

**CHINESE *SHI...DE* FOCUS CONSTRUCTIONS:
AN OPTIMALITY-THEORETIC PROPOSAL**

by

Kwok Tim Choi
B.A., Simon Fraser University, 2002

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

In the
Department
of
Linguistics

© Kwok Tim Choi 2006

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Fall 2006

All rights reserved. This work may not be
reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy
or other means, without permission of the author.

APPROVAL

Name: Kwok Tim Choi
Degree: Master of Arts
Title of Thesis: Chinese *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions:
An Optimality-Theoretic Proposal

Examining Committee:

Chair: Dr. Chung-hye Han
Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics

Dr. Nancy A. Hedberg
Senior Supervisor
Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics

Dr. María Teresa Taboada
Supervisor
Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics

Dr. Laura A. Michaelis
External Examiner
Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics
University of Colorado

Date Defended: September 7, 2006



**SIMON FRASER
UNIVERSITY**library

DECLARATION OF PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENCE

The author, whose copyright is declared on the title page of this work, has granted to Simon Fraser University the right to lend this thesis, project or extended essay to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users.

The author has further granted permission to Simon Fraser University to keep or make a digital copy for use in its circulating collection (currently available to the public at the "Institutional Repository" link of the SFU Library website <www.lib.sfu.ca> at: <<http://ir.lib.sfu.ca/handle/1892/112>>) and, without changing the content, to translate the thesis/project or extended essays, if technically possible, to any medium or format for the purpose of preservation of the digital work.

The author has further agreed that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by either the author or the Dean of Graduate Studies.

It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without the author's written permission.

Permission for public performance, or limited permission for private scholarly use, of any multimedia materials forming part of this work, may have been granted by the author. This information may be found on the separately catalogued multimedia material and in the signed Partial Copyright Licence.

The original Partial Copyright Licence attesting to these terms, and signed by this author, may be found in the original bound copy of this work, retained in the Simon Fraser University Archive.

Simon Fraser University Library
Burnaby, BC, Canada

ABSTRACT

This thesis studies *SHI...DE* focus constructions, or what have been called cleft sentences, in Chinese. The two main goals are to understand the form and function of this type of construction and to account for its syntactic variations. First, I justify previous claims that *shi* plays a dual role in *SHI...DE* focus constructions as a contrastive focus marker and as a Theme-Rheme separator. Then I put together a set of restrictions on topical Themes in *SHI...DE* focus constructions, which I call topical Theme conditions. Finally, based on the data, I propose that the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions is shaped by the interaction of four syntactic and pragmatic factors—topical Theme conditions, strong topic fronting, word order and a *shi* rule. These factors are ranked according to their strengths. The availability of such ranking suggests the possibility of using Optimality Theory to account for the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions.

Keywords: Chinese; focus; Systemic Functional Linguistics, Optimality Theory; Theme and Rheme; topic and comment

Subject Terms: Chinese Language – Discourse Analysis; Chinese Language – Syntax; Focus (Linguistics); Functionalism (Linguistics); Language Modern – Topic and Comment; Optimality Theory (Linguistics)

DEDICATION

To my parents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am mostly indebted to Dr. Nancy Hedberg, my senior supervisor, without whom this thesis would not have been possible. Dr. Hedberg's courses in syntax and discourse pragmatics, as well as her influential works on cleft sentences, have inspired me to write this thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. Hedberg for her continuous guidance, encouragement and support throughout my years of graduate study at Simon Fraser University. During the months of writing and revising this thesis, she had been patiently answering my questions, helping me to formulate my ideas and clearing up various errors and misconceptions in the earlier drafts.

I would also like to thank Dr. Maite Taboada for supervising my thesis and providing feedback on it. I am particularly thankful for her courses in functional linguistics and discourse and dialogue processing, which helped me to develop solid foundations in discourse analysis and Systemic Functional Linguistics. I also thank Dr. Laura Michaelis, my external examiner, for carefully reading my thesis and giving me invaluable suggestions for revision.

Studying at SFU Linguistics has been an enjoyable experience. I would like to thank the faculty members for generously sharing their knowledge and creating a supportive and friendly environment. I would like to especially thank Dr. Chung-hye Han for her courses in syntax and semantics, from which I was greatly benefited, and Dr. Alexei Kochetov for introducing Optimality Theory to me and making phonology interesting. I thank the staff at the Linguistics Department, Carol Jackson, Grace Wattanga, Liz Straker and Rita Parmar, for their kindness and help in various ways. I also thank the fellow graduate students, especially my cohort members Mayo Kudo, Nicole Carter, Niki Efstathopoulou and my officemates Anne Rimrott and Yasuko Sakurai, for their friendship. I am thankful for the financial support from Simon Fraser University and the Linguistics Department through a Graduate Fellowship and various Teaching Assistantships. I would also like to thank Dr. John Alderete and Dr. Peter Muntigl for offering me the opportunities to work as Research Assistant of their projects.

My special thanks go to the people who have been with me through all the ups and downs of my life. I am extremely thankful to my family, my parents Wai-Cheung and Lisa Choi, and my brother Eric, for their endless love, tolerance, care and support in the past years. I would also like to thank my friends, especially Clement, Liam, Patrick, the “Ex-Samuel Birthday Dinner Group” and the “Philadelphians”, for their fellowship, encouragement and prayer.

Last but not the least, I thank my Heavenly Father for everything.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Figures.....	ix
Abbreviations.....	x
1 Introduction.....	1
2 Background.....	4
2.1 The Form of <i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions.....	4
2.1.1 <i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions and Inverted Pseudo-clefts.....	5
2.1.2 Emphatic Sentences.....	17
2.1.3 Summary.....	19
2.2 The Function of <i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions.....	20
2.2.1 <i>Shi</i> as a Focus Marker in <i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions.....	20
2.2.2 The Definition of Focus.....	21
2.2.3 <i>Shi</i> as a Contrastive Focus Marker.....	23
2.2.4 The Scope of <i>Shi</i>	25
2.2.5 The Role of <i>De</i> in <i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions.....	26
2.2.6 Summary.....	29
2.3 Variations of <i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions.....	30
2.3.1 From a Syntactic Point of View.....	30
2.3.2 From a Discourse Point of View.....	32
2.4 <i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions and Cleft Sentences.....	35
2.4.1 Syntactic Differences.....	35
2.4.2 Functional Similarities and Differences.....	38
2.5 Chapter Summary.....	40
3 Topical Theme Conditions.....	42
3.1 Sentence-Initial Elements.....	42
3.1.1 Chafe's Approach.....	43
3.1.2 Gundel's Approach.....	46
3.1.3 Halliday's Approach.....	53
3.1.4 Downing's Approach.....	56
3.1.5 Summary.....	60
3.2 Chinese Topical Themes.....	61
3.2.1 Topic-Prominent Languages and Subject-Prominent Languages.....	61
3.2.2 Chinese as a Topic-Prominent Language.....	62
3.2.3 Downing Revisited.....	66
3.2.4 Topic Marker Test.....	73
3.2.5 Summary.....	74
3.3 Topical Theme Conditions.....	75
3.3.1 Participant Themes.....	76
3.3.2 Individual Themes.....	79
3.3.3 Temporal, Spatial and Situational Themes.....	81

3.3.4	Impossible Topical Themes	82
3.4	Chapter Summary	83
4	Accounting for the Form of <i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions	86
4.1	<i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Construction as a Theme-Rheme Structure	86
4.1.1	Topic Marker Test.....	87
4.1.2	Topical Theme Conditions	87
4.1.3	Variations of <i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Construction.....	92
4.2	Formation of <i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions	95
4.2.1	<i>Shi</i> Rule	95
4.2.2	Topical Theme Conditions	97
4.2.3	Interim Summary	100
4.2.4	Word Order	100
4.2.5	Summary	102
4.3	<i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions with Fronted Constituents.....	104
4.3.1	<i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions with Fronted Circumstantial Elements	104
4.3.2	<i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions with Fronted Individual Elements	105
4.3.3	<i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions with Fronted Participant Elements	107
4.3.4	Multiple Participant Themes	109
4.3.5	Multiple Individual Themes	112
4.3.6	Multiple Spatial, Temporal and Situational Themes.....	113
4.3.7	Accounting for the Fronting of Constituents.....	116
4.3.8	Modifications of the Model.....	121
4.3.9	Summary	124
4.4	<i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions without Topical Theme.....	125
4.5	Object-final <i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions	127
4.6	Chapter Summary.....	129
5	Towards an Optimality-Theoretic Account of <i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions	130
5.1	Optimality Theory and <i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions.....	131
5.1.1	Input and Candidates.....	131
5.1.2	Constraints	132
5.1.3	Selecting the Optimal Output.....	134
5.2	More Examples.....	135
5.2.1	Direct Object Focused <i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions	136
5.2.2	Verb Focused <i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions.....	137
5.2.3	<i>SHI...DE</i> Focus Constructions with Fronted Constituents.....	138
5.3	Chapter Summary.....	141
6	Concluding Remarks	142
	Bibliography	146

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1	Sentence-initial elements, syntactic topics and pragmatic topics.....	49
Figure 3.2	Syntactic topics and topical Themes.....	56

ABBREVIATIONS

ASP	aspect marker
CL	classifier
FF	FINAL FOCUS
I.T.	individual Theme
MCF	MARKING CONTRASTIVE FOCUS
MOD	modification marker
NOM	nominalizer
P.T.	participant Theme
Q	question marker
S-TopMove	STRONG TOPIC MOVEMENT
SP.T.	spatial Theme
ST.T.	situational Theme
STAY	ECONOMY OF MOVEMENT
T.T.	temporal Theme
TOP	topic marker
TTC	TOPICAL THEME CONDITIONS

1 INTRODUCTION

Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions, or what have been called Chinese cleft sentences, can be distinguished from regular sentences by at least two features, as shown in the following examples. (1) are examples of *SHI...DE* focus constructions and (2) is an example of a regular sentence.

- (1) a. *Shi wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
SHI I at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
'It was me who found your dog in the park.'
'It was the case that I found your dog in the park.'
- b. *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
'It was in the park that I found your dog.'
'It was find your dog in the park that I did.'
- c. *Wo zai gongyuan-li shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
I at park-in SHI find-ASP your dog DE
'It was find that I did to your dog in the park.'
'It was find your dog that I did in the park.'
- (2) *Wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou.*
I at park-in find-ASP your dog
'I found your dog in the park.'

(Based on Teng, 1979, p.102-103)

The above data show the two features that characterize the *SHI...DE* focus constructions. A *SHI...DE* focus construction differs from a regular sentence by the appearance of two morphemes—*shi* and *de*. The addition of these two morphemes to a regular sentence does not only change the form of the sentence, but also changes the function of a regular sentence. *SHI...DE* focus constructions carry special functions contributed by *shi* and *de* independently.

This study is motivated by two goals. First, previous studies of *SHI...DE* focus constructions, or Chinese cleft sentences, do not provide a satisfying analysis of the form and the function of this type of sentences. In particular, there have been controversies such as the simple versus complex sentence analysis of the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions, the disagreements over their focus marking function, and the various analyses of *de*. In this study, these problems

will be revisited and a conclusion on the actual facts of *SHI...DE* focus constructions, in particular, their form and function, will be provided.

The second goal of this study is to provide an account of the variations of *SHI...DE* focus constructions that exist in the grammar. Previous studies have shown that various forms of *SHI...DE* focus constructions are possible in Chinese. Some of them have been shown in (1) above. However, the data show that the forms of these sentences are restricted. Several restrictions apply to these sentences. For example, according to Luo (1992), *shi* can only appear pre-verbally and thus the so-called “direct object clefts” and “indirect object clefts”, in which *shi* occurs post-verbally, do not exist. This study investigates what are the factors that on one hand lead to the variations of *SHI...DE* focus construction and on the other hand restrict the occurrence of some other forms.

The first goal is related to the second one in the sense that the second goal of this study cannot be attained without solving some basic problems related to the study of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. Therefore, this study starts with a chapter that provides the background of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. I begin by dealing with one of the biggest difficulties encountered when studying of *SHI...DE* focus constructions, that is, to define what they are. There are some *SHI...DE* focus constructions (such as (1)) that appear to be identical to other unrelated constructions, such as (inverted) pseudo-clefts and emphatic sentences. These look-alike forms have created problems in some of the previous studies of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. In chapter 2, I am going to distinguish *SHI...DE* focus constructions from those structures by showing the unique functions of the two morphemes—*shi* and *de*—in *SHI...DE* focus constructions. The result of this analysis does not only answer the questions on the true function of *SHI...DE* focus constructions, but also unveils the syntactic structure of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. While the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions has been debated over the past decades, this study clearly shows that the complex sentence approach to *SHI...DE* focus constructions is inaccurate. This conclusion also suggests that *SHI...DE* focus constructions and

English cleft sentences, which are functionally similar and have been thought to be syntactically similar, have completely different syntactic structures.

After solving these problems of studying *SHI...DE* focus constructions and discussing the basic facts of this type of sentences, chapters 3 and 4 start to investigate the second question that motivates this study, that is, why some forms of *SHI...DE* focus constructions are prohibited. Based on Zhu's (1997) claim that all elements before the morpheme *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions are topics (or topical Themes), I show that some of the unacceptable forms of *SHI...DE* focus construction can be explained by the topical Theme conditions—a set of restrictions applying to the topical elements. Chapter 3 is a discussion of topical Themes and the topical Theme conditions in Chinese. In chapter 4, I apply these topical Theme conditions to the data and show that they are one of the factors that determine the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions.

The discovery of the effects of the topical Theme conditions on *SHI...DE* focus constructions does not end the investigation. Additional data suggest that more factors are contributing to the formation of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. The investigation continues in the second half of chapter 4. The data show that the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions is also subject to the canonical word order and a fronting process that involves strongly topical elements.

The data in this study show that the factors that shape the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions are ranked according to their strengths, with the stronger factors overriding the weaker ones. This ranking calls for an Optimality-Theoretic (OT) account of the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. Chapter 5 is a proposal of such an OT analysis. The factors that contribute to the formation of *SHI...DE* focus constructions are translated into a set of formal constraints. Each grammatical *SHI...DE* focus construction starts out as a set of input containing semantic and pragmatic information. Based on the input, output candidates are generated. The grammatical form of a *SHI...DE* focus construction is the candidate that commits the least violations. Chapter 6 is the concluding chapter with some directions for future research.

2 BACKGROUND

In this chapter, I am going to provide the background of Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions. I first discuss the syntactic form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions by distinguishing them from two look-alike structures, inverted pseudo-clefts and emphatic sentences, followed by an investigation of the function of *SHI...DE* focus constructions in section 2.2. In section 2.3, I present the research question that motivates this study, that is, what are the factors that determine the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. The last section of this chapter is a brief comparison between Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions and English cleft sentences. I will show that even though these two structures have been thought to be similar, they are in fact both structurally and functionally different.

2.1 The Form of *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions

The sentence in (1) is ambiguous and has three possible interpretations. It can be interpreted as a *SHI...DE* focus construction (indicated as “focus reading” below), as an inverted pseudo-cleft sentence, and as an emphatic sentence. The examples in (2)-(4) show that with the help of the context, these three interpretations can be easily identified. In this section, I will show that the sentence in (1) has different syntactic structures under different interpretations.

- (1) *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
'It was in the park that I found your dog.' [Focus reading]
'I was the one who found your dog in the park.' [Inverted pseudo-cleft reading]
'I did find your dog in the park.' [Emphatic reading]

(Based on Teng, 1979, p.103)

- (2) A: *Ni zai nali zhao-dao wode gou de?*
you at where find-ASP my dog DE
'Where did you find my dog?'
- B: *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
'It was in the park that I found your dog.' [Focus reading]

- (3) A: *Shui zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao wode gou de?*
 who at park-in find-ASP my dog DE
 ‘Who found my dog in the park?’
- B: *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘I was the one who found your dog in the park.’ [Inverted pseudo-cleft reading]
- (4) A: *Ni zhende zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao wode gou ma?*
 you really at park-in find-ASP my dog Q
 ‘Did you really find my dog in the park?’
- B: *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘I did find your dog in the park.’ [Emphatic reading]

SHI...DE focus constructions appear to be identical to inverted pseudo-clefts and emphatic sentences. It is not possible to study the syntactic structure of *SHI...DE* focus constructions without first distinguishing them from these two identical forms. Therefore, in this section I am going to briefly introduce the syntax of these three types of sentence, and then provide the correct structure of *SHI...DE* focus constructions.

2.1.1 *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions and Inverted Pseudo-clefts

When interpreted as an inverted pseudo-cleft, (1) is the inverted form of (5), a pseudo-cleft sentence.

- (5) *Zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de shi wo.*
 at park-in find-ASP your dog DE SHI I
 ‘The one who found your dog in the park was me.’ [Pseudo-cleft reading]

(Teng, 1979, p.102)

SHI...DE focus constructions, pseudo-clefts and inverted pseudo-clefts are sometimes all known as *SHI...DE* constructions or *SHI...DE* sentences (in Zhao, 1979; Li & Thompson, 1981; Shi, 2003, for examples) for the fact that they all contain two words or morphemes—*shi* and *de*. In this section, I will show that *SHI...DE* focus constructions and (inverted) pseudo-clefts are structurally different and the two special morphemes, *shi* and *de*, are in fact different morphemes.

In his preliminary study of *SHI...DE* constructions, Teng (1979) at the beginning does not clearly distinguish between *SHI...DE* focus constructions (or what he calls Chinese clefts) and pseudo-clefts. Based on his understanding of English clefts and pseudo-clefts, he proposes three characteristics by which these Chinese cleft-like sentences can be identified. First, they contain a syntactic marker which marks the focused, emphasized or contrastive constituent (i.e. what he calls the cleft element). Second, an NP (represented by \emptyset in the following examples) which refers to the focused constituent is missing in the main clause. Third, these sentences can be divided into two parts—asserted and assumed (or presupposed). In addition, the asserted part is always the singled-out constituent, that is, the cleft element.

Note that Teng (1979) suggests these criteria based on English cleft and pseudo-cleft sentences. These criteria clearly apply to the English examples, as shown in (6) below. (6a) is an example of English cleft and (6b) is an example of English pseudo-cleft.

- (6) a. It was your dog that I found in the park.
 b. What I found in the park was your dog. (Teng, 1979, p. 101)

(7) and (8) are the analyses of the sentences in (6) based on the three criteria. In both sentences, the asserted or focused element is “your dog”, which appears after the copula. In addition, there is a missing NP in both sentences which refers to “your dog”. Furthermore, both sentences can be divided into two parts, assumed and asserted. The cleft element is always the asserted part and the assumed part is the so-called main clause.

(7) English cleft sentence (from (6a)):

It was	your dog _i	that I found \emptyset_i in the park.
It + copula	cleft element	main clause
	asserted	assumed

(8) English pseudo-cleft sentence (from (6a)):

What I found \emptyset_i in the park	was	your dog _i
main clause	copula	cleft element
assumed		asserted

Teng (1979) does not clearly define “main clause” in his paper. It appears that what he means by main clause is sentence minus the cleft element. However, other works on English clefts and pseudo-clefts usually treat that part of sentence as an embedded clause. For example, in English clefts, it is called relative clause by Collins (1992) and cleft clause by Hedberg (1990, 1999, 2000). If these subsequent analyses of English clefts and pseudo-clefts are correct, the term “main clause” used by Teng is confusing because syntactically speaking, the “main clause” is actually embedded.

Note that the analyses in (7) and (8) are not formal syntactic analyses of English clefts and pseudo-clefts. They only briefly show the basic structures of these sentences. The purpose of providing the analyses here is to show the examples of what Teng’s criteria are based on rather than discussing the syntactic structures of English clefts and pseudo-clefts. I will not provide further discussion of English clefts and pseudo-clefts here. More on English clefts will be discussed in section 2.4.

Back to Chinese clefts and pseudo-clefts, according to Teng’s (1976) criteria, which he later finds problematic when applying to Chinese, sentences in (1) and (2) are analyzed as follows.

(9) *SHI...DE* focus construction (from (1)):

Wo_i I_i	<i>shi</i>	\emptyset_i <i>zai gongyuanli zhaodao nide gou de.</i> \emptyset_i find your dog in the park
cleft element	copula	main clause
asserted		assumed

(10) Inverted pseudo-cleft (from (1)):

Wo_i I_i	<i>shi</i>	\emptyset_i <i>zai gongyuanli zhaodao nide gou de.</i> \emptyset_i find your dog in the park
cleft element	copula	main clause
asserted		assumed

(11) Pseudo-cleft (from (2)):

\emptyset_i <i>Zai gongyuanli zhaodao nide gou de</i> \emptyset_i Find your dog in the park	<i>shi</i>	wo_i me_i
main clause	copula	cleft element
assumed		asserted

Teng's (1979) analysis correctly accounts for the (inverted) pseudo-clefts. First, the so-called main clause '∅ find your dog in the park' is truly assumed or presupposed, as shown in (12) and (13) below. In both (12) and (13), the presuppositions in (d) survive when the (inverted) pseudo-clefts in (1) and (2) are negated, as shown in (a), questioned, as shown in (b), or serving as antecedents in conditionals, as shown in (c) (Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet, 2000).

(12) Inverted pseudo-cleft:

a. *Wo bu-shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I not-SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 'I was not the one who found your dog in the park.'

b. *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de, shi ma?*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE SHI Q
 'Is it true that I was the one who found your dog in the park?'

c. *Ruguo wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de,*
 if I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE

ni yidin bu-hui hen wo.
 you must not-will hate I

'If I were the one who found your dog in the park, you would not hate me.'

d. Presupposition: $\exists_x\{x \text{ zai gongyuanli zhaodao nide gou}\}$
 $\exists_x\{x \text{ finds your dog in the park}\}$
 'Someone found your dog in the park.'

(13) Pseudo-cleft:

a. *Zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de bu-shi wo.*
 at park-in find-ASP your dog DE not-SHI I
 'The one who found your dog in the park was not me.'

b. *Zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de shi-bu-shi wo?*
 at park-in find-ASP your dog DE SHI-not-SHI I
 'Am I the one who found your dog in the park?'

c. *Ruguo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de shi wo,*
 if at park-in find-ASP your dog DE SHI I

ni yidin bu-hui hen wo.
 you must not-will hate I

'If the one who found your dog in the park was me, you wouldn't hate me.'

- d. Presupposition: $\exists_x\{x \text{ zai gongyuanli zhao dao nide gou}\}$
 $\exists_x\{x \text{ finds your dog in the park}\}$
 ‘Someone found your dog in the park.’

Moreover, pseudo-cleft sentences (1) and (2) function to single out the cleft element *wo* ‘I’. Both sentences answer the question “who was the person who found the dog?”, as shown in (14) and (15). This shows that the cleft elements in both sentences are being asserted, not assumed or presupposed.

- (14) A: *Shui zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao wode gou?*
 who at park-in find-ASP my dog
 ‘Who found my dog in the park?’
- B: *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘I was the one who found your dog in the park.’ [Inverted pseudo-cleft]
- (15) A: *Shui zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao wode gou?*
 who at park-in find-ASP my dog
 ‘Who found my dog in the park?’
- B: *Zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de shi wo.*
 at park-in find-ASP your dog DE SHI I
 ‘The one who found your dog in the park was me.’ [Pseudo-cleft]

Although Teng’s (1979) criteria work well with (inverted) pseudo-clefts in Chinese, they are problematic when they are used to analyze cleft sentences, or *SHI...DE* focus constructions. (Teng also points out the problem in the same paper.) The analysis of (1) under focus reading based on Teng’s criteria is shown in (9). In (9), *wo* ‘I’ is analyzed as the cleft or asserted element and the rest of the sentence as the presupposed main clause. I am going to show later in this section that this is an incorrect analysis. Although Teng also points out the problem, his criteria force this analysis. In (1), the only possible missing NP appears to be the agent of the verb *zhao-dao* ‘find’. If the missing NP must refer to the cleft element, the only way to analyze (1) is to treat *wo* ‘I’ as the asserted cleft element and the post-*shi* part of the sentence as the presupposed main clause that contains the missing NP.

However, the analysis in (9) is an incorrect analysis of (1) under the focus (or cleft) interpretation. As opposed to the case of (inverted) pseudo-clefts, when (1) receives focus or

cleft reading, the so-called cleft element *wo* ‘I’ is not the focused or asserted element. This is shown by (16), where (1), repeated as (16B) below, does not answer the question in (16A). Instead, the example in (17) shows that (1) answers the question in (17A). Thus, the real asserted element of the focus sentence (1) is the adjunct *zai gongyuan-li* ‘in the park’.

- (16) A: *Shui zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao wode gou?*
 who at park-in find-ASP my dog
 ‘Who found my dog in the park?’
- B: *#Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was in the park that I found your dog.’ [Focus reading]
- (17) A: *Ni zai nali zhao-dao wode gou?*
 you at where find-ASP my dog
 ‘Where did you find my dog?’
- B: *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was in the park that I found your dog.’ [Focus reading]

Moreover, if the analysis in (9) is correct for *SHI...DE* focus constructions (or clefts), when (1) receives the focus reading, the assumed part of the sentence is the post-*shi* part and the sentence has the same presupposition as when it receives inverted pseudo-cleft reading (cf. (9) and (10)). In other words, the presupposition of (1) is expected to be “Someone found your dog in the park.”, as shown in (18d). However, (18a-c) show that (18d) is not the real presupposition of (1). When (1) is interpreted as a *SHI...DE* focus construction, the presupposition in (18d) does not survive the tests in (18a-c), that is, when (1) is negated, questioned or serving as the antecedent of a conditional. Instead, (1) under the focus (or cleft) interpretation presupposes ‘I found your dog at somewhere.’, as shown in (18e). This is the real presupposition of (1) as it survives the tests in (18a-c).

- (18) *SHI...DE* focus construction:
 a. *Wo bu-shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I not-SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was not in the park that I found your dog.’

- b. *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de, shi ma?*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE SHI Q
 'Is it true that it was in the park that I found your dog?'
- c. *Rugou wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de,*
 if I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE

ni yidin bu-hui hen wo.
 you must not-will hate I

 'If it was in the park that I found your dog, you would not hate me.'
- d. Presupposition: $\exists_x\{x \text{ zai gongyuanli zhaodao nide gou}\}$
 $\exists_x\{x \text{ finds your dog in the park}\}$
 'Someone found your dog in the park.'
- e. Presupposition: $\exists_x\{Wo \text{ zai } x \text{ zhaodao nide gou}\}$
 $\exists_x\{I \text{ found your dog at } x\}$
 'I found your dog somewhere.'

The above discussion has shown clearly that *SHI...DE* focus constructions and (inverted) pseudo-clefts cannot be analyzed in the same way as shown in (9), (10) and (11). Teng (1979) also points out the differences between Chinese clefts and pseudo-clefts in his paper. Even though he does not come up with a clear conclusion of the correct analysis of clefts or *SHI...DE* focus constructions, he proposes that *shi* is a different morpheme in *SHI...DE* focus constructions and in pseudo-clefts. Teng's main argument is that *shi* in pseudo-clefts acts as a copula or linking verb similar to BE in English that links the asserted and the assumed parts. As a result, it is only in a pseudo-cleft that the positions of the assumed constituent and the asserted constituent can exchange without altering the meaning (i.e. the truth condition) of the sentence. In other words, the pseudo-clefts "A *shi* B" and "B *shi* A" are equivalent in terms of their truth conditions (Zhu, 1997). Hence, a pseudo-cleft and its inverted counterpart are always equivalent to each other. However, Teng claims that in *SHI...DE* focus constructions, such an exchange of positions is not possible. Therefore, *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions cannot be a copula or linking verb. He suggests that *shi* is a focus marker in *SHI...DE* focus constructions that is inserted before the asserted element.

Zhu (1997) also suggests that *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions and in pseudo-clefts are different morphemes. He claims that *shi* is a copula in pseudo-clefts, but not in *SHI...DE* focus constructions. One of his arguments is that *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions is optional but it is obligatory in pseudo-clefts, as shown in examples (19) and (20). In (19b), even when *shi* is missing, the sentence can still receive focus reading, provided that the asserted constituent ‘in the park’ is stressed. (Zhu, 1997; Yariv-Laor, 1999). When correctly stressed, (19b) is a possible answer to (17A). (20) shows that *shi*, as a copula or linking verb, is obligatory in pseudo-clefts.

- (19) a. *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was in the park that I found your dog.’
- b. *Wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was in the park that I found your dog.’ [with appropriate stress]
- (20) a. *Zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de shi wo.*
 at park-in find-ASP your dog DE SHI I
 ‘The one who found your dog in the/a park was me.’
- b. **Zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de wo.*
 at park-in find-ASP your dog DE I

Optionality alone is not a strong argument to show that *shi* is not a copula in *SHI...DE* focus constructions. In fact, *shi* behaves similar to a copula or a verb. For examples, similar to verbs, *shi* can be negated by *bu* and it can be used to form A-not-A questions.

- (21) a. *Wo bu-xihuan gou.*
 I not-like dog
 ‘I don’t like dogs.’
- b. *Wo bu-shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I not-SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was not in the park that I found your dog.’
- (22) a. *Ni xihuan-bu-xihuan gou?*
 I like-not-like dog
 ‘Do you like dogs?’
- b. *Ni shi-bu-shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao wode gou de?*
 I SHI-not-SHI at park-in find-ASP my dog DE
 ‘Was it in the park that you found my dog?’

Another argument that goes against the claim that *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions is a copula verb is that there are cases where *shi* occurs in positions other than the verbal position in this type of sentence. In *SHI...DE* focus constructions, *shi* can occur in various positions of a sentence, for example, sentence-initially, as shown in (23) (Chiu-Ming & Li, 1994). Based on this fact, Zhu (1997) concludes that *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions cannot be a copula because of the flexibility of its distribution.

- (23) *Shi wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 SHI I at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 'It's me who found your dog in the park.'

(Teng, 1979, p. 102)

In addition, the data in (24)-(26) also show that *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions cannot be a verb. (24a) is a regular sentence; (25a) is a pseudo-cleft and (26a) is a *SHI...DE* focus construction. In all of these sentences, the verb must follow the modal. Thus, in (24b) and (25b), when the verb precedes the modal, the sentences are ungrammatical. However, (26b) shows that *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions can appear before the epistemic modals. In other words, *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions is not a verb as it is in pseudo-clefts.

(24) Regular sentence:

- a. *Ta yingai xihuan gou.*
 he should like dog
 'He should like dogs.'
- b. **Ta xihuan yingai gou.*
 he like should dog

(25) Pseudo-cleft sentence:

- a. *Ta yingai shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 he should SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 'He should be the one who found your dog in the park.'
- b. **Ta shi yingai zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 he SHI should at park-in find-ASP your dog DE

(26) *SHI...DE* focus construction:

- a. *Ta yingai shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 he should SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 'It should be in the park that he found your dog.'

- b. *Ta shi yingai zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de,*
 he SHI should at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
bu-shi yiding.
 not-SHI must

‘It is should, not must, that he has found your dog in the park.’
 ‘He SHOULD, not must, have found your dog in the park.’ (literally)

The above discussions suggest that it is the morpheme *shi*, which has multiple readings, that causes the ambiguity in (1). However, this is not the only source of ambiguity. The sentence-final morpheme *de* also has more than one meaning and is said to be playing different roles in the above sentences.

Teng (1979) suggests that not only *shi*, but *de* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions and pseudo-clefts are different morphemes. One piece of evidence is that *de* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions is optional and *de* in pseudo-clefts is obligatory. For example, when *de* is absent, (27) only allows the cleft or focus interpretation but not the inverted pseudo-cleft interpretation.

- (27) *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog
 ‘It was in the park that I found your dog.’ [Focus reading]
 *‘I was the one who found your dog in the park.’ [Inverted pseudo-cleft reading]

Many studies of *de* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions consider *de* as a nominalizer or modification marker, like what it is in pseudo-clefts (Chiu-Ming & Li, 1994; Huang & Fawcett, 1996; Li & Thompson, 1981; Lu, 1943; Luo, 1992; Modini, 1993; Ross, 1983). The nominalizer analysis suggests that *de* nominalizes the post-*shi* elements of a *SHI...DE* focus construction (Li & Thompson, 1981). The modification marker analysis suggests that there is an elided head noun after *de*, and the post-*shi* elements form a relative clause that modifies the elided noun (Lu, 1943; Luo, 1992; Modini, 1993; Ross, 1983). These two analyses of *de* suggest the following structures of *SHI...DE* sentences.

- (28) a. Nominalizer analysis:
 subject *shi* nominalization (Li & Thompson, 1981, p. 587)
 b. Modification marker analysis:
 subject *shi* [NP[relative clause]*e*]

Both the nominalizer and the modification marker analyses of *de* are based on the assumption that *shi* is a copula verb that links the subject and the nominalization (or the NP), which are equivalent to each other. Thus, these analyses suggest that *SHI...DE* focus constructions can be inverted like pseudo-clefts. However, I have already shown that first, *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions is not a copula or linking verb. Second, both Teng (1997) and Zhu (1997) claim that the pre-*shi* and post-*shi* parts of a *SHI...DE* focus construction are not equational and thus inverting a *SHI...DE* focus construction is not possible.

The structures in (28) are clearly not correct for *SHI...DE* focus constructions, but they are possible structures of pseudo-clefts (Kitagawa & Ross, 1982). The following data support this claim. In (29), the headless relative clause or the nominalization of a pseudo-cleft can be substituted by a third person singular pronoun *ta*. However, as shown in (30), such pronominalization is not possible in *SHI...DE* focus constructions. Thus, (28) is not a possible analysis of *SHI...DE* focus constructions.

(29) Inverted pseudo-cleft:

A: *Shui shi zhao-dao wode gou de?*
 who SHI find-ASP my dog DE
 ‘Who is the one who found my dog?’

B₁. *Wo shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘I am the one who found your dog.’

B₂. *Wo shi ta.*
 I SHI him/her
 ‘I am that person.’

(30) *SHI...DE* focus construction:

A: *Ni bujian-le wode gou ma?*
 you lose-ASP my dog Q
 ‘Did you lose my dog?’

B₁. *Wo shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was find that I did to your dog.’

B₂. *#Wo shi ta.*
 I SHI him/her
 ‘I am that person.’

According to Teng (1979) and Zhao (1979), *de* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions is possibly a past tense marker. However, this view has been opposed by succeeding studies for the fact that *SHI...DE* sentences are compatible with present and future contexts (Ross, 1983; Lee, 2005, for examples). One of the examples is shown in (31).

- (31) *Ta mingtian shi hui qu kan dianying de.*
 he tomorrow SHI will go see movie DE
 ‘It is go to see a movie that he will do tomorrow.’

(Based on Ross, 1983, p. 224)

One of the most recent analyses of *de* in *SHI...DE* focus construction is the work done by Lee (2005), who suggests that *de* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions, which she calls focus *de*, is an optional sentence-final particle that expresses the speaker’s attitude. It is used when the speaker is certain about the assertion. The following examples show that when *de* is present in *SHI...DE* focus constructions, the speaker is more certain about the assertion than the cases without *de*.

- (32) a. *Wo shi hen xihuan gou.*
 I SHI very like dog
 ‘It is like dogs very much that I do.’ [Focus reading]
- b. *Wo shi hen xihuan gou de.*
 I SHI very like dog DE
 ‘(It is true that) it is like dogs very much that I do.’ [Focus reading]

In fact, the use of this focus *de* is not limited to *SHI...DE* focus constructions. The following examples show that *de* can be used in regular sentences.

- (33) a. *Wo hen xihuan gou.*
 I very like dog
 ‘I like dogs very much.’
- b. *Wo hen xihuan gou de.*
 I very like dog DE
 ‘(It’s true that) I like dogs very much.’

The above discussion of *shi* and *de* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions and Chinese pseudo-clefts shows that *shi* and *de* in these two types of sentences are different morphemes. In pseudo-clefts, *shi* is a copula verb similar to English BE and *de* is either a nominalizer or a modification marker. In *SHI...DE* focus constructions, *shi* is not a copula and *de* is not a nominalizer or a

modification marker. Thus, the basic structures of *SHI...DE* focus constructions, pseudo-clefts and inverted pseudo-clefts are revealed, as shown in (34)-(36). While pseudo-clefts are complex sentences with embedded relative clauses (or under the nominalization analysis, a simple sentence with a nominalization functions as the complement of *shi*), *SHI...DE* focus constructions are simple sentences with *shi* dividing the sentence into two parts.

(34) *SHI...DE* focus construction:
Part of sentence + non-copula *shi* + part of sentence + focus *de*

(35) Pseudo-cleft sentence:
Modification marker analysis:
[headless RC + *de*] + copula *shi* + nominal phrase

Nominalizer analysis:
nominalization + copula *shi* + nominal phrase

(36) Inverted pseudo-cleft sentence:
Modification marker analysis:
nominal phrase + copula *shi* + [headless RC + *de*]

Nominalizer analysis:
nominal phrase + copula *shi* + nominalization

In this section, I have distinguished *SHI...DE* focus constructions from pseudo-clefts and inverted pseudo-clefts. I have shown that although *SHI...DE* focus constructions and inverted pseudo-clefts look identical to each other, they are syntactically different. In the next section, I am going to show that *SHI...DE* focus constructions are structurally different from another look-alike construction—emphatic sentences.

2.1.2 Emphatic Sentences

The sentence in (1), repeated as (37), has a third possible interpretation—as an emphatic sentence.

(37) *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
'I did find your dog in the/a park.' [Emphatic reading]

(Based on Teng, 1979, p. 103)

(37), when interpreted as an emphatic sentence, does not have the assertive function as it does in *SHI...DE* focus constructions and in pseudo-clefts. Unlike *SHI...DE* focus constructions and inverted pseudo-clefts, neither of the elements preceding or following *shi* in the emphatic sentence is being asserted. Thus, (37), as an emphatic sentence, does not answer the questions in (38A) and (39A). However, it answers the confirmation question in (40A).

- (38) A: *Shui zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao wode gou?*
 who at park-in find-ASP my dog
 ‘Who found my dog in the/a park?’
- B: *#Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘I did find your dog in the park.’ [Emphatic reading]
- (39) A: *Ni zai nali zhao-dao wode gou?*
 you at where find-ASP my dog
 ‘Where did you find my dog?’
- B: *#Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘I did find your dog in the park.’ [Emphatic reading]
- (40) A: *Ni zhende zai gong-yuan-li zhao-dao wode gou ma?*
 you really at park-in find-ASP my dog Q
 ‘Did you really find my dog in the park?’
- B: *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘I did find your dog in the park.’ [Emphatic reading]

One possible way to distinguish the emphatic reading in (37) from the other two possible readings is by the position of stress. According to Yip and Rimmington (2004), who call this type of emphatic expression concessionary emphasis, the morpheme *shi* in emphatic sentences is stressed. When the above sentence is under the focus interpretation, the sentence stress falls on the focused phrase that follows *shi*. A similar observation is made by Li and Thompson (1981) and Paul and Whitman (2001). They call the stressed *shi* a marker of affirmation. This stressed *shi* functions similarly to the emphatic DO in English. With the insertion of the stressed *shi* to a sentence, it adds a meaning of ‘it’s true that...’ or ‘the situation is that’ to the sentence, for example:

- (41) *Wo shi bu chi la de.*
 I SHI not eat hot DE
 ‘I do can’t eat hot food.’
 ‘It’s true that I can’t eat hot food.’ (literally)
 (Based on Li & Thompson, 1981, p. 154)

Although *shi* in emphatic sentences is different from *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions, *de* in both types of sentences is the same morpheme. In other words, *de* in emphatic sentences is an affirmation marker, or what is called focus *de* by Lee (2005), as it is in *SHI...DE* focus constructions. Thus, in emphatic sentences, *de* is also optional.

- (42) A. *Ni zhende zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao wode gou ma?*
 you really at park-in find-ASP my dog Q
 ‘Did you really find my dog in the park?’
- B. *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog
 ‘I did find your dog in the park.’

2.1.3 Summary

This section shows that despite their similarities, *SHI...DE* focus constructions are structurally different from (inverted) pseudo-clefts and emphatic sentences. *Shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions is neither a copula as in pseudo-clefts (similar to BE in English) or an emphatic marker as in emphatic sentences (similar to emphatic DO in English). In addition, the sentence-final *de* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions is not a nominalizer or modification marker as it is in pseudo-clefts. It is an optional sentence-final particle that carries the meaning of certainty which can generally be used in various types of sentences. These findings suggest that *SHI...DE* focus constructions are simple sentences with no embedded clauses. Thus, analyzing *SHI...DE* focus constructions as complex sentences is inaccurate.

In the next section, I will discuss the function of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. I am going to show that the special function of *SHI...DE* focus constructions results from the two special morphemes—*shi* and *de*—working independently to add meanings to regular sentences.

2.2 The Function of *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions

The *SHI...DE* focus construction is called a focus construction because it carries some focus-marking function which is contributed by the morpheme *shi*. It is generally accepted that *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions is a focus marker that marks its following focused element or constituent (Teng, 1979; Chan, 1990; Zhu, 1997; Yariv-Laor, 1999; Chen & Luo, 2005). In this section, I will first review some previous studies that claim *shi* is a focus marker, and discuss the role *shi* plays in *SHI...DE* focus constructions. Following the discussion of *shi*, I am going to investigate the contributions of the morpheme *de* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions, which has been understudied. The goal of this section is to show that that *SHI...DE* focus constructions have a dual function. They have a focus-marking function contributed by the insertion of the morpheme *shi*. In addition, with the addition of the morpheme *de*, the speaker's attitude towards the truth value of his or her assertion is being expressed.

2.2.1 *Shi* as a Focus Marker in *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions

The previous section has mentioned that *shi* in cleft sentences is neither a copula verb equivalent to the English BE nor an emphatic marker equivalent to the English emphatic DO. It is instead a focus marker used to emphasize a particular part of a sentence (Chiu-Ming & Li, 1994; Teng, 1979; Zhao, 1979). One of the earliest works on *shi* is found in a reference grammar of Mandarin Chinese by Li and Thompson (1981), who suggest that *shi* has various functions. *Shi* can be a linking verb, a marker of affirmation or a copula in presentative sentences. However, according to Li and Thompson, no matter what the function of *shi* is, it is always categorized as a copula verb. But as discussed in the previous section, *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions is not a copula verb.

According to Yip and Rimmington (2004), *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions is a morpheme that expresses confirmatory emphasis. It is placed immediately in front of the phrase

that is being emphasized. Hengeveld (1990) suggests a rule to account for the appearance of *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions, as shown in (43).

$$(43) \quad (x_n)_{\text{Foc}} \rightarrow shi(x_n) \quad (\text{Hengeveld, 1990, p. 307})$$

This rule suggests that *shi*, as a focus marker, is inserted immediately before the focused element. Chan (1990) particularly points out that *shi* only occurs before certain types of sentential elements, which include subject noun phrase, auxiliary verb, predicate verb phrase or noun phrase, and prepositional phrase, for the purpose of emphasizing.

Assuming the previous analyses that claim *shi* is a focus marker are correct, there are two problems that need to be solved. First, in the works that argue *shi* is a focus marker, there is no clear definition of the notion of focus. In the next section, I am going to show that there is more than one type of focus in the literature. This definition problem leads to the next question, that is, if *shi* is a focus marker, which type of focus is it marking? This question will be answered in section 2.2.3.

2.2.2 The Definition of Focus

It is generally agreed in the literature that *shi* has some focus-marking function. However, the definition of focus remains unclear in some literature. Several terms were being used, sometimes interchangeably—focus, new information, contrast, comment, emphasis, and assertion. In this section, I am going to provide clear definitions of focus and different types of focus based on Gundel's theory. In the next section, I will reinvestigate the function of the focus marker *shi* based on Gundel's definitions.

Gundel and Fretheim (2004) suggest that there are two types of focus—information focus and contrastive focus. Information focus is also known as semantic focus in Zhu (1997). It is “the new information in relation to the topic” (Gundel & Fretheim, 2004, p. 181). Information focus can be easily identified by question/answer pairs. When answering a WH-question, the phrase that replaces the WH-phrase is the information focus (Zhu, 1997). For example, in the

question/answer pair in (44), the phrase ‘my teacher’ in B is the information focus, which replaces the WH-word ‘who’ in the question in A.

- (44) A: *Ni kan-dao shui?*
you see-ASP who
‘Who did you see?’
- B: *Wo kan-dao wode laoshi.*
I see-ASP my teacher
‘I saw my teacher.’

It appears that information focus does not necessarily correlate with predicate (i.e. the whole verb phrase ‘saw my teacher’ in the above example). Gundel and Fretheim (2004) suggest that information focus correlates with what Chao (1968; in Gundel & Fretheim, 2004) calls logical predicate, which can be different from grammatical predicate that is generally defined as sentence minus subject.

The second type of focus, according to Gundel and Fretheim (2004), is contrastive focus. It refers to the entity, not any other entities, that the speaker wants the addressee to particularly pay attention to. This type of focus is called contrastive because it rules out other possible candidates or alternatives that can possibly fill its position (Chafe, 1976; Zhu, 1997). Zhu (1997) suggests that every semantic (information) focus is inherently contrastive because there always exist some entities that are alternatives to the information focus. However, it is the speaker’s decision whether to particularly draw the addressee’s attention to it by explicitly marking it as contrastive or not. In addition, Gundel and Fretheim suggest that information focus and contrastive focus are marked differently phonologically. However, this issue is out of the scope of this thesis and I will not provide further discussion about it.

Now, the question is what kind of focus *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions marks. Zhu (1997) claims that *shi* marks semantic (information) focus, which according to him is inherently contrastive. In addition, Teng (1979), Yen (1986), Paris (1998), Yariv-Laor (1999) and Chen and Luo (2005) suggest that *shi* is a contrastive focus marker or expresses contrast. In the next

section, I will justify these previous claims and show that *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions is marking contrastive focus under the definition of Gundel.

2.2.3 *Shi* as a Contrastive Focus Marker

In this section, I will show that *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions is a contrastive focus marker. As mentioned in the previous section, according to Gundel and Fretheim (2004), a contrastive focus is the element of a sentence which the speaker wants the addressee to pay attention to. It occurs in cases such as when a particular element is contrasted with some alternatives in the addressee's mind, when the addressee is expecting or believing in something different from the speaker, or when the speaker is planning to introduce a new topic (Gundel, 1999; Gundel & Fretheim, 2004; Yariv-Laor, 1999; Zhu, 1997). The following example shows that *shi* marks the contrastive focus of a sentence.

- (45) A: *Zhangsan mai-le na-liang che.*
 Zhangsan buy-ASP that-CL car
 'Zhangsan bought that car.'
- B₁: *Shi wo mai-le na-liang che de, (bu-shi ta).*
 SHI I buy-ASP that-CL car DE not-SHI him
 'It's me who bought that car, (not him).'
- B₂: *#Wo mai-le na-liang che, (bu-shi ta).*
 I buy-ASP that-CL car not-SHI him
 'I bought that car, (not him).'

In the above example, *wo* 'I' is clearly the contrastive focus. Speaker B is attempting to correct speaker A by telling him that the person who bought the car is in fact speaker B, not Zhangsan. The data show that it is more appropriate for speaker B to respond to A's utterance by using a *SHI...DE* focus construction (B₁) instead of a regular sentence (B₂). B₂ is marginally acceptable in this context and it is an infelicitous response to A without the contrastive focus *wo* 'I' marked by a heavy stress. This observation shows that *shi* marks the contrastive focus of a sentence. Furthermore, *shi* can be replaced by a heavy stress falling on the contrastive focus itself.

The examples in (46)-(47) are cases where there are two focus elements in a sentence.

- (46) A: *Zhangsan zai nali mai-le na-liang che?*
 Zhangsan at where buy-ASP that-CL car
 ‘Where did Zhangsan buy that car?’
- B₁: *Shi wo zai Wengehua mai-le na-liang che de.*
 SHI I at Vancouver buy-ASP that-CL car DE
 ‘It’s me who bought that car in Vancouver.’
- B₂: *#Wo shi zai Wengehua mai-le na-liang che de.*
 I SHI at Vancouver buy-ASP that-CL car DE
 ‘It’s in Vancouver where I bought that car.’
- B₃: *#Wo zai Wengehua mai-le na-liang che de.*
 I at Vancouver buy-ASP that-CL car DE
 ‘I bought that car in Vancouver.’
- B₄: **Shi wo shi zai Wengehua mai-le na-liang che de.*
 SHI I SHI at Vancouver buy-ASP that-CL car DE
 ‘It’s me it’s in Vancouver where I bought that car.’
- (47) A: *Shui zai Doulundou mai-le na-liang che?*
 who at Toronto buy-ASP that-CL car
 ‘Who bought that car in Toronto?’
- B₁: *Shi Zhangsan zai Wengehua mai-le na-liang che de.*
 SHI Zhangsan at Vancouver buy-ASP that-CL car DE
 ‘It’s Zhangsan who bought that car in Vancouver.’
- B₂: *#Zhangsan shi zai Wengehua mai-le na-liang che de.*
 Zhangsan SHI at Vancouver buy-ASP that-CL car DE
 ‘It’s in Vancouver where Zhangsan bought that car.’
- B₃: *#Zhangsan zai Wengehua mai-le na-liang che de.*
 Zhangsan at Vancouver buy-ASP that-CL car DE
 ‘Zhangsan bought that car in Vancouver.’
- B₄: **Shi Zhangsan shi zai Wengehua mai-le na-liang che de.*
 SHI Zhangsan SHI at Vancouver buy-ASP that-CL car DE
 ‘It’s Zhangsan it’s in Vancouver where he bought that car.’

In the above examples, there are two focused elements in the B sentences. In (46), there is a contrastive focus *wo* ‘I’ and an information focus *zai Wengehua* ‘in Vancouver’, which is inherently contrastive according to Zhu (1997). In (47), the information focus is the subject ‘Zhangsan’ and the contrastive focus is the adjunct ‘in Vancouver’. Thus, in both cases, there are two candidates that can be marked by *shi*. The data show that in the cases where two foci are found in a sentence, it is the most appropriate to have the first focus marked by *shi*, as shown in

B₁ in (46) and (47). In both cases, B₂ is not acceptable even if the first focused element is appropriately stressed. B₃, where *shi* is absent, is not an appropriate answer to A even though it can be slightly improved by putting a heavy stress on both focused elements. B₄, with both information foci marked by *shi*, is ungrammatical.

To conclude, *shi* is a contrastive focus marker that appears immediately before the contrastive focus. In addition, *shi* can be replaced by stressing the contrastive focus itself. The above data also show that only one *shi* is allowed in a sentence in case the sentence contains two focused elements and it is always the first focus that gets marked.

2.2.4 The Scope of *Shi*

In the previous sections, in order to simplify the discussion, it has been assumed that the *SHI...DE* focus construction in (1) has only one interpretation. However, multiple interpretations of the *SHI...DE* focus construction are actually possible. The sentence in (1), when interpreted as a *SHI...DE* focus construction, can have the following possible meanings.

- (48) *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 (i) ‘It was in the park that I found your dog.’ [Focus reading]
 (ii) ‘It was find your dog in the park that I did.’ [Focus reading]

(48) has two possible focus interpretations. The contrastive focus can either be the adjunct prepositional phrase ‘in the park’ or the whole verb phrase ‘find your dog in the park’. The second interpretation is less obvious. However, this interpretation fits in some contexts, such as the example below.

- (49) A: *Zuotian xiawu ni zai jia kan shu ma?*
 yesterday afternoon you at home read book Q
 ‘Were you reading a book at home yesterday afternoon?’
 B: *Zuotian xiawu wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao nide gou de.*
 yesterday afternoon I SHI at park-in find your dog DE
 ‘It was finding your dog in the park that I did yesterday afternoon.’

The ambiguity in (48) can be explained by the scope of *shi*. With interpretation (i), *shi* is c-commanding the prepositional phrase. With interpretation (ii), *shi* is c-commanding the whole verb phrase. The basic structure of each interpretation is shown in (50) below. It is assumed that *shi* is the head of a *shi* phrase (*shiP*) that contains the contrastive focus. (*ShiP* would possibly be identified as a focus phrase (FocP) in formal syntactic analysis (in Breul, 2004; Chen & Luo, 2005, for examples). Alternatively, Hoh and Chiang (1989) suggest that *shi* is the head of IP. However, I will not provide further syntactic discussion here.)

- (50) (i) Adjunct as contrastive focus
Wo _{VP}[_{shiP}[*shi* _{PP}[*zai* *gongyuan-li*]] *zhao-dao* *nide* *gou* *de*].
- (ii) Verb phrase as contrastive focus
Wo _{shiP}[*shi* _{VP}[_{PP}[*zai* *gongyuan-li*] *zhao-dao* *nide* *gou* *de*]].

Sentences with *shi* as a contrastive focus marker can have multiple meanings, which depend on the constituents that go under its scope. Structural ambiguity in *SHI...DE* focus constructions is a common phenomenon. Other examples can be found in section 2.3.

2.2.5 The Role of *De* in *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions

Lee (2005) suggests that *de* is a sentence-final particle that expresses the meaning of certainty. “*De* is assumed to express the speaker’s assertive attitude toward the belief that the action/event of the presupposition (had) happened, has happened, is happening, or even is bound to happen” (Lee, 2005, p. 149). As already shown in examples (32) and (33), using a sentence with *de* shows that the speaker is more certain about the utterance than without *de*.

According to Lee (2005), the use of *de* in a *SHI...DE* focus construction is only determined by the speaker’s attitude towards the presupposition part of the sentence. Moreover, she suggests that the presupposition of the sentence is located immediately before *de*. However, what Lee suggests is not completely correct. The presupposition part of a *SHI...DE* focus construction does not necessarily include only the elements immediately before *de*, for example, sentence (1), repeated as (51) below.

(51) *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 'It was in the park that I found your dog.' [Focus reading]

(52) $\exists_x\{Wo\ zai\ x\ zhao-dao\ nide\ gou\}$
 $\exists_x\{I\ found\ your\ dog\ in\ x\}$
 x = the park

(51) presupposes (52). This presupposition survives the negation, interrogation and conditional tests in (18). Clearly, the presupposition includes the sentence-initial subject 'I'. Therefore, as opposed to Lee's (2005) claim, the presupposition of a *SHI...DE* focus construction is not limited to the part immediately before *de*. The presupposition is instead the whole sentence minus the contrastive focus under the scope of *shi*.

According to Lee (2005), *de* expresses how certain the speaker is about the occurrence of the presupposition (i.e. sentence minus the contrastive focus). She claims that *de* cannot be used when the speaker is not certain about the events. For example, according to Lee, (53) is problematic because the event has not occurred yet at the time of utterance. Thus, the speaker cannot be certain about this yet-to-happen event and therefore *de* cannot be used.

(53) *?Zhangsan shi mingtian hui huilai de.*
 Zhangsan SHI tomorrow will come-back DE
 'It is tomorrow that Zhangsan will come back.'
 (Lee, 2005, p. 150)

While Lee (2005) claims that *de* does not occur with uncertain or yet-to-happen events such as (53), in fact there are contexts where the sentence is acceptable, as shown in (54).

(54) A: *Zhangsan huotian hui huilai ma?*
 Zhangsan the-day-after will come-back Q
 'Is it the case that Zhangsan will come back on the day after?'
 B: *Zhangsan shi mingtian hui huilai de.*
 Zhangsan SHI tomorrow will come-back DE
 'It is tomorrow that Zhangsan will come back.'

In addition, it is not plausible to simply say *de* reflects the speaker's certainty towards the presupposition of the sentence. When the speaker utters a sentence, he or she must have assumed the presupposition to be correct and known to the addressee. For example, when uttering the

sentence in (53), the speaker must believe that Zhangsan will come back at some time. (The presupposition of (53) is shown in (55).) Otherwise, there is no reason for the speaker to utter the sentence and provide the piece of information (i.e. tomorrow) the addressee is likely to be seeking.

- (55) $\exists_t \{Zhangsan\ t\ hui\ huilai\}$
 $\exists_t \{Zhangsan\ will\ come\ back\ at\ t\}$
 $t = \text{tomorrow}$

It is more reasonable to propose that when deciding to use *de* in a sentence or not, the speaker is evaluating his or her attitude towards the truth value of the whole proposition or the whole sentence, instead of purely the presupposition as suggested by Lee (2005). For example, *de* is used in (53) when the speaker is very certain that the proposition ‘Zhangsan will come back tomorrow’ is true.

A possible counterargument against the claim that *de* expresses the speaker’s certain attitude towards the whole proposition is shown in (56), where *de* seems to co-occur with uncertainty.

- (56) *Zhangsan keneng shi mingtian hui huilai de.*
 Zhangsan possibly SHI tomorrow will come-back DE
 ‘It may be tomorrow that Zhangsan will come back.’

(56) shows that *de* is compatible with epistemic modals that expresses uncertainty. In this example, the speaker is not certain whether Zhangsan will come back tomorrow or not but *de* still can be used. Therefore, it seems that *de* is co-occurring with uncertainty here. However, note that *de* is used in (56) because the speaker is certain about the proposition he or she utters, not the likelihood of occurrence of the event. In other words, what the speaker is not certain about here is the actual situation which is yet to occur, that is, that Zhangsan will come back tomorrow. In (56), what the speaker is actually trying to express is ‘It is true that (or I am certain that) Zhangsan may come back tomorrow, but I am not sure whether he will actually come back or not. (We will know tomorrow.)’.

The examples below provide another piece of evidence showing that *de* expresses speaker's certainty towards the whole proposition. They show that it is not possible to have *de* co-occurring with a situation where the speaker is not sure about the truth value of a proposition.

(57) *Wo xiangxin ta shi bu-hui lai de.*
 I believe he SHI not-will come DE
 'It is true that I believe he will not come.'
 'I believe (it is true that) he will not come.'

(58) *Wo huaiyi ta shi bu-hui lai de.*
 I doubt he SHI not-will come DE
 'It is true that I doubt he will not come.'
 *'I doubt (it is true that) he will not come.'

(57) and (58) are both complex sentences with embedded clauses. In (57), there are two possible interpretations. *De* can either express the speaker certainty towards the whole sentence, or just the embedded clause. However, in (58), the only possible interpretation is that *de* expresses the speaker's attitude towards the whole sentence. *De* cannot be used to express the speaker's attitude towards the embedded clause. The second interpretation is not possible because in (58), the speaker doubts the truth value of proposition of the embedded clause. *De*, which expresses certainty, is incompatible with the doubt.

Again, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the use of *de* is not limited to *SHI...DE* focus constructions and it is an optional particle. Its presence or absence does not affect the truth conditions of the sentence. Its function is to express the speaker's attitude towards the proposition. It is used when the speaker wants to emphasize what he or she asserts is true.

2.2.6 Summary

This section discussed the function of *SHI...DE* focus constructions by investigating the contributions from the two morphemes—*shi* and *de*. In sum, *SHI...DE* focus constructions express two functions. First, they overtly mark the contrastive focus. *Shi* is a contrastive focus marker that is inserted immediately before the focused element. In addition, *shi* can take various scopes and therefore some *SHI...DE* focus constructions can have multiple interpretations. The

second function *SHI...DE* focus constructions exhibit is to express the speaker's certainty. The use of *de* indicates that the speaker is emphasizing that he or she strongly believes the proposition is true.

2.3 Variations of *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions

The *SHI...DE* focus constructions discussed in the earlier part of this chapter are restricted to one form, where *shi* appears after the subject and before the adjunct. There are in fact many different possible variations of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. This section will be divided into two sections. The first section looks at the variations of *SHI...DE* focus constructions from a syntactic point of view. The second section looks at this phenomenon from a discourse or functional point of view. I argue that these variations are caused by various factors—some are syntactic factors and some are pragmatic factors. These factors will be discussed in detail in later chapters.

2.3.1 From a Syntactic Point of View

The following examples (some are based on Teng, 1979, pp. 102-103) show the variations of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. Most of the following examples have more than one possible interpretation, as shown in the translations. For simplicity reasons, the certainty meaning expressed by *de* ('it is true that...') is not shown in the translation.

- (59) a. *Shi wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 SHI I at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 'It was me who found your dog in the park.' [Subject focused]
 'It is the case that I found your dog in the park.' [Sentence focused]
- b. *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 'It was in the park that I found your dog.' [Locative adjunct focused]
 'It was find your dog in the park that I did.' [VP focused]
- c. *Wo shi zai zuotian zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at yesterday find-ASP your dog DE
 'It was yesterday that I found your dog.' [Temporal adjunct focused]
 'It was find your dog yesterday that I did.' [VP focused]

- d. *Wo shi yong wangyuanjing zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI use binocular find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was with binoculars that I found your dog.’ [Instrumental adj. focused]
 ‘It was find your dog with binoculars that I did.’ [VP focused]
- e. *Wo zai gongyuan-li shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I at park-in SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was find your dog that I did in the park.’ [VP focused]
 ‘It was find that I did to your dog in the park.’ [Verb focused]
- f. **Wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao shi nide gou de.*
 I at park-in find-ASP SHI your dog DE
 ‘It was your dog that I found in the park.’ [Direct object focused]
- g. **Wo gei-le shi ta yi-ben shu de.*
 I give-ASP SHI him one-CL book DE
 ‘It was (to) him I gave a book.’ [Indirect object focused]

In the above examples, all of the sentences are similar to each other except that the location of *shi* is different. The above variations of *SHI...DE* focus constructions can be explained by the location of the contrastive focus. In each sentence, the emphasis, or the focus, is on a different element. As a contrastive focus marker, *shi* always occurs immediately before the focused element. In other words, it is the location of the focused element that determines the location of *shi* and the forms of the above *SHI...DE* focus constructions. However, there are two exceptions. Direct and indirect objects, as shown in (59f) and (59g) respectively, when focused, do not allow *shi* to occur immediately before them. Thus, some factors other than the location of focus restrict the location of *shi*.

Luo (1992) attempts to explain the fact that *shi* cannot be placed before and mark a focused direct or indirect object by imposing a syntactic rule. According to Luo, there is a linear constraint, as shown in (60), that restricts the occurrence of *shi* in the post-verbal position.

- (60) Linear constraint:
 *X MAIN VERB *shi* Y (Luo, 1992, p. 58)

Although this linear constraint correctly accounts for what has been observed from the data in (59f-g), Luo provides no explanation for this rule. Thus, what restricts the occurrence of

shi before direct and indirect objects remains unknown. This question will be answered in later chapters.

2.3.2 From a Discourse Point of View

This section looks at the variations of *SHI...DE* focus constructions from a discourse, or functional, point of view. As mentioned earlier, Zhu (1997) claims that *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions separates topic and comment (=focus, according to Zhu), or given and new information. The following example shows that this analysis appears to be correct.

- (61) A: *Zuotian ni lai-guo wode jia ma?*
 yesterday you come-ASP my home Q
 ‘Did you come to my home yesterday?’
- B: *Zuotian wo shi qu-le daxue de.*
 yesterday I SHI go-ASP university DE
 ‘It’s going to the university that I did yesterday.’

In B’s response in (61), both ‘yesterday’ and ‘I’ (=speaker B) are given information or topics. The verb phrase ‘going to the university’ is new information or the contrastive focus. Here, *shi* is clearly dividing given and new information.

However, there are examples of *SHI...DE* focus construction where *shi* does not seem to behave as a true separator between given and new information. First, there is a type of *SHI...DE* focus construction in which *shi* occurs sentence-initially. In B’s response in (62) below, all post-*shi* elements are new information and there is no given information before *shi*. Zhu (1997) calls this type of sentences all-comment sentences and he treats them as exceptional cases, where no overt sentence-initial topic is present. In (63), given information is found sentence-finally, after *shi* and the new information. In these cases, there is nothing that goes before *shi* and it is not clear whether *shi* is truly a separator of given and new information as suggested by Zhu.

- (62) A: *Fasheng-le shenme shi?*
 happen-ASP what incident
 ‘What happens?’

- B: *Shi women dajia le.*
 SHI we fight ASP
 ‘It’s that we have fought.’
- (63) A: *Shui da-le ta yi-dun?*
 who beat-ASP him one-CL
 ‘Who beat him?’
- B: *Shi wo da-le ta yi-dun de.*
 SHI I beat-ASP him one-CL DE
 ‘It’s me who beat him.’

Another type of *SHI...DE* focus constructions has a more complicated information structure. The elements before *shi* are given information, and the elements that follow *shi* include both given and new information. The following is an example.

- (64) A: *Ni zai nali zhao-dao wode gou?*
 you at where find-ASP my dog
 ‘Where did you find my dog?’
- B: *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was in the park where I found your dog.’

In (64), B’s answer to A is an adjunct focused *SHI...DE* focus construction. The contrastive focus is clearly the adjunct ‘in the park’. ‘I’ (=speaker B) appearing before *shi* and ‘found your dog’, the [verb + complement], appearing after *shi* are both given information which have been mentioned in A’s question. In this example, *shi* does not function as a strict separator between given and new information. Given information is found both before and after *shi*.

At this point, when looking at *SHI...DE* focus constructions from a discourse or functional point of view, several types of *SHI...DE* focus constructions have been identified. The first type is the “standard version”, where *shi* separates given and new information as suggested by Zhu (1997), with the structure shown in (65a). There is also a type where no given information is present, as shown in (65b). Moreover, some *SHI...DE* focus constructions have given information found after *shi* and contrastive focus, as shown in (65c). Finally, there is a mixed type where given information is found both before and after *shi*, as shown in (65d).

- (65)
- a. given information - *shi* - new information - *de*
 - b. *shi* - new information - *de*
 - c. *shi* - new information - given information - *de*
 - d. given information - *shi* - new information - given information - *de*

To sum up, these four types of *SHI...DE* focus constructions have a few things in common. First, the new information, or the contrastive focus, is always found immediately after *shi*. This is a trivial finding because as a contrastive focus marker, *shi* must always precede the contrastive focus according to the *shi* insertion rule by Hengeveld (1990). Another generalization from the above data is that in a *SHI...DE* focus construction, given information can only be found in two positions: the sentence-initial position (before *shi*) or the sentence-final position (after the contrastive focus, or the *shi*P). The data suggest that given information can appear in both, either one, or neither one, of these two positions.

Clearly, Zhu's (1997) analysis of *shi* as a separator between topic and focus does not adequately reflect what has been observed from the data. The patterns in (65) show that *shi* does not strictly separate topic and focus. In the following chapters, I am going to explain these variations by arguing that other factors are participating in shaping the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions.

One of the goals of this study is to provide answers to the questions about the variations of *SHI...DE* focus constructions discussed above. The first question is related to the syntactic rule—why focused direct and indirect objects cannot be marked by *shi*. The second question is related to information structure—why some given information does not appear sentence-initially if *shi* is truly a separator between topic and focus. I assume that, other than the location of contrastive focus that determines where *shi* should appear in a *SHI...DE* focus construction, the form of a *SHI...DE* focus construction is shaped by some other factors. Each of them will be discussed in detail in later chapters.

The expletive analysis does not treat the cleft clause as a relative clause. Instead, the “relative pronoun” in the cleft clause, as well as the cleft pronoun and the copula, are expletive elements. Thus, a cleft sentence such as (67b) is formed by inserting the expletive “it”, copula “be”, and relative pronoun “who” to the sentence in (67a).

- (67) a. Clinton won.
 b. [It was] CLINTON [who] won.
 cleft pronoun + copula + clefted constituent + cleft clause
 (Hedberg, 2000, p. 909)

Hedberg (2000) suggests a new analysis of English cleft sentences. She follows the extraposition analysis and suggests that English clefts contain a relative clause and no expletive item. She claims that the relative clause is extraposed and is adjoined to the clefted constituent. An important finding of Hedberg is the semantic relationship between the cleft pronoun and the cleft clause. She suggests that the relationship between the cleft pronoun and the cleft clause is like that between the determiner and the NP in a DP. The cleft pronoun provides information about the context (such as givenness of the referent) and the cleft clause gives the descriptive component.

- (68) a. It was CLINTON who won.
 b. cleft pronoun + copula + clefted constituent + cleft clause
 (Hedberg, 2000, p. 891)

Both the extraposition analysis and Hedberg’s (2000) updated version claim that English cleft sentences contain a relative clause (i.e. the cleft clause). This is not the case in Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions. In earlier discussion, I have already shown that *shi* is not a copula in *SHI...DE* focus constructions. Unlike a pseudo-cleft, the relation between the elements before and after *shi* is not equational. Moreover, the elements following *shi* do not form a relative clause. Even though it has been believed that *SHI...DE* focus constructions contain a relative clause because the sentence-final *de* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions has been analyzed as a modification marker, I have shown that *de* is not a modification marker (nor a nominalizer), but an optional marker of certainty which can be absent in most cases.

Hedberg's (1999) study of Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions, which attempts to analyze *SHI...DE* focus constructions as bi-clausal or complex sentences similar to English clefts, suggests that the presupposed elements of a *SHI...DE* focus construction (i.e. the pre-*shi* elements and the post-focus elements) form a clause. The pre-*shi* element is topicalized and as a result occurs in the sentence-initial position. According to this view, the structure of Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions are complex sentences with an embedded clause, as shown in the following example.

- (69) *Wo_i shi zai gongyuan-li [t_i zhao-dao nide gou de].*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 'It was in the park that I found your dog.'

As mentioned previously, the facts that *shi* is not a copula and *de* is not a modification marker suggest that the bi-clausal approach to *SHI...DE* focus constructions is inaccurate. At least they show that there is no embedded relative clause in *SHI...DE* focus constructions. There is an additional piece of evidence that shows that Hedberg's (1999) approach to *SHI...DE* focus constructions is problematic, as shown in (70), a VP focused *SHI...DE* focus construction. In (70), it is unclear what the presupposition clause is. There is no post-focus element in the sentence and if an embedded clause truly exists, that embedded clause only consists of the subject 'I' and the adjunct 'in the park' and it lacks a verbal predicate.

- (70) *Wo zai gongyuan-li shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I at park-in SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 'It was find your dog that I did in the park.'

English clefts under the expletive analysis share some similarities with *SHI...DE* focus constructions. Under this analysis, both English clefts and *SHI...DE* focus constructions are regular sentences plus the insertion of morphemes or words. In the case of English clefts, they are formed by adding the expletive items ("it", the copula and the relative pronoun). For *SHI...DE* focus constructions, they are formed by the insertion of the contrastive focus marker *shi*. In both cases, the "cleft" sentences are analyzed as simple sentences. However, even if the expletive analysis of English cleft is correct, English clefts and Chinese *SHI...DE* focus

constructions are still quite different from each other. One of the differences is that English cleft sentences always have the expletive “it” as the grammatical subject but Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions lack the expletive subject. This difference is obvious because there are no expletive elements in Chinese. Thus, the inserted elements (i.e. *shi* and *de*), unlike those in English clefts, have meanings and hence they are not expletives.

2.4.2 Functional Similarities and Differences

Despite their syntactic differences, Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions and English cleft sentences have similar functions. First, in both structures, an element is being singled out. In Chinese, it is the constituent under the scope of *shi*. In English, it is the clefted constituent which appears after the copula and before the cleft clause. Second, both Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions and English cleft sentences are associated with existential and exhaustive conditions. These conditions associated with English clefts are well known (Hedberg, 2000). In Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions, the existential condition is shown by the tests in section 2.1.1. The exhaustive condition is shown below.

- (71) #*Shi* *Zhangsan* *zhao-dao* *nide* *gou* *de*,
 SHI Zhangsan find-ASP your dog DE
- wo* *ye* *zhao-dao*.
 I also find-ASP

#‘It’s Zhangsan who found your dog. I also did.’

This example shows that Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions, similar to English clefts, imply that the singled-out element is the only element that takes part in the action. In (71), Zhangsan is the only person who found the dog. Thus, it is awkward to add the clause “I also did”. Similar observation has also been made by Chen and Luo (2005).

Hedberg (1990) classifies English cleft sentences into two types—topic-clause clefts and comment-clause clefts. These two types of clefts can be identified by the context and by the pitch accent. Topic-clause clefts have the cleft clause as the topic and the clefted constituent as the

contrastive focus, it is impossible to have the structure in (75), where the focused element precedes its marker. The possible structure would be (76), where the comment is fronted but still marked by *shi* and the topic is “left behind”.

(75) **COMMENT** **TOPIC**
 *shi* *de*

(76) **COMMENT** **TOPIC**
shi *de*

As mentioned in the previous section, Zhu (1997) does not discuss all possible forms of Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions. *SHI...DE* focus constructions do not only have the forms in (74) and (76), the following (shown in (77)) are all of the possible forms of *SHI...DE* sentences and they will be re-visited in the following chapters. Note that in all cases, *shi* always precedes the contrastive focus and therefore the structure in (75) is never possible.

- (77) a. given information - *shi* - new information - *de* (= (74))
 b. *shi* - new information - *de*
 c. *shi* - new information - given information - *de* (= (76))
 d. given information - *shi* - new information - given information - *de*

In this above discussion, I have shown that despite the fact that Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions and English cleft sentences are very similar in terms of meaning and function, they do not correspond to each other. Looking from both the syntactic and functional points of view, there are some crucial differences between these two types of construction. Calling Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions “Chinese clefts” is a misconception caused by translation. The name “Chinese clefts” falsely relates *SHI...DE* focus constructions to English cleft sentences and does not reflect the unique characteristics of *SHI...DE* focus constructions.

2.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, several issues have been discussed. First, there is a discussion of the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. They are distinguished from the other two look-alike structures,

pseudo-clefts and emphatic sentences. Then, I discuss the optional particle *de* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions and show that it is not a nominalizer or modification marker as it is in pseudo-clefts. The second section of the chapter deals with the functions of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. Its main function of marking contrastive focus is contributed by the contrastive focus marker *shi* and *de* is a sentence-final particle that expresses certainty. Section 3 of this chapter presents the variations of *SHI...DE* focus constructions and shows some peculiar cases. For examples, direct and indirect object focused *SHI...DE* focus constructions do not exist and *shi* does not function as a strict separator between topic and comment as claimed by Zhu (1997). These cases will be revisited in the next two chapters with possible explanations. The last section of this chapter is a comparison between Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions and English cleft sentences. These two types of sentences have been thought to be related because of their similarities in meaning. However, the above discussion has shown that they are syntactically distinctive from each other.

3 TOPICAL THEME CONDITIONS

The goal of this chapter is to compile a list of restrictions on the sentence-initial elements in Chinese. I begin with a section defining what sentence-initial elements refer to. In the literature, there are different approaches to the sentence-initial elements. They are sometimes known as topics or syntactic topics (Chafe, 1976; Gundel, 1988; Gundel & Fretheim, 2004; Shi, 2000; Xu & Langendoen, 1985) and sometimes known as topical Themes (Downing, 1992; Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The first section of this chapter discusses and compares four different approaches to the sentence-initial elements. In the next section, I focus on the sentence-initial elements in Chinese, a topic-prominent language. I am going to show that Downing's modification of Halliday's approach to topical Themes best describes the sentence-initial elements in Chinese. In the last section, various restrictions on the sentence-initial elements, or what is going to be called topical Theme conditions, in Chinese, will be discussed.

3.1 Sentence-Initial Elements

There are different types of sentence-initial elements. In English, for example, the sentence-initial elements can be classified into three types. (1)-(3) are the examples of each type.

- (1)
 - a. John likes Mary.
 - b. Peter was hit by the car.
 - c. The train arrives.

- (2)
 - a. Mary, she never talks to me.
 - b. In the afternoon, he came to my place.
 - c. Being unable to find a job, John decided to go back to study.

- (3)
 - a. It rains.
 - b. There comes the train.
 - c. It is beans that I hate.

As this point, I define sentence-initial elements as sentence minus predicate. Formal definitions of these elements will be discussed later in this section. In the above examples, the sentences in (1) have the subject as the only sentence-initial element. In (2), in addition to the

subject, some adjunct element appears sentence-initially in each sentence and thus there are more than one sentence-initial elements. In the sentences in (3), the sentence-initial elements are different from those in (1) and (2). Although they appear sentence-initially and fill the subject slots, they do not appear to have referents. In this section, I will review some previous works on various types of sentence-initial elements and attempt to reconcile different approaches that exist in the literature.

3.1.1 Chafe's Approach

Chafe (1976) focuses on studying the sentence-initial elements (which he calls topics) of sentences such as those in (2). However, he only considers the sentence-initial adjunct-like constituents in (2), such as "Mary" in (2a), as topics. As for the subjects, such as "she" in (2a), he does not consider them sentence-initial elements or topics.

According to Chafe (1976), topic refers to the preposed element in structures that involve topicalization, as shown in (2a) and in (4). In (4a-b), the direct object of the sentences ('the play') is placed in the sentence-initial position and it leaves a gap or a resumptive pronoun in its original position. In addition to having a gap or a pronoun, a full NP can also fill the position, as shown in (c). Note that Chafe only considers NP topics in his work. It is unclear what he would do with non-NP sentence-initial elements such as those in (2b-c) because no such examples are provided in his work.

- (4) a. **TOPIC**
The play, John saw ___ yesterday.
- b. **TOPIC**
As for the play, John saw it yesterday. (Chafe, 1976, p. 49)
- c. **TOPIC**
The play, John saw the play yesterday.

The above examples show what Chafe (1976) calls English-style topics. Xu and Langendoen (1985) provide the following representation for this type of topic (shown in (5)). X

refers to the topicalized (or preposed) element and Y refers to the “copy” of X which is co-indexed with X (i.e. X=Y).

- (5) English-style topic:
 [s' X [s ...Y...]], where Y is an empty NP, pronoun, or full NP co-indexed with X, and Y is not contained in a larger constituent other than VP.
 (Xu & Langendoen, 1985, p. 3)

Another type of topic suggested by Chafe (1976) is the Chinese-style topic. Its representation is shown in (6). The main difference between a Chinese-style topic and an English-style topic is the relationship between X and Y (i.e. the topicalized element and its “copy”). Unlike English-style topics, a Chinese-style topic X is not co-indexed with Y but X and Y are somewhat related. Shi (2000) calls this kind of topic dangling topic. The only requirement of X is a mysterious “aboutness”. That is, the comment (=sentence minus X according to Shi (2000)) or part of the comment must be saying something about X. However, the definition of “saying something about” remains unclear. Some of the examples of dangling topic or Chinese-style topic are shown in (7).

- (6) Chinese-style topic:
 [s' X [s ...Y...]], where X is a major category and Y, possibly empty, is related to X.
 (Xu & Langendoen, 1985, p. 20)

- (7) a. *Nei-xie shumu shu-shen da.*
 those-CL tree tree-trunk big
 ‘Those trees, the tree trucks are big.’
- b. *Nei-ge ren yang ming George Zhang.*
 that-CL person foreign name George Zhang
 ‘That person, his foreign name is George Zhang.’
 (Chafe, 1976, p. 50)
- c. *Na-chang huo xiaofang-dui lai-de-kuai.*
 that-CL fire fire-brigade come-DE-fast
 ‘At the time of that fire, the fire brigade came quickly.’
 (Shi, 2000, p. 393)
- d. *Er-lou, yinyue sheng hao chao.*
 2nd-floor music sound very loud
 ‘As for the second floor, the music is too loud.’
 ‘The music on the second floor is too loud.’ (literal meaning)
 (Zhu, 1997, p. 52)

Chafe (1976) claims that sentences with Chinese-style topics are often mistakenly translated. One of the examples is shown in (7d). According to Chafe, (7d) should not be translated as ‘as for the second floor...’ A better translation would be ‘on the second floor, the music is too loud.’ or simply ‘the second floor, the music is too loud.’. He suggests that the ‘as for...’ translation adds a contrastive meaning to the sentence-initial element, which is not the case in sentences such as (7d).

Chafe (1976) claims that the Chinese-style topics are not what the sentences are about. In examples (7a-b), Chafe suggests that what the sentences are truly talking about are the subjects (i.e. ‘the tree trunks’ and ‘his foreign name’), not the topicalized elements (i.e. ‘those trees’ and ‘that person’). This claim is perhaps more explicit in examples (7c-d). It is clear that what (7c-d) talk about are not the topicalized elements ‘the fire’ and ‘2nd floor’, but the subjects ‘the fire brigade’ and ‘the music’. The initial NPs (=topics) in these sentences provide background information for the sentence, such as the person, thing, time or location involved. Chafe suggests that the function of these Chinese-style topics is to “set a spatial, temporal, or individual framework within which the main predication holds” (Chafe, 1976, p. 50). This claim is reflected in the translation of (7c-d) where the topics ‘that fire’ and ‘2nd floor’ are preferably translated as temporal and spatial adjuncts respectively. Their function is to provide the background information for the sentences, but they are not what the sentences are about.

As for the English-style topics, Chafe does not say explicitly whether English-style topics are what the sentences are about or not. He only claims that they are dislocated elements that are preposed for some discourse reasons, possibly related to contrastiveness or givenness. In addition, he also points out that when the sentence-initial elements are preposed for the purposes of contrasting, they should not be called topics because they behave differently from the “real topics”. One of the examples of contrastive topics is shown below. “John” in (8B) is a contrastive topic. Although it appears sentence-initially, it is not a real topic because according to Chafe, real topics are not characterized by contrastiveness.

- (8) A: Who saw what?
B: John, he saw a movie.

A key difference between Chinese-style topics and English-style topics is shown by the examples in (4) and (7) provided by Chafe (1976). According to these examples, English-style topics are participants of the sentences which appear sentence-initially by fronting or topicalization. For example, in (4a), the topic is the direct object of the sentence. Chinese-style topics are not participants of the sentences. The role of this type of topic is to provide background information of the sentences, as discussed earlier.

3.1.2 Gundel's Approach

Similar to Chafe (1976), Gundel (1985, 1988) only considers the sentence-initial elements (exclude subjects) in (2) as topics, in particular, syntactic topics. She suggests that topic can be viewed from two different angles. It can be defined from a syntactic point of view and from a pragmatic point of view. This results in a distinction between syntactic topic and pragmatic topic, each defined as follows.

- (9) Syntactic Topic:
A constituent, C, is the syntactic topic of some sentence, S, iff C is immediately dominated by S and C is adjoined to the left or right of some sentence S' which is also immediately dominated by S.
- (10) Pragmatic Topic:
An entity, E, is the pragmatic topic of a sentence, S, iff S is intended to increase the addressee's knowledge about, request information about, or otherwise get the addressee to act with respect to E.

(Gundel, 1985, p. 86)

Gundel (1985) defines syntactic topic as the constituent adjoining to S'. This definition of syntactic topic is similar to Chafe's (1976) definition of (Chinese- and English-style) topic, where topic is defined as the preposed element in topicalization structures. However, Gundel's definition of syntactic topic also includes the dislocated constituents in right dislocation structures while Chafe only considers the left-dislocated constituents as topics. According to Gundel's

definition of syntactic topic, “Mary” in (2a) is a syntactic topic of the sentence. However, it is unclear whether the sentence-initial elements in (2b-c) would be considered as syntactic topics as well. Although Gundel does not explicitly say that only NPs (or other nominal elements) can be syntactic topics in her definition in (9) and it appears that non-NPs can be considered as syntactic topics according to that definition, she only provides NP topic examples in her works. More importantly, while Gundel claims that all syntactic topics must also be pragmatic topics, the definition in (10) restricts pragmatic topics to entities. Thus, whether non-nominal sentence-initial elements, which do not refer to entities, would be treated as syntactic topics by Gundel remains unclear.

According to Gundel (1985), pragmatic topic is defined as what the sentence is about. It is contrasted with comment in topic-comment structure. (Topic refers to what the sentence is about and comment refers to what is predicated about the topic (Gundel & Fretheim, 2004)). A formal definition of comment is shown in (11). Comment is the non-topical part of a sentence (=sentence minus pragmatic topic) and is the piece of information that fills the information gap.

- (11) Comment Definition:
 A predication, P, is the comment of a sentence, S, iff, in using S the speaker intends P to be assessed relative to the topic of S.
(Gundel, 1988, p. 210)

The pragmatic notions of topic and comment, under the above definitions, are independent of syntactic structures (Gundel & Fretheim, 2004). The following examples show that there is no real restriction on where the pragmatic topics and comments appear. The questions in (12) and (13) can be answered by different types of sentences. In all cases, the answers (i.e. the foci) are always marked by the primary stress. In (12), the topic is “Fred” and the focus is “the beans”. In (13), “the beans” is the topic and “Fred” is the focus. However, when comparing B₁ to B₃ in (12) and (13), the sentences are identical. The only way to tell what the topic and the comment are is by the context or by the position of the primary stress. In B₁, the subject can be either topic and comment. In both B₂, the topicalized elements (which appear to

be syntactic topics) can be either topic or comment. In B₃, the cleft constituent can also be topic or comment (see Hedberg (1990, 2000)). Thus, the positions in a sentence where the pragmatic topic and comment appear are not restricted. In other words, according to Gundel (1985) and Gundel and Fretheim (2000), there are no “reserved” positions for pragmatic topic and comment in a sentence.

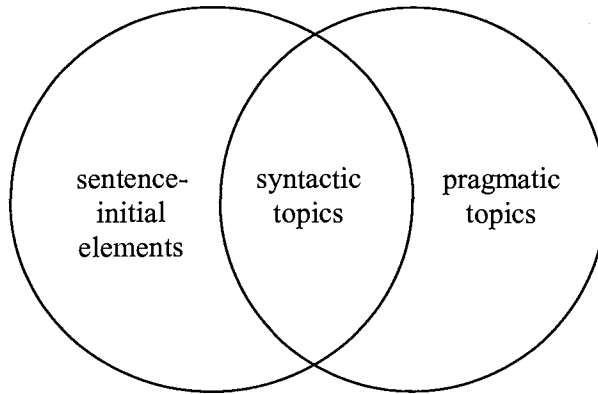
- (12) A: What did Fred eat?
B₁: Fred ate the BEANS.
B₂: The BEANS, Fred ate.
B₃: It was the BEANS that Fred ate.
- (13) A: Who ate the beans?
B₁: FRED ate the beans.
B₂: The beans, FRED ate.
B₃: It was the beans that FRED ate.
B₄: The beans, FRED ate them.
B₅: FRED ate them, the beans.

(Based on Gundel & Fretheim, 2004, p. 185)

The above data show a problem. Gundel (1985) claims that the referents of all syntactic topics are pragmatic topics, but not vice versa. Thus, all dislocated elements in topicalization and right dislocation structures are considered pragmatic topics. However, B₂ in (12) and (13) seem to go against this claim. Although in (13B₂), the topicalized element “the beans” is truly a pragmatic topic, it is not the case in (12B₂). In (12B₂), the sentence-initial element “the beans” is stressed and by the discourse context, it is clear that “the beans” is not a pragmatic topic. It is a focused element which is new to the context. Gundel suggests that the sentence-initial elements such as “the beans” in (12B₂) are not real topics. They are in fact focused elements that get proposed by a process known as focus movement by Prince (1981). Thus, not all sentence-initial elements are syntactic topics. Only those that are not foci are considered as syntactic topics. Moreover, Gundel (1985, 1988) claims that the referent of a syntactic topic must be a pragmatic topic. In other words, syntactic topic is a subset of pragmatic topic. The following diagram

shows the relationship between sentence-initial elements, syntactic topics and pragmatic topics according to Gundel.

Fig. 3.1: Sentence-initial elements, syntactic topics and pragmatic topics.

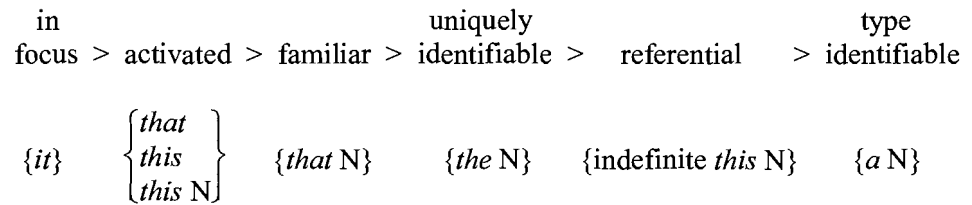


Gundel (1988) suggests that topics (syntactic and pragmatic) must associate with familiarity. That is, a topic must be known, or given, by the speaker and the addressee. One of the examples is shown in (14). In (14), the indefinite article “a” suggests that the “topicalized” element “a window” is not familiar to the speaker and the addressee. Hence, it is not a possible topic. “The window” is a possible topic because the definite article “the” suggests that “the window” is familiar to the speaker and the addressee.

- (14) $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{The} \\ *A \end{array} \right\}$ window, it’s still open. (Gundel, 1988, p. 213)

The use of definite versus indefinite article is a basic method to tell whether an entity is familiar to the speaker and the addressee. Definite NPs are typically associated with familiar entities and indefinite NPs typically refer to unfamiliar NPs. The Givenness Hierarchy proposed by Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski (1993) provide a more in-depth study of the forms of NPs associated with cognitive statuses. (15) is the English Givenness Hierarchy.

(15) The Givenness Hierarchy (Gundel, Hedberg & Zacharski, 1993, p. 275)



The Givenness Hierarchy accounts for the linguistic forms of NPs associated with each cognitive status. According to Gundel et al (1993), there are six levels of cognitive status. On the Givenness Hierarchy, an entity which is “in focus” has the highest cognitive status, that is, it is the most restrictive and has the highest degree of referential givenness. The lowest cognitive status is “type identifiable”, which means that an entity is the least restrictive and the least referentially given. Gundel et al note that these statuses are not mutually exclusive. Instead, a status entails all lower statuses. For example, an entity which is “referential” entails that it is also “type identifiable”. In addition, cognitive statuses are encoded in linguistic forms. In English, for example, one or more forms of NPs are assigned to each cognitive status, as shown in (15) above.

Since a higher cognitive status entails all the lower ones, for each status, the assigned form(s) or a lower form can be used in principle. For example, theoretically, the indefinite form “a”, which only requires the referent to be “type identifiable”, can be used for all cognitive statuses because all statuses entail “type identifiable”, the lowest status. However, the choice of a particular form is governed by Grice’s Maxim of Quantity that requires the speaker to contribute as much information as what is required. In the case when “a” is used, it implicates that a higher form would not have been appropriate to be used in that situation. In other words, using “a” implicates that the cognitive status of the referent is “type identifiable”. However, this is merely an implicature and it is not necessarily the case.

The Givenness Hierarchy is helpful in understanding Gundel's (1985, 1988) concept of familiarity, a condition which topics are subject to. Gundel suggests the conditions in (16) and (17) that topics must meet.

(16) Topic-Familiarity Condition:
An entity, E, can successfully serve as a topic, T, iff, both speaker and addressee have previous knowledge of or familiarity with E.

(17) Topic-Identifiability Condition:
An expression, E, can successfully refer to a topic T, iff E is of a form that allows the addressee to uniquely identify T.

(Gundel, 1988, pp. 212-214)

The Topic-Familiarity Condition requires that a topic must be an entity which is familiar to the speaker and the addressee. However, Gundel points (1988) out that in some situations a topic does not appear to be familiar. The following is one example.

(18) I didn't get much sleep last night because the dog next door kept me awake.

(Gundel, 1985, p. 87)

Gundel suggests that "the dog" in (18) is not necessarily familiar to the addressee. The addressee does not have to have prior knowledge of "the dog". The sentence is felicitous as long as the addressee is able to uniquely identify it. The Topic-Identifiability Condition accounts for this fact. It is a weaker version of the Topic-Familiarity Condition that only requires the expression of a topic be uniquely identifiable.

In addition, Gundel (1988) points out that it has been argued that in some cases, topics are not necessarily familiar or uniquely identifiable. For example, Reinhart (1981; in Gundel & Fretheim, 2004) suggests that topics can be only referential, as shown in (19). However, Gundel suggests that it is only in certain situations that a topic does not have to be familiar. For example, in (19), "an old preacher down there", which is not familiar to the addressee as suggested by the indefinite article, is a possible topic because the modifier of this NP "down there" has a definite or generic reference. Generally speaking, the Topic-Familiarity Condition applies to all topicalized elements.

- (19) An old preacher down there, they augured under the grave where his wife was buried.

(from Prince, 1985; in Gundel & Fretheim, 2004, p. 181)

In sum, Gundel (1985, 1988) calls the sentence-initial topicalized elements syntactic topics (and hence, pragmatic topics). The above discussion summarizes Gundel's view on these sentence-initial elements. She claims that these elements must be familiar to the speaker and the addressee (Topic-Familiarity Condition). In most cases, non-familiar elements are not possible topics.

There are two types of sentence-initial topicalized elements that Gundel (1985, 1988) does not mention explicitly in her discussion of syntactic topics. The first type is what Chafe (1976) calls Chinese-style topics. As opposed to Chafe, Gundel does not distinguish between Chinese- and English-style topics. In her works, however, she mainly discusses what Chafe calls English-style topics, that is, the topicalized NPs which are participants of sentences. She does not clearly mention how she would deal with the Chinese-style topics, that is, the topics that are non-participant of sentences but serve to provide relevant background information. However, clearly, Chafe's Chinese-style topics fit into Gundel's definition of syntactic topic in (9). Therefore, they should also be treated as topics by Gundel as well and hence the Topic-Familiarity Condition applying to all topics should also apply to Chinese-style topics. In section 3.2 and 3.3, I will discuss how this condition applies to Chinese-style topics with data in Chinese.

The second type of topicalized elements Gundel (1985, 1988) does not clearly mention in her discussion is non-NP sentence-initial elements, as shown in the following examples.

- (20) a. In the park, John saw a dog.
b. At six o'clock, the train arrived.

According to Gundel's (1985) definitions of syntactic and pragmatic topics in (9) and (10), the sentence-initial elements in (20) are considered as topics. However, there is one problem with these non-NP topics. While Gundel suggests that the Topic-Familiarity and Identifiability Conditions generally apply to topics, it is unclear how these conditions, which only

apply to NP topics, apply to these non-NP topics. More on these problems will be revisited again in sections 2.2 and 2.3, when Gundel's theory is applied to the study of Chinese sentence-initial elements.

3.1.3 Halliday's Approach

Halliday's (1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) definition of Theme partially overlaps with Chafe's (1976) and Gundel's (1985, 1988) definitions of (syntactic) topic, which define topic as the dislocated element in topicalization structures. Halliday defines Theme as the sentence-initial element which serves as the point of departure of a message. However, he points out that not all sentence-initial elements or Themes are like Chafe's and Gundel's topics. According to Halliday, only topical Themes behave similarly to topics. In a sentence, there can be other elements preceding the topical Themes. They are known as textual Themes and interpersonal Themes. Textual Themes are sentence-initial non-ideational elements such as continuatives (e.g. yes, well, oh) and conjunctions (e.g. so, but, and). Interpersonal Themes include various types of mood adjuncts (e.g. oh, maybe, fortunately). Textual Themes and interpersonal Themes are not relevant to this study and I will not provide further discussion of these notions.

According to Halliday (1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), topical Themes, unlike the other two types of Themes, are ideational sentence-initial elements. What Halliday calls ideational elements are those that have Transitivity roles in a sentence. That is, a topical Theme must be a participant, circumstance or process. The non-Thematic part of a sentence is called Rheme. Topical Themes are always marked by some syntactic device. Different languages have different ways of marking topic Themes. In English, which has a relatively rigid word order, the topical Theme is always the first ideational element of a sentence, as shown in (21). In languages such as Japanese, the topical Theme is marked by a special marker *wa*, as shown in (22). While

(21) shows an example of a participant topical Theme, (23) shows an example of a circumstantial topical Theme.

- | | | | |
|------|---|---|--------------------------------|
| (21) | TOPICAL THEME
<u>John</u> | RHEME
saw the movie. | |
| (22) | TOPICAL THEME
<u>Kare wa</u>
he TH
'He came yesterday.' | RHEME
<i>kinoo</i>
yesterday | <i>kimashita.</i>
come(PST) |
| | | | (Modini, 1993, p. 156) |
| (23) | TOPICAL THEME
<u>Once</u> | RHEME
I was a real turtle. | (Halliday, 1985, p. 39) |

Halliday's approach to topical Themes implies that in a canonical sentence of languages such as English, the topical Theme is always the subject (see (21)). In non-canonical sentences such as passives in (24), the topical Theme is the promoted patient. For the case that involves topicalization, as shown in (4), repeated as (25) below, the topical Theme is the topicalized element, which is the first ideational element of the sentence.

- | | | | |
|------|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| (24) | TOPICAL THEME
<u>Mary</u> | RHEME
was kissed by John. | |
| (25) | TOPICAL THEME
<u>The play,</u> | RHEME
John saw yesterday. | (Chafe, 1976, p. 49) |

Halliday (1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) suggests that each clause can only have one topical Theme. Thus, in sentences that have multiple sentence-initial or "topicalized" elements, such as (26) below, it is always the first ideational element that gets analyzed as the topical Theme and the rest of the sentence is the Rheme.

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| (26) | TOPICAL THEME
<u>Last night,</u>
friends, John was hit by a car. | RHEME
at the entrance of the cinema, waiting for his |
|------|---|--|

On the function of topical Themes, Halliday defines topical Theme as the point of departure of a sentence and what the sentence is about (Eggins, 1994; Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Halliday claims that his definition of topical Theme is related to topic within

the topic-comment framework. However, he points out that the key difference between topical Theme and topic is that topic only refers to a subset of topical Theme.

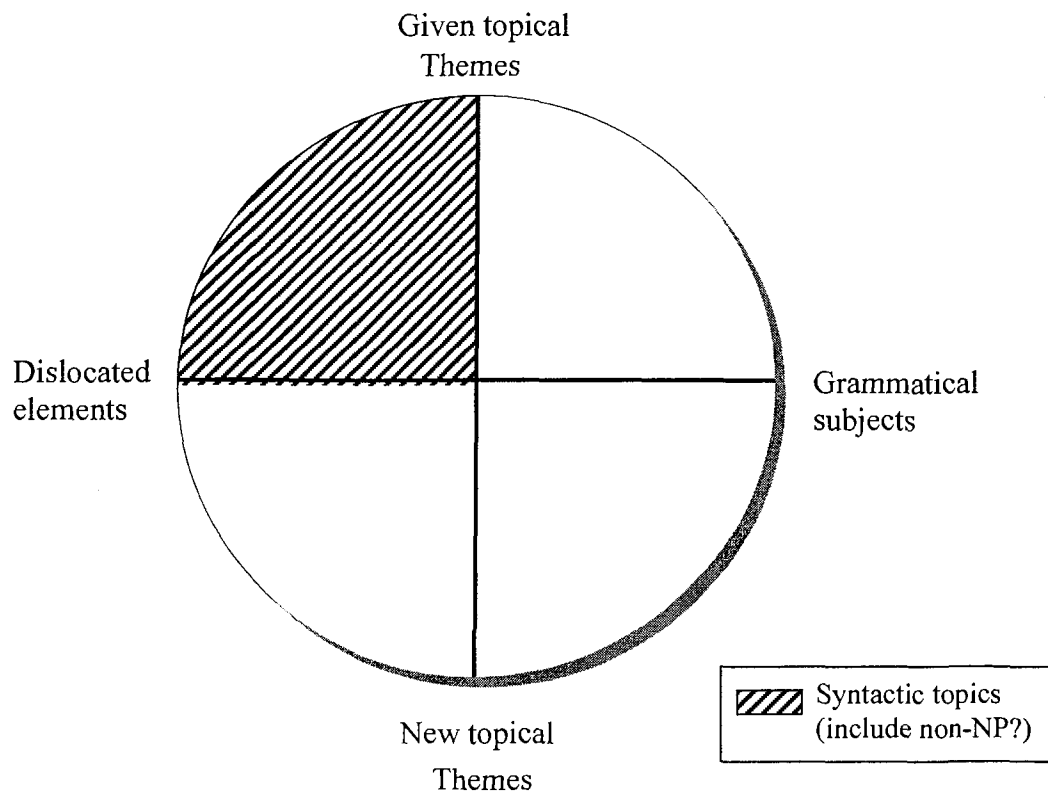
Halliday claims that topical Themes are typically, but not necessarily, Given. Some topical Themes can be New. Given-New according to Halliday is determined by recoverability. An element which has been mentioned previously or is known to the addressee is considered as recoverable or Given. An element which is new to the context (i.e. has not been mentioned previously) or is unexpected to the addressee is non-recoverable, and therefore, New. Chafe (1976) and Gundel (1985, 1988) both suggest that the contrastive sentence-initial elements, or what Halliday calls New topical Themes, are not real (syntactic) topics. (Syntactic) topics must be familiar or given to the speaker and the addressee (cf. Gundel's (1985) Topic-Familiarity Condition). This view of topic is similar to Halliday's view on Given topical Themes. Halliday's definition of Given is similar to Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski's (1993) definition of familiar on the Givenness Hierarchy. Both (syntactic) topics and Given topical Themes are sentence-initial elements that have been mentioned previously or that the addressee has prior knowledge of.

As mentioned earlier, (syntactic) topics refer only to the dislocated elements in structures such as topicalization according to Chafe (1976) and Gundel (1985, 1988). Under Halliday's (1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) approach, topical Themes include all sentence-initial elements, which include both grammatical subjects and dislocated elements. In addition, although it is unclear whether Chafe and Gundel would treat sentence-initial non-NPs/non-participants as topics, Halliday clearly claims that non-nominal and circumstantial elements such as adjuncts, as long as they are ideational, are topical Themes.

The following diagram summarizes the above discussion and shows the relationship between (syntactic) topics and topical Themes. (Syntactic) topics by Chafe (1976) and Gundel (1985, 1988) only refer to a subset of topical Themes. Syntactic topics are dislocated sentence-initial elements (i.e. sentence-initial elements excluding grammatical subjects) which are familiar or Given. Topical Themes refer to both dislocated sentence-initial elements and grammatical

subjects, which can be either Given or New. The only thing which remains uncertain is whether Chafe and Gundel would treat non-NP dislocated elements as topics.

Fig. 3.2: Syntactic topics and topical Themes.



3.1.4 Downing's Approach

Downing (1991) points out a problem with Halliday's (1985) approach to sentence-initial ideational elements, or topical Themes. She points out that the non-NP topical Themes in (27), although analyzed as topical Themes by Halliday, do not fit well into the definition of topical Themes.

- (27)
- a. In the park, I found your dog.
 - b. Two weeks ago, there was a fire in my neighborhood.
 - c. Without letting him know, she left.

The sentence-initial elements in (27) are what Halliday (1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) calls circumstantial topical Themes. That is, they serve to provide the circumstantial or background information of the sentences. According to Halliday, they are analyzed as the topical

Themes of the sentences and thus are what the sentences are about. Downing (1991) claims that this Thematic analysis of sentences such as those in (27) is counter-intuitive. In (27a), for example, it is more desirable to treat the subject “I” as the real topical Theme. The sentence-initial adjunct “in the park” simply provides the background information of the sentence. According to Downing, what the sentence is truly about is “I”, a participant of the sentence. In addition, Downing is not convinced that circumstantial topical Themes are associated with the notion of topic. She claims that topics must refer to entities and hence the fronted adjuncts in (27) cannot behave like topics.

Because of the difficulty of seeing these non-NP sentence-initial elements as what Halliday (1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) calls topical Themes, Downing (1991) modifies Halliday’s approach by providing a more in-dept analysis of these non-NP elements in her work. She claims that the sentence-initial ideational elements, or what are called topical Themes by Halliday, can be subdivided into four types according to their functions, which include participant (or individual) Themes, spatial Themes, temporal Themes and situational Themes. Participant Themes are either sentence-initial subjects or other fronted participants (e.g. fronted direct objects). The other three types of topical Themes are what Halliday classifies as non-participant or circumstantial topical Themes. Spatial and temporal Themes are sentence-initial locative and temporal adjuncts (e.g. prepositional phrases and adverbials). Situational Themes are the sentence-initial elements which do not belong to the other three types. Similar to spatial and temporal Themes, their function is to provide background information of the events described by the sentences such as the causes, the purposes and the reasons (e.g. infinitival clauses that give or create a background for the sentence). Examples of each type of topical Theme are provided below, with the topical Themes marked in italic.

- (28) a. Participant Theme:
Chief among these young men was Plato.

- b. Temporal Theme:
For two hundred years the Roman soldier-farmers had struggled for freedom and a share in the government of their state...
- c. Spatial Theme:
In the East long before the time of Buddha there had been ascetics...
- d. Situational Theme:
In order to realize the full possibilities of the new apparatus of human life they had to arrange their affairs upon a broader basis...

(Downing, 1991, pp. 130-138)

Downing's (1991) work is a combination of Chafe's (1976) claim that a Chinese-style topic sets a framework in which the main predication holds and Halliday's (1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) claim that a topical Theme is what the sentence is about (similar to Gundel's (1985) definition of topic). In particular, she suggests that only the participant Theme is what the sentence is about. However, all topical Themes set up frameworks where the main predications hold. Different types of topical Themes set up different types of frameworks and therefore there are four types of frameworks: individual, temporal, spatial and situational. Downing also claims that once a framework is established, it can be carried over across sentences. The scope of the framework across sentences is known as span. It is not clear what the maximum length or extension of a span is. Downing claims that a span can hold until a new span is introduced to the discourse. This concept of span is similar to what is known as topic chain in various works that study this phenomenon in Chinese, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

A contribution of Downing's (1991) classification of sentence-initial elements is that the analysis of multiple topical Themes in a single sentence is made possible while Halliday (1985) claims that each clause can have only one topical Theme. By classifying sentence-initial elements into different types of topical Themes, the Thematic structure of the following sentence can be easily explained.

- (29) Last night, at the entrance of the cinema, waiting for his friends, John was hit by a car.

Sentence (29) contains multiple sentence-initial elements. It has a temporal adjunct “last night”, a locative adjunct “at the entrance of the cinema”, a gerund clause “waiting for his friends”, and the grammatical subject “John”. By taking Halliday’s (1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) approach, only “last night” is analyzed as topical Theme. However, as mentioned earlier, this analysis is problematic because what (29) is about is the participant “John”, not “last night”. “Last night” serves more as the background information of the events. Under Downing’s (1991) approach, this problem is solved. These sentence-initial elements belong to different types of topical Themes which serve different functions. The participant Theme “John” sets the participant framework and is what the sentence is about. The temporal adjunct (temporal Theme) sets a temporal framework; the locative adjunct (spatial Theme) sets a spatial framework; and the infinitival clause (situational Theme) sets a situational framework. These non-NP sentence-initial elements are not what the sentence is about but they provide the background where the main predication holds.

Downing (1991) suggests that topical Themes are associated with what are known as topics. As mentioned earlier, topical Themes, when they are Given, correspond to Gundel’s (1985, 1988) syntactic topics except syntactic topics only include dislocated elements. The only uncertainty is Gundel’s view on non-participant/non-NP topics (i.e. spatial, temporal and situational Themes). As for Chafe (1976), what he calls English-style topics apparently correspond to what Downing calls participant Themes (again, when they are Given). Chafe’s Chinese-style topics appear to be related to Downing’s non-participant Themes (i.e. spatial, temporal and situational Themes). Both Chafe’s Chinese-style topics and Downing’s non-participant Themes serve similar functions of setting up frameworks where the main predications hold. The only difference here is that Chafe’s Chinese-style topics are sentence-initial NPs, but Downing’s non-participants are realized as non-NPs (at least in English).

3.1.5 Summary

This section discussed four approaches to sentence-initial elements. Chafe (1976) and Gundel (1985, 1988) hold similar views that (syntactic) topics refer to the dislocated elements in structures such as topicalization. In addition, they claim that topics must be given or familiar and non-given or focused sentence-initial elements are not real topics. (Gundel (1985, 1988) has provided more detailed discussion on familiarity or givenness compared to Chafe (1976).) However, unlike Chafe, who divides topics into Chinese-style and English-style, Gundel mainly studies English-style topics, which are participants of sentences, and calls them syntactic topics. It is still unclear how she would handle non-participant sentence-initial elements.

There are two differences between Halliday's (1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) approach to sentence-initial elements and Chafe's (1976) and Gundel's (1985, 1988) approaches. First, Halliday calls the sentence-initial elements, dislocated or non-dislocated, topical Themes while only dislocated elements are considered as (syntactic) topics by Chafe and Gundel. Second, Halliday separates givenness from the study of topical Themes. According to Halliday, topical Themes can be either Given or New. However, Chafe and Gundel claim that only given or familiar elements can be topics. Downing (1991) is an extension of Halliday's work which modifies the previous approach by classifying topical Themes into four types. It is also the only approach that mentions multiple sentence-initial elements in one sentence.

For the rest of this study, Downing's (1991) approach, which is based on Halliday's (1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) approach to sentence-initial elements, will be adopted. The reason for choosing this approach will be discussed in the next section. It is mainly because the way Downing deals with the sentence-initial elements (topical Themes) best describes the situation in Chinese, a topic-prominent language. In order to capture all possible types of topical Theme in Chinese, Downing's approach needs to be modified and the next section will provide further discussion.

3.2 Chinese Topical Themes

In this section, I am going to begin with a review of previous works on the sentence structure of Chinese, a well-recognized topic-prominent language that has a topic-comment sentence structure. The model of Thematic analysis originally proposed by Halliday (1985), later modified by Downing (1991), will be applied to the study of Chinese sentence structure. Next, I am going to apply Gundel's (1988) topic conditions to the topical Themes in Chinese sentences. In addition to the topic conditions suggested by Gundel, the works of other Chinese scholars who have studied Chinese topichood will be incorporated. The goals of this section are to show that Chinese has a topic-comment (later called Theme-Rheme) sentence structure and to compile a list of restrictions on Chinese topical Themes.

3.2.1 Topic-Prominent Languages and Subject-Prominent Languages

Li and Thompson (1976) divide languages into four basic types: topic-prominent (e.g. Chinese), subject-prominent (e.g. English), both topic- and subject-prominent (e.g. Japanese), and neither topic- or subject-prominent (e.g. Tagalog). Li and Thompson differentiate topic and subject by establishing seven criteria, summarized in (30) below. These differences between topic and subject will be revisited in the next section.

- (30)
- a. Topics need to be definite (including proper and generic NPs), but subjects need not be.
 - b. Topics are not arguments of verb and therefore are not subject to the selectional restrictions of the verb. Subjects are selectionally related to the verb.
 - c. Topics are not determined by the verb, but subjects are.
 - d. Topics have functional roles across sentences. Subjects' functional roles are restricted to sentential level.
 - e. Topics need not agree with the verb. Subject-verb agreement is almost obligatory cross-linguistically.
 - f. Topics must be sentence-initial (or at least morphologically marked), but subjects need not be sentence-initial.
 - g. Topics do not participate in sentence-internal grammatical processes, but subjects do in processes such as reflexivization, passivization, Equi-NP deletion, verb serialization, and imperativization.

While both Chafe (1976) and Gundel (1985) restrict the notion of (syntactic) topic to the dislocated elements in non-canonical structures such as topicalization, Li and Thompson (1976) have a different view on topics. They suggest that in some languages, which they call topic-prominent languages, the topic is a part of the canonical sentence. In topic-prominent languages, the topic is viewed as a grammatical category, just like the subject and the object. The basic sentence structure of such languages is topic-comment (Li & Thompson, 1976, 1981; Zhu, 1997). In other words, there is no real topicalization structure in topic-prominent languages because the sentence-initial topic is viewed as a part of the canonical structure. The sentence-initial position is the default position for topics.

Subject-prominent languages are the languages that have subject-predicate structures. The sentence-initial element of a canonical sentence is not the topic, but the subject. Chafe's (1976) and Gundel's (1985) definitions of (syntactic) topic do not consider subjects in canonical sentences as topics. Syntactic topics only appear in non-canonical sentences that involve topicalization.

3.2.2 Chinese as a Topic-Prominent Language

Chinese is widely recognized as a topic-prominent language (Li & Thompson, 1976, 1981; Xu & Langendoen, 1985; Shen, 1988; Her, 1991; Chu, 1993 and Shi, 2000). This view originates from Li and Thompson (1976, 1981), who suggest that the topic, along with the subject and the object, are syntactic categories in Chinese. One of the motivations for proposing Chinese as a topic-prominent language is based on the existence of what was called double-subject sentences, as shown in (31). Traditionally, (31) has been said to contain two subjects, 'this girl' and 'eyes', and this double-subject analysis has been a challenge to Chinese syntacticians. However, by analyzing the first element 'this girl' as the topic of the sentence, the structure of these so-called double-subject sentences is explained. They are canonical sentences with a TOPIC-SUBJECT-(ADJUNCT)-VERB-OBJECT structure (Li & Thompson, 1976, 1981).

- (31) **TOPIC** **SUBJECT**
Zhei-gei nuhai yanjing hen da.
 this-CL girl eye very big
 ‘This girl’s eyes are very big.’
 ‘This girl has very big eyes.’ (literally) (Li & Thompson, 1981, p. 88)

To show that Chinese is a topic-prominent instead of a subject-prominent language, Li and Thompson (1976, 1981) test the topichood of the sentence-initial NPs by using the criteria discussed in the previous section. They show that the sentence-initial NPs do not have the features of subjects. First, unlike subjects, the sentence-initial elements do not participate in sentence-internal processes such as reflexivization, as shown in (32) and (33).

- (32) **TOPIC** **SUBJECT**
**John, wo xihuan ta-ziji.*
 John I like he-self
 *‘John I like himself.’ (Li & Thompson, 1976, p. 478)

- (33) **TOPIC+SUBJECT**
John xihuan ta-ziji.
 John like he-self
 ‘John likes himself.’

In addition, the sentence-initial elements are not selectionally related to the verb, as shown in (34). Note that this argument does not apply to English-style topics, or participant Themes. It has been discussed in the previous section that participant Themes are participants of the processes and therefore are selected by the verbs.

- (34) **TOPIC** **SUBJECT**
Dongwu wo zuzhang baoshou zhengce.
 animal I advocate conservation policy
 ‘Animals, I advocate a conservation policy.’
 ‘About/as for the animals, I advocate a conservation policy.’ (literally)
 (Li & Thompson, 1976, p. 479)

Furthermore, the sentence-initial elements possess the features of topics, as suggested by Li and Thompson (1976). First, the sentence-initial elements must be definite, as shown in (35). In (36), even when the topic and the subject coincide (to be discussed later in this section), the sentence-initial noun phrase still needs to be definite. This definiteness requirement on the

sentence-initial NPs is related to Gundel's (1988) familiarity conditions on topic, which have been discussed in the previous section and will be taken up again later in the chapter.

- (35) a. **TOPIC** **SUBJECT**
**Yi-ge* *ren* *wo* *jiang-guo* *ta.*
one-CL person I see-ASP him
'A person, I met him before.'
- b. **TOPIC** **SUBJECT**
Nei-ge *ren* *wo* *jiang-guo* *ta.*
that-CL person I see-ASP him
'That person, I met him before.'
- (36) a. **TOPIC+SUBJECT**
**Yi-ge* *ren* *si-le.*
one-CL person die-ASP
'A person died.'
- b. **TOPIC+SUBJECT**
Nei-ge *ren* *si-le.*
that-CL person die-ASP
'That person died.'

The second topical feature the sentence-initial NPs possess is that they serve some discourse functions, that is, functions above the level of sentence. This phenomenon is known as topic chain. An example is shown below.

- (37) a. *Wo* *dakai* *bingxiang,*
I open fridge
- b. \emptyset *dao-le* *yi-bei niunai,*
 \emptyset pour-ASP one-CL milk
- c. \emptyset *zuo-le* *yi-ge sanmingzhi.*
 \emptyset make-ASP one-CL sandwich

'I opened the fridge, poured a glass of milk and made a sandwich.'

(Li, 2004, p. 27)

In (37), the only sentence that contains an overt topic is (37a), where 'I' is both the topic and the subject. (37b-c) do not have a topic/subject. The topics/subjects in (37b-c) are left out because they are known. This observation has been discussed extensively in the literature such as Li (2004), Li and Thompson (1981), Shi (1989) and Tao (1996). There are discussions on the

missing topic NPs in sentences such as (37b-c). At least two possible analyses have been suggested. The missing NPs can be deleted by equi-NP deletion, or the gaps are in fact covert elements co-indexed with the topics such as ‘I’ in (37a). I will not provide further discussions on topic chain here. It has been clearly shown that the sentence-initial NPs in Chinese sentences such as ‘I’ in (37a) are more than a subject. They possess some features of topics such as establishing a topic chain across sentences. As mentioned in the previous section, this concept of topic chain is somewhat similar to Downing’s (1991) notion of span.

Li and Thompson (1981) identify four types of Chinese sentences. They include sentences with both the topic and the subject, sentences with the topic and the subject as the same element, sentences with only the topic and an empty subject, and sentences with no topic (for example, when the topic is known by the context). Examples of each type are shown below.

- (38) **TOPIC** **SUBJECT**
Nei-zhi *gou* *wo* *yijing kan-guo* *le.*
that-CL dog I already see-ASP ASP
‘That dog I have already seen.’
- (39) **TOPIC+SUBJECT**
Wo
I *xihuan chi* *pingguo.*
like eat apple
‘I like to eat apples.’
- (40) **TOPIC** **SUBJECT**
Nei-ben *shu* \emptyset *chuban* *le.*
that-CL book publish ASP
‘That book, (someone) has published it.’
- (41) A: *Juzi huai le ma?*
 orange spoiled ASP Q
 ‘Are the oranges spoiled?’
- B: *Huai le.*
 spoiled ASP
 ‘(They) are spoiled.’

(Li & Thompson, 1981, pp. 88-90)

According to Li and Thompson (1981), the sentence-initial noun phrases (or nominal elements), if present, must be interpreted as topics (while in some cases, they are also subjects). The topic can only be absent when it is known in the context, such as the cases in (37) and (41B).

Xu and Langendoen (1985) suggest the rule in (42) for Chinese sentences. The topic is an element outside of the scope of the sentence (S), and is adjoining to the left of the sentence. This rule allows recursion and therefore it entails that Chinese allows multiple topics.

$$(42) \quad S' \rightarrow \text{TOP} \{S, S'\} \quad (\text{Xu \& Langendoen, 1985, p. 2})$$

Xu and Langendoen's (1985) rule for Chinese sentences in (42) suggests that a sentence can have multiple topics. In fact, multiple topics are common in Chinese. In addition, not only NPs can be topics, temporal and locative adjuncts can also appear sentence-initially as topics (Zhu, 1997). Some examples are shown below.

(43)	TOPIC₁	TOPIC₂	TOPIC₃			
	<u>Zuotian</u>	<u>Li</u> <u>xianshen</u>	<u>wo</u>	<i>kanjian</i>	<i>le.</i>	
	yesterday	Li mister	I	see	ASP	
	‘Yesterday, Mr. Li I saw.’					
	(Xu & Langendoen, 1985, p. 17)					

(44)	TOPIC₁	TOPIC₂	TOPIC₃			
	<u>Zai gongyuan-li</u>	<u>nide</u> <u>gou</u>	<u>wo</u>	<i>zhao-dao</i>	<i>le.</i>	
	at park-in	your dog	I	find-ASP	ASP	
	‘In the park, your dog I found.’					

In the unmarked case, the topical Theme of a Chinese declarative sentence is the subject. However, in (43) and (44), the temporal and locative adjuncts and the objects are fronted and become topical Themes. These are examples of what Halliday calls marked Themes (Egins, 1994; Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). In the next chapter, I will show that *SHI...DE* focus constructions behave similarly. There are *SHI...DE* focus constructions with marked and unmarked Themes. Both the unmarked and the marked cases of *SHI...DE* focus constructions that involve fronting of constituents will be discussed in the next chapter.

3.2.3 Downing Revisited

Downing's (1991) modification of Halliday's (1985) approach to sentence-initial elements (topical Themes) appears to be the most appropriate existing model to be used in analyzing Chinese sentence structure. The problem with Chafe's (1976) and Gundel's (1985,

1988) approaches is that they only define (syntactic) topics as dislocated elements in topicalization (and according to Gundel, right-dislocation) structures. However, as mentioned earlier, as a topic-prominent language, Chinese does not have real topicalization. Topic is generally defined as the sentence-initial element(s) in Chinese. In addition, Chafe's and Gundel's approaches do not provide clear solutions to the analyses of sentences with more than one topic and sentences with non-NP/non-participant topics, which exist in Chinese. Because of these difficulties, Downing's approach to topical Themes is adopted in this study.

The terminology Li and Thompson (1976) use to describe the Chinese (and other topic-prominent languages) sentence structure is topic-comment. However, topic and comment are used by Gundel (1988) as pragmatic notions and Gundel and Fretheim (2004) have emphasized that these pragmatic notions should be independent of syntax. To avoid confusion, the notion of Theme-Rheme proposed by Halliday (1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) and also used by Downing (1991) will be used in lieu of topic-comment for the rest of this study. Theme (topical Theme) refers to the sentence-initial topical element(s) and Rheme refers to sentence minus Theme.

According to Li and Thompson (1981), as a topic-prominent language, the initial element of a Chinese sentence must be analyzed as the topic (i.e. the topical Theme) except in the case of null topic/subject such as (37) discussed above. Downing (1991) classifies topical Themes into four types by their functions. Such classification applies to Chinese as well. Depending on their functions, the sentence-initial elements can be classified as participant, temporal, spatial, or situational Themes. The only elements that can become participant Themes are the ones that are participants of the processes described by the sentences. Thus, only the subject, the direct object and the indirect object can become participant Themes. The following are some examples.

- (45) **PARTICIPANT THEME** **RHEME**
 Wo zhao-dao-le nide gou.
 I find-ASP-ASP your dog
 'I found your dog.'

- (46) **PARTICIPANT THEME** **RHEME**
Nide gou zhao-dao-le.
 your dog find-ASP-ASP
 ‘Your dog, (I) found (it).’
- (47) **PARTICIPANT THEME** **RHEME**
Zhangsan gei-le ta nei-ben shu le.
 Zhangsan give-ASP him that-CL book ASP
 ‘Zhangsan, (I) already gave him a book.’

These participant Themes are arguments of the verbs and are selected. Downing (1991) claims that they are what the sentences are about (related to Gundel’s (1988) definition of topic). Note that, however, in Chinese, not every sentence-initial NP can be analyzed as participant Theme. Examples have been shown in (4), repeated as (48) and (49) below.

- (48) **NON-PARTICIPANT THEME**
Nei-xie shumu shu-shen da.
 those-CL tree tree-trunk big
 ‘Those trees, the tree trunks are big.’
(Chafe, 1976, p. 50)

- (49) **NON-PARTICIPANT THEME**
Zhei-gei nuhai yanjing hen da.
 this-CL girl eye very big
 ‘This girl’s eyes are very big.’
 ‘This girl has very big eyes.’
(Li & Thompson, 1981, p. 88)

In the above examples, the sentence-initial NPs are not participants. They are not selected by the verbs and they are instead known as Chinese-style topics by Chafe (1976). Chafe claims that these NPs are not what the sentences are about. What the sentences are about in these examples are the subjects (i.e. ‘the tree trunks’ and ‘eyes’), not the sentence-initial NPs. The correct analyses of the above sentences are treating ‘the tree trunks’ and ‘eyes’ as participant Themes and treating ‘those tree’ and ‘this girl’ as some other type of Theme. Downing (1991) does not discuss these Chinese-style topics and it is not clear how she would handle these cases. This special type of non-participant NP topical Themes will be discussed again at the end of this section.

Temporal Themes are the sentence-initial constituents that establish temporal frameworks where the predications hold (Downing, 1991). According to this definition, all sentence-initial temporal adjuncts are classified as temporal Themes. In the example below, the sentence-initial temporal adjunct ‘yesterday’ is analyzed as a temporal Theme. The participant Theme is ‘I’.

(50)	TEMPORAL THEME	PARTICIPANT THEME	RHEME
	<u>Zuotian</u>	<u>wo</u>	<u>jian-dao ni.</u>
	yesterday	I	see-ASP you
	‘Yesterday, I saw you.’		

Spatial Themes are the sentence-initial locative adjuncts that set up spatial frameworks for the predications. That is, they restrict the locations where the predications occur. While locative adjuncts are usually PPs in English, they can be NPs in Chinese. In the following example, the NP ‘2nd-floor’ is analyzed as a spatial Theme and ‘music sound’, as a participant of the sentence, is analyzed as the participant Theme.

(51)	SPATIAL THEME	PARTICIPANT THEME	RHEME
	<u>Er-lou,</u>	<u>yinyue sheng</u>	<u>hao chao.</u>
	2nd-floor	music sound	very loud
	‘As for the second floor, the music is too loud.’		
	‘The music on the second floor is too loud.’ (literal meaning)		
	(Zhu, 1997, p. 52)		

Situational Themes, according to Downing (1991), include the sentence-initial elements that do not belong to the other three types of topical Themes. These include infinitival clauses in English that provide backgrounds, purposes, or conditions of the predications. In Chinese these topical Themes are usually realized as subjectless clauses.

(52)	SITUATIONAL THEME	PARTICIPANT THEME	RHEME
	<u>Weile</u>	<u>shengli,</u>	<u>ta</u>
	for sake of	victory	he
	‘For sake of victory, he is very work hardworking.’		
	‘In order to win, he works very hard.’ (literally)		

(53)	SITUATIONAL THEME	PARTICIPANT THEME	RHEME
	<u>Wangji-le</u>	<u>shijian,</u>	<u>wo</u>
	forget-ASP	time	I
	‘Having forgotten about the time, I was late.’		
			<u>chidao-le.</u>
			late-ASP

Downing's (1991) classification of topical Themes is applicable to Chinese except for one case, as shown in examples (48) and (49). In these cases, the sentence-initial NPs of the sentences do not belong to any of the above types. They are not participants of the sentences and they do not establish temporal, spatial or situational frameworks.

Downing (1991) does not include these non-participant NP topical Themes (a type of Chinese-style topics) in her classification. While omitting the existence of these non-participant Themes, she assumes all NP topical Themes are participant Themes, which is true for English. According to Chafe (1976), the function of these non-participant NP topical Themes (or Chinese-style topics) is to set up the domains that restrict the applicability of the main predications. For example, in (48), the domain is 'those trees'. By establishing the domain, 'the tree trunks are big' is only applicable to 'those trees' but not any other trees. The same principle applies to (49), where 'eyes are very big' only applies to 'the girl' but not other people. These Chinese-style topics function similarly to the temporal, spatial and situational Themes discussed above. They serve to establish frameworks where the main predications hold.

In order to allow Downing's (1991) classification to be applicable to Chinese, the classification needs to be modified. An extra type of topical Themes should be added to the current classification that includes participant, spatial, temporal and situational Themes. The non-participant NP topical Themes are known as "individual Themes" in this study. The term individual Theme originates from Chafe's (1976) claim that this type of sentence-initial element sets up individual framework within which the main predication holds. Downing uses the terms participant Theme and individual Theme interchangeably in her work. However, participant Theme here refers to an NP topical Theme that is a participant of the action described by the sentence (i.e. selected by the verb) and individual Theme here refers to a non-participant NP topical Theme (i.e. Chafe's (1976) Chinese-style topics).

Thus, (48) and (49), repeated as (54) and (55) below, should be analyzed as follows.

- | | | | |
|------|---|--------------------------|----------------------|
| (54) | INDIVIDUAL THEME | PARTICIPANT THEME | |
| | <u>Nei-xie</u> <u>shumu</u> | <u>shu-shen</u> | <i>da.</i> |
| | those-CL tree | tree-trunk | big |
| | ‘Those trees, the tree trucks are big.’ | | |
| | | | (Chafe, 1976, p. 50) |

- | | | | | |
|------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|------------------------------|
| (55) | INDIVIDUAL THEME | PARTICIPANT THEME | | |
| | <u>Zhei-gei</u> <u>nuhai</u> | <u>yanjing</u> | <i>hen</i> | <i>da.</i> |
| | this-CL girl | eye | very | big |
| | ‘This girl’s eyes are very big.’ | | | |
| | ‘This girl has very big eyes.’ | | | |
| | | | | (Li & Thompson, 1981, p. 88) |

Fang, McDonald and Cheng (1995) suggest that individual Theme in Chinese is a special type of Thematic element. Other types of Themes—participant Themes, spatial Themes, temporal Themes and situational Themes—are experiential elements. In other words, they all have Transitivity function in the sentences. (As mentioned earlier, participant Themes are participants and spatial, temporal and situational Themes are circumstances.) However, individual Themes do not have any experiential function. Fang et al claim that they only play a structural, or textual, role of serving as the point of departure of a message.

Another problem with applying Downing’s (1991) model to the study of Chinese sentence-initial elements (topical Themes) is givenness. While Downing and Halliday (1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) claim that Given/New is independent of Theme-Rheme and therefore topical Themes can be either Given or New, the definitions of topics by Chafe (1976) and Gundel (1985, 1988) suggest that topics must be given or familiar. The data seem to suggest that this familiarity condition always applies to Chinese topical Themes. Li and Thompson (1981) have shown that indefinite NPs cannot be topics in Chinese, as shown in (56). More on the application of this familiarity condition to Chinese sentence-initial elements will be discussed in the next section.

- | | | | |
|------|----|--------------------------|----------------|
| (56) | a. | PARTICIPANT THEME | |
| | | <u>*Yi-ge</u> <u>ren</u> | <i>lai-le.</i> |
| | | one-CL person | come-ASP |
| | | ‘A person has come.’ | |

b. **PARTICIPANT THEME**

<i>*Yi-tiao</i>	<i>gou</i>	<i>wo</i>	<i>zhao-dao-le.</i>
one-CL	dog	I	find-ASP-ASP
'A dog, I found (it).'			

Shen (1988) claims that sentence-initial foci are possible in Chinese. However, (57B₁) show that it is still impossible to have the indefinite NP appear sentence-initially. To answer the question in A, an existential sentence B₂ or a *SHI* sentence B₃ has to be used. The existential marker *you* and the focus marker *shi*, as well as intonation, are possibly means of distinguishing sentence-initial foci from topics.

- (57) A: *Shui zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao wode gou?*
 who at park-in find-ASP my dog
 'Who found my dog in the park?'
- B₁: **Yi-ge nanren zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou.*
 one-CL man at park-in find-ASP your dog
 'A man found your dog in the park.'
- B₂: *You yi-ge nanren zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou.*
 have one-CL man at park-in find-ASP your dog
 'There was a man who found your dog in the park.'
- B₃: *Shi yi-ge nanren zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou.*
 SHI one-CL man at park-in find-ASP your dog
 'It was a man who found your dog in the park.'

Using terms such as “topical Themes”, “participant Themes” and “temporal Themes” to describe sentence-initial elements in Chinese is not accurate. While Themes can be either Given or New, all Chinese sentence-initial elements are Given or familiar. In other words, in Chinese (and probably in all topic-prominent languages), only Given topical Themes exist. There are no New or contrastive topical Themes as there are in languages such as English. For the rest of this study, I will use topical Themes to refer to all sentence-initial elements in Chinese. However, note that this term, when used in the study of Chinese, only refers to the elements that are Given.

As mentioned earlier, Gundel’s (1985, 1988) familiarity condition on topics, now applying to Chinese topical Themes, only applies to NP participant topics. It remains unclear whether this condition applies to non-participants such as individual, spatial, temporal and

situational Themes as Gundel does not discuss these cases explicitly in her works. This question will be revisited in section 3.3.

3.2.4 Topic Marker Test

It is important to clearly identify the topical Themes and the Theme-Rheme boundary of a sentence. In the previous section, topical Themes have been identified solely by their distributions and their functions. That is, a topical Theme must be a sentence-initial element and must serve the Thematic functions of establishing framework (and for participant Theme, be what the sentence is about). In this section, a more simple and objective method of identifying topical Themes will be discussed and this method will be used for the rest of this study.

Li and Thompson (1981) suggest that Chinese has some optional topic markers—*a*, *me*, *ne* and *ba*. These topic markers, even though they are optional and are only used in spoken discourse, can mark only topical Themes and not other elements in a sentence, as shown in (58).

- (58) a. *Wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou.*
 I at park-in find-ASP your dog
 ‘I found your dog in the park.’
- b. *Wo* *ne zai gongyuan-li ne zhao-dao (*ne)*
 I TOP at park-in TOP find-ASP TOP

*nide gou (*ne).*
 your dog TOP
 ‘I found your dog in the park.’
- c. **TOPICAL THEMES** **RHEME**
Wo zai gongyuan-li *zhao-dao nide gou.*
 I at park-in find-ASP your dog
 ‘I found your dog in the park.’

(58a) is the original sentence without any topic marker. (58b) shows that the topic markers can only mark the topical elements—in the above case, the participant Theme ‘I’ and the spatial Theme ‘in the park’. The VP ‘found your dog’ is not Thematic and thus cannot be marked by *ne*. This test suggests the Theme-Rheme analysis of the sentence as shown in (58c).

The following examples show that this topic marker test can also be used to test other types of topical Themes such as temporal Themes, situational Themes and individual Themes. Here, the topic marker *a* is used instead of *ne* but the results are the same.

- (59) a. Temporal Theme:
Zuotian a wo zhao-dao nide gou.
 yesterday TOP I find-ASP your dog
 ‘Yesterday, I found your dog.’
- b. Situational Theme:
Meiyou ren bang wo a wo zhao-dao nide gou.
 without person help I TOP I find-ASP your dog
 ‘Without anyone’s help, I found your dog.’
- c. Individual Theme:
Nide gou a pinzhong hen hanjian.
 your dog TOP breed very rare
 ‘Your dog, (its) breed is very rare.’

To summarize this section and the previous section, sentence-initial elements, or topical Themes, in Chinese sentences can be distinguished from Rhemes in two ways. First, only topical Themes can be marked by topic markers such as *a* and *ne*. Second, all topical Themes must belong to one of the types mentioned above and serve their functions.

3.2.5 Summary

The first half of this chapter compares the existing models of topical or Thematic analysis by Chafe (1976), Gundel (1985, 1988), Halliday (1985) and Downing (1991). I have shown that Downing’s model, which involves a functional classification of topical Themes, is the most appropriate for Chinese. However, Downing’s classification needs to be modified because of two reasons. First, Downing does not take into account what Chafe (1976) calls Chinese-style topics (i.e. non-participant sentence-initial NPs). Second, topical Themes originally include both Given and New elements. However, this is not the case in Chinese. In Chinese, topical Themes (at least participant Themes) must be Given or familiar. For the rest of this study, the modified version of

Downing's (1991) model will be used. This modified version of Downing's classification is shown in (60).

(60) Downing's (1991) classification (modified):

- a. Participant Themes
Topical Themes that are participants of the sentences (i.e. arguments selected by the verbs). They establish participant frameworks where the main predications hold and they are what the sentences are about (i.e. topics).
- b. Individual Themes
Topical Themes that are non-participants in the sentences. They establish individual frameworks where the main predications hold and thus restrict the individual domains where the predications apply.
- c. Temporal Themes
Topical Themes that are non-participants in the sentences. They establish temporal frameworks where the main predications hold and thus restrict the temporal domains where the predications apply.
- d. Spatial Themes
Topical Themes that are non-participants in the sentences. They establish spatial frameworks where the main predications hold and thus restrict the spatial domains where the predications apply.
- e. Situational Themes
Topical Themes that are non-participants in the sentences. They establish situational frameworks where the main predications hold and thus restrict the situational domains where the predications apply.

3.3 Topical Theme Conditions

This section discusses the restrictions on different types of topical Themes in Chinese. As mentioned in the previous section, participant Themes are different from other topical Themes because only participant Themes are what the sentences are truly about. The other types of topical Themes only establish frameworks where the main predication holds. In addition, although it is clear that Gundel's (1985, 1988) familiarity condition applies to participant Themes in Chinese, it is unclear whether a similar condition applies to non-participant Themes. In this section, I am going to show that while the participant Themes and individual Themes are subject to various restrictions, the other types of topical Themes are relatively less restrictive.

3.3.1 Participant Themes

Not every element can be a participant Theme. This section will focus on the conditions which the participant Themes are subject to. As discussed in the previous section, participant Themes are different from individual, temporal, spatial and situational Themes. Only the participant Theme of a sentence is truly what the sentence is about and is the topic of the sentence (Downing, 1991). This definition shows that what Downing calls participant Theme in some ways equals to what Gundel (1985) calls pragmatic topic. Hence, the conditions of topics suggested by Gundel are expected to be applicable to participant Themes.

First, under the definition that participant Themes must be participants of sentences (i.e. subjects, direct and indirect objects), participant Themes must be nominal and denoting entities. The most common type of participant Themes is NPs. In addition to NPs, participant Themes can be clauses, and other nominalized elements such as nominalized verbs, adjectives and adverbs. The idea that participant Themes must be nominal is not new. It has been suggested by Chu (1993, 1998) that one of the primary attributes of topics in Chinese sentences is being nominal.

In addition, Gundel (1988) claims that topics are relationally given and comments are relationally new. The example in (61) shows that it is the case in Chinese. The topical Themes must be relationally given and thus cannot be newer than the Rhemes.

- (61) A: *Zhangsan zhao-dao-le shenme?*
 Zhangsan find-ASP-ASP what
 ‘What did Zhangsan find?’
- B₁: **PARTICIPANT THEME** **RHEME**
Ta a *zhao-dao-le nide gou.*
 he TOP find-ASP-ASL your dog
 ‘He found your dog.’
- B₂: **PARTICIPANT THEME** **RHEME**
#Nide gou a *ta zhao-dao-le.*
 your dog TOP he find-ASP-ASP
 ‘Your dog, he found (it).’

In the above example, B₂, although being grammatically correct, is an infelicitous answer to A. The problem with B₂ is that, the participant Theme ‘your dog’ is relationally new compared to the Rheme. B₁ is more acceptable because the participant Theme ‘he’ is relationally given and the Rheme ‘found your dog’ is relationally new. (62) is another example. In (62), B₁ is a less preferable to A than B₂ and B₃ because the participant Theme ‘Zhangsan’ in B₁ is relationally new and the participant Theme in B₂ ‘your dog’ is relationally given. B₃, a *SHI...DE* focus construction, appears to be the best answer to A. I will return to this type of sentence in the next chapter.

- (62) A: *Shui zhao-dao-le wode gou?*
 who find-ASP-ASP my dog
 ‘Who found my dog?’
- B₁: **PARTICIPANT THEME** **RHEME**
#Zhangsan a zhao-dao-le nide gou.
 Zhangsan TOP find-ASP-ASP your dog
 ‘Zhangsan found your dog.’
- B₂: **PARTICIPANT THEME** **RHEME**
Nide gou a Zhangsan zhao-dao-le.
 your dog TOP Zhangsan find-ASP-ASP
 ‘Your dog, Zhangsan found (it).’
- B₃ *Shi Zhangsan zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 SHI Zhangsan find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It’s Zhangsan who found your dog.’

The third restriction on Chinese sentence-initial elements is Gundel’s (1988) Topic-Familiarity Condition. This condition requires that topics (=topical Themes in Chinese) must refer to entities which are familiar to the speaker and the addressee. Gundel furthermore provides a weaker version of this condition—Topical-Identifiability Condition—which requires that topics must be at least uniquely identifiable. Cross-linguistically, uniquely identifiability is generally realized as definite NPs (Gundel, Hedberg & Zacharski, 1993). (63) is the Chinese Givenness Hierarchy proposed by Gundel et al, which shows the Chinese linguistic realizations of NPs correspond to different cognitive statuses. According to the Givenness Hierarchy and Gundel’s (1988) topic conditions, participant Themes in Chinese sentences cannot be NPs with indefinite

article *yi* ‘one/a’ or bare NPs, which are associated with entities that are type-identifiable. As mentioned earlier, when the participant Themes are indefinite NPs, the sentences are unacceptable, as shown in (64) and (65).

(63) The Chinese Givenness Hierarchy (based on Gundel et al, 1993, p. 284)

in focus	>	activated	>	familiar	>	uniquely identifiable	>	referential	>	type identifiable
$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \emptyset \\ ta \\ 's/he \\ it' \end{array} \right\}$		$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} TA \\ zhe \text{ 'this'} \\ nei \text{ 'that'} \\ zhe N \end{array} \right\}$				{ <i>nei</i> N}				$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} yi N \text{ 'a N'} \\ \emptyset N \end{array} \right\}$

(64) a. **PARTICIPANT THEME**
**Yi-ge ren (a) lai-le.*
 one-CL person TOP come-ASP
 ‘A person has come.’

b. **PARTICIPANT THEME**
Nei-ge ren (a) lai-le.
 that-CL person TOP come-ASP
 ‘That person has come.’

(65) a. **PARTICIPANT THEME**
**Yi-tiao gou (a) wo zhao-dao-le.*
 one-CL dog TOP I find-ASP-ASP
 ‘A dog, I found (it).’

b. **PARTICIPANT THEME**
Nei-tiao gou (a) wo zhao-dao-le.
 that-CL dog TOP I find-ASP-ASP
 ‘That dog, I found (it).’

Although the Chinese Givenness Hierarchy provided by Gundel et al (1993) suggests that, governed by Grice’s maxim of quantity, bare noun is not the most appropriate form for uniquely identifiable entities, bare nouns commonly function as participant Themes, as shown below.

(66) **PARTICIPANT THEME**
Xuesheng (a) hen xihuan ta.
 student TOP very like him
 ‘(The) students like him very much.’

(67) **PARTICIPANT THEME**
Gou (a) wo bu xihuan.
 dog TOP I not like
 ‘(The) dogs, I don’t like (them) very much.’

It is argued by Chen and Sybesma (1999) that Chinese bare nouns can be interpreted as indefinite. This is shown in the following example. According to Chen and Sybesma, ‘book’ in (68) is interpreted as an indefinite NP.

- (68) *Huifei mai shu qu le.*
 Huifei buy book go ASP
 ‘Huifei went to buy a book/books.’

(Chen & Sybesma, 1999, p. 510)

However, according to Li and Thompson (1981), Chinese bare nouns, when appear sentence-initially, are always interpreted as definite or generic. The indefinite reading probably only arises when bare nouns appear in non-topical positions. Thus, in (66) and (67), Gundel’s (1988) Topic-Familiarity Condition is not violated because the initial NPs are not indefinite or unfamiliar. They are interpreted either as definite or generic NPs.

In this section, I have shown that participant Themes in Chinese are subject to three conditions. First, they must be nominal. Second, they must be given in relation to the Rheme. Finally, they must be either definite or generic (i.e. satisfying the Topical-Familiarity Condition).

3.3.2 Individual Themes

Individual Themes establish individual frameworks where the main predications hold. Under this definition, individual Themes must be nominal and denoting entities as well. However, unlike participant Themes, it appears that in (69), individual Themes do not have to satisfy the Topic-Familiarity Condition. The individual Theme ‘a dog’ is an indefinite NP and it does not have a specific reference. It is type identifiable. However, (69) is acceptable.

- (69) **INDIVIDUAL THEME**
Yi-tiao gou (a). *jiaqian keyi hen gui.*
 one-CL dog TOP price can very expensive
 ‘The price of a dog can be very expensive.’ (literally)

However, (70) shows that when the modal *keyi* ‘can’ is removed from the above sentence, the sentence becomes unacceptable.

- (70) **INDIVIDUAL THEME**
**Yi-tiao* gou (a), *jiaqian* *hen* *gui*.
 one-CL dog TOP price very expensive
 ‘The price of a dog is very expensive.’ (literally)

It is unclear why (69) is acceptable while (70) is not. I suspect that it is the epistemic modal that affects the result in (69). The examples in (71) show that whether a sentence with an indefinite individual Theme is acceptable depends on the “value” of the modal (Zhu, 1996). The sentence with a higher-value modal *yidin* ‘must’ is less acceptable than a sentence with a lower-value modal such as *yinggai* ‘should’. It appears that the higher the value of the modal, the less likely that an indefinite individual Theme is acceptable.

- (71) a. **INDIVIDUAL THEME**
**Yi-tiao* gou (a), *jiaqian* *yidin* *hen* *gui*.
 one-CL dog TOP price must very expensive
 ‘The price of a dog must be very expensive.’ (literally)
- b. **INDIVIDUAL THEME**
Yi-tiao gou (a), *jiaqian* *yinggai* *hen* *gui*.
 one-CL dog TOP price should very expensive
 ‘The price of a dog should be very expensive.’ (literally)

I suggest that it is the pragmatic factors that lead to the above results. I conclude that in usual cases, for example, when modals are not involved, individual Themes cannot be indefinite, as shown in (70). Thus, Gundel’s (1988) Topic Familiarity-Condition generally applies to individual Themes.

The following data suggest that in addition to the Topic-Familiarity Condition, individual Themes also have to be relationally given. The individual Theme cannot be newer in relation to the Rheme.

- (72) A: *Shenme* *shi* *ne* *zui* *guide* *dongxi?*
 what be you most expensive thing
 ‘What is the most expensive thing you have?’

- INDIVIDUAL THEME**
 B₁: *#Wode* *fangzi* (ne) *jiaqian* *zui* *gui*.
 my house TOP price most expensive
 ‘The price of my house is the most expensive.’ (literally)

B₂: *Wo zui guide dongxi shi wode fangzi.*
 I most expensive thing be my house
 ‘The most expensive thing I have is my house.’

3.3.3 Temporal, Spatial and Situational Themes

The data show that the circumstantial Thematic elements—temporal, spatial and situational Themes—are not restricted by the Topic-Familiarity Condition. Unrecoverable or non-specific time, location and situation are possible topical Themes, as shown in the examples in (73)-(75). In the examples, although it is very likely that the speaker knows the specific background information (time, location and reason) of the sentences, the speaker decides not to provide these specific pieces of information to the addressee.

- (73) **TEMPORAL THEME**
Zai yi-ge shijian (a) wo kan-jian ni.
 at one-CL time TOP I see-ASP you
 ‘At a time, I saw you.’
- (74) **SPATIAL THEME**
Zai yi-ge difang (a) wo zhao-dao nide gou.
 at one-CL place TOP I find-ASP your dog
 ‘At a place, I found your dog.’
- (75) **SITUATIONAL THEME**
Yinwei yi-xie yuanyin (a) wo bu lai le.
 because one-CL reason TOP I not come PRT
 ‘For some reasons, I am not coming.’

The above discussion shows that the Topic-Familiarity Condition does not apply to these circumstantial Themes. However, the following data suggest that as topical Themes, they still need to be relationally given. In other words, these Themes cannot be newer than the Rhemes. In all of the following examples, B₂ are better answers to A than B₁. In all of the B₁ sentences, the topical Themes are relationally new compared to the rest of the sentence. In B₂, no relationally new elements appear in topical Theme positions.

- (76) A: *Ni shenme shijian lai?*
 you what time come
 ‘When will you come?’

- B₁: **TEMPORAL THEME**
 #*Mingtian* (ne) wo hui lai.
 tomorrow TOP I will come
 ‘Tomorrow, I will come.’
- B₂: *Wo shi mingtian hui lai.*
 I SHI tomorrow will come
 ‘It is tomorrow that I will come.’
- (77) A: *Ni zai nali jian-dao ta?*
 you at where see-ASP him
 ‘Where did you see him?’
- B₁: **SPATIAL THEME**
 #*Zai gongyuan-li* (ne) wo jian-dao ta.
 at park-in TOP I see-ASP him
 ‘In the park, I saw him.’
- B₂: *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li jian-dao ta.*
 I SHI at park-in see-ASP him
 ‘It is in the park that I saw him.’
- (78) A: *Ni weishenme bu lai?*
 you why not come
 ‘Why didn’t you come?’
- B₁: **SITUATIONAL THEME**
 #*Yinwei ta zai* (ne) wo bu lai.
 because he at TOP I not come
 ‘Because he was there, I did not come.’
- B₂: *Wo bu lai shi yinwei ta zai.*
 I not come SHI because he at
 ‘That I did not come is because he was there.’

3.3.4 Impossible Topical Themes

The above discussion shows that in Chinese, topical Themes are subject to the familiarity and relational givenness conditions. In addition to these conditions, there is an additional restriction applying on the sentence-initial elements. As mentioned earlier, Chinese has five types of topical Themes—participant, individual, temporal, spatial and situational. This classification of sentence-initial in Chinese is an exhaustive list. In other words, no other elements can appear sentence-initially and serve as topical Theme. The examples in (79) show

that elements such as verbs, VPs, AdjP and AdvPs are not possible topical Themes. They cannot be topical Themes because they do not belong to any one of the five types of topical Themes that Chinese allows. However, nominalized verbs are possible topical Themes, as shown in (80) (Zhu, 1997). The topical Theme in (80), although it is verb-like, is a nominalized element and is the participant of the sentence. Therefore, it is analyzed as a participant Theme.

- (79) a. **Gei, wo ni yi-ben shu.*
 give I you one-CL book
 ‘Give, I you a book.’
- b. **Gei ni yi-ben shu, wo.*
 give you one-CL book I
 ‘Give you a book, I (do).’
- c. **Hen Meili, ta.*
 very pretty she
 ‘Very pretty, she (is).’
- d. **Hen kuai, ta paobu.*
 very quick he run
 ‘Very quickly, he runs.’
- (80) **PARTICIPANT THEME**
 Youyong, *wo* *xihuan.*
 swimming I like
 ‘Swimming, I like.’

3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter first reviews the existing approaches to sentence-initial elements by Chafe (1967), Gundel (1985, 1988), Halliday (1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) and Downing (1991). I have shown that these approaches are problematic when they are used to analyze Chinese sentences. I have also shown that Downing’s approach to topical Themes is the most appropriate model to account for the pattern and the behavior of topical (or topical Thematic) elements in Chinese, a topic-prominent language. To allow Downing’s model to be completely applicable to Chinese, it has been modified by adding to the existing model an extra type of topical Theme—individual Theme.

The second part of the chapter is the application of the modified version of Downing's (1991) classification of topical Themes to the Chinese data. Chinese allows five types of topical Themes—participant, individual, temporal, spatial, and situational. I have shown that Chinese topical elements must belong to one of the five types of topical Themes and serve the corresponding functions. Therefore, elements, such as VPs, that do not belong to one of the types are impossible topics or topical Themes.

The last part of this chapter lists the conditions which the topical elements have to satisfy. The data show that all topical Themes must be given in relation to the Rheme (I call this “Relational Givenness Condition”). In addition, Gundel's (1988) familiarity conditions have been tested with the data. The data suggest that only participant and individual Themes are subject to this condition and must be familiar to the speaker and the addressee.

The aim of this chapter is to provide a list of conditions in Chinese that the sentence-initial elements, or topical Themes, have to satisfy. (81) summarizes the findings. As mentioned above, first, a topical element must belong to one of the five types of topical Themes and serve the corresponding function. Second, it must also satisfy the corresponding familiarity and relational givenness conditions. For example, a temporal Theme must be a temporal adjunct (or other possible linguistics forms) that denotes time and thus establishes a temporal framework. In addition, it must be relationally given. These conditions applying on the topical Themes are known as “Topical Theme Conditions”.

(81) Chinese Topical Theme Conditions:

- a. **Participant Theme (P.T.)**
Typical linguistic forms: NP, nominal clause, nominalized element
Denotation: Entity (participant)
Conditions: Topic-Familiarity Condition, Relational Givenness Condition
- b. **Individual Theme (I.T.)**
Typical linguistic forms: NP, nominal clause, nominalized element
Denotation: Entity (non-participant)
Conditions: Topic-Familiarity Condition, Relational Givenness Condition

- c. **Temporal Theme (T.T.)**
Typical linguistic forms: Temporal adjunct (usually PP)
Denotation: Time
Condition: Relational Givenness Condition
- d. **Spatial Theme (SP.T.)**
Typical linguistic forms: Locative adjunct (usually PP)
Denotation: Location
Condition: Relational Givenness Condition
- e. **Situational Theme (ST.T.)**
Typical linguistic forms: Situational adjunct (e.g. clause)
Denotation: Situation (e.g. purpose, cause, conditional)
Condition: Relational Givenness Condition

In the next chapter, I will apply these topical Theme conditions to *SHI...DE* focus constructions. I will show that these conditions apply to *SHI...DE* focus constructions as they do in regular sentences. Moreover, these conditions explain some of the ungrammatical cases of *SHI...DE* sentences, such as the direct- and indirect-object focused cases mentioned in chapter 2.

4 ACCOUNTING FOR THE FORM OF *SHI...DE* FOCUS CONSTRUCTIONS

This chapter aims at accounting for the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. Based on the discussion in the previous chapter, I will first justify Zhu's (1997) claim that the *SHI...DE* focus construction is a Theme-Rheme structure and *shi* plays a dual role in this type of sentence—as a contrastive focus marker and as a Theme-Rheme separator. The next two sections of this chapter discuss the formation of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. I am going to show that the form of a *SHI...DE* focus construction is determined by four factors—the *shi* rule, the topical Theme conditions, the word order and the strong topic fronting rule. With these four factors, it is possible to account for the forms of different types of *SHI...DE* focus constructions.

4.1 *SHI...DE* Focus Construction as a Theme-Rheme Structure

In this section, I am going to discuss Zhu's (1997) claim that the *SHI...DE* focus construction is a type of topic-comment (Theme-Rheme) structure. Zhu argues that *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions, in addition to being a contrastive focus marker, is also a separator between topic and comment (i.e. Theme and Rheme). Zhu's claim entails that in a *SHI...DE* sentence, all pre-*shi* elements are Thematic and all post-*shi* elements are Rhematic. In this section, the Thematic status of the pre-*shi* elements in *SHI...DE* focus constructions will be tested against the topical Theme conditions discussed in the previous chapter. I will show that all pre-*shi* elements of regular *SHI...DE* focus constructions, as topical Themes, are subject to those conditions.

Zhu's (1997) claim that *shi* is a Theme-Rheme separator does not explain two cases of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. In what Zhu calls all-comment clefts, there is no topical Theme. In addition, in verb- and adjunct-focused *SHI...DE* focus constructions, *shi* does not appear to function as a strict separator between topic and comment (Theme and Rheme). The solutions to

these special cases will be discussed later in the chapter. In this section, I limit the discussion to the basic cases.

4.1.1 Topic Marker Test

Before applying the topical Theme conditions to test the Thematic status of the pre-*shi* elements in *SHI...DE* focus constructions, I will use the topic marker test to show that all pre-*shi* elements in *SHI...DE* focus constructions are topical Themes. The following examples show that the optional topic marker *a* cannot be used to mark the post-*shi* elements. However, all pre-*shi* elements can be marked by *a* (or other topic markers). In addition, the data suggest that the topic marker can be used more than once. (As mentioned in the previous chapter, multiple topical Themes of different types are possible, under Downing's (1991) approach.)

- (1) a. *Wo a shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I TOP SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 'It was in the park that I found your dog.'
- b. **Wo shi zai gongyuan-li a zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in TOP find-ASP your dog DE
- c. *Wo a zai gongyuan-li a shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I TOP at park-in TOP SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 'It was finding your dog that I did in the park.'
- d. **Wo zai gongyuan-li shi zhao-dao a nide gou de.*
 I at park-in SHI find-ASP TOP your dog DE
- e. **Wo zai gongyuan-li shi zhao-dao nide gou a de.*
 I at park-in SHI find-ASP your dog TOP DE

4.1.2 Topical Theme Conditions

This section uses the topical Theme conditions to justify Zhu's (1997) claim that *shi* is a Theme-Rheme separator in *SHI...DE* focus constructions. I will show that while all of the pre-*shi* elements in a *SHI...DE* focus construction are subject to the topical Theme conditions, all of the post-*shi* elements are not restricted by these conditions. The first type of *SHI...DE* focus construction to look at is those that involve participant Themes. As discussed in the previous

chapter, participant Themes must satisfy both the Topic-Familiarity Condition and the Relational Givenness Condition.

The Topic-Familiarity Condition requires that the participant NP in the pre-*shi* position of a *SHI...DE* focus construction must be familiar to the speaker and the addressee and therefore must not be indefinite. The following examples show that this is the case. Indefinite NPs cannot appear in the pre-*shi* position of *SHI...DE* focus constructions.

- (2) a. **P.T.**
**Yi-ge ren shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 one-CL person SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was in the park that a person found your dog.’
- b. **P.T.**
Nei-ge ren shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.
 that-CL person SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was in the park that that person found your dog.’

The Relational Givenness Condition requires the pre-*shi* participant NP to be relationally given. The following examples show that the pre-*shi* participant NP is subject to this condition and thus is a topical Theme. In (3), B₁ is a less acceptable answer to A compared to B₂. In B₁, ‘I’ is relationally new and this is a violation of the Relational Givenness Condition. (4B) does not violate the Relational Givenness Condition because the pre-*shi* participant ‘Zhangsan’ is relationally given.

- (3) A: *Shui zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao wode gou?*
 who at park-in find-ASP my dog
 ‘Who found my dog in the park?’
- B₁: **P.T.**
#Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was finding your dog in the park that that I did.’
- B₂: *Shi wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 SHI I at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was me who found your dog in the park.’
- (4) A: *Zhangsan zuo-le shenme?*
 Zhangsan do-ASP what
 ‘What did Zhangsan do?’

B: **P.T.**
Zhangsan shi zhao-dao nide gou de.
 Zhangsan SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It’s finding your dog that Zhangsan did.’

The Topic-Familiarity and Relational Givenness Conditions also apply to individual Themes, as mentioned in the previous chapter. The following data show that these conditions apply to the pre-*shi* individual elements in *SHI...DE* focus constructions. (5) shows that the pre-*shi* individual elements in *SHI...DE* focus constructions must be definite. Thus, the Topic-Familiarity Condition applies. (6) shows that the pre-*shi* individual elements are subject to the Relational Givenness Condition. They cannot be newer than the Rheme (i.e. the post-*shi* part).

- (5) a. **INDIVIDUAL THEME**
**Yi-gen nuren, toufa shi hen chang de.*
 One-CL woman hair SHI very long DE
 ‘A woman, the hair is very long.’
 ‘A woman’s hair is very long.’ (literally)
- b. **INDIVIDUAL THEME**
Nei-gen nuren, toufa shi hen chang de.
 That-CL woman hair SHI very long DE
 ‘That woman, the hair is very long.’
 ‘That woman’s hair is very long.’ (literally)
- (6) A: *Shenme shi ne zui guide dongxi?*
 what be you most expensive thing
 ‘What is the most expensive thing you have?’
- INDIVIDUAL THEME**
- B₁: *#Wode fangzi jianqian shi hen gui de.*
 my house price SHI very expensive DE
 ‘As for my house, it is very expensive that the price is.’
- B₂: *Wo zui guide dongxi shi wode fangzi.*
 I most expensive thing be my house
 ‘The most expensive thing I have is my house.’

If *shi* truly functions as a Theme-Rheme separator in *SHI...DE* focus constructions, the topical Theme conditions should also apply to the pre-*shi* circumstantial elements. Unlike participant and individual Themes, temporal, spatial and situational Themes only need to satisfy the Relational Givenness Condition. The examples in (7)-(9) show that this is true. In these examples, all B₁ sentences are inappropriate answers to A and all B₂ sentences are good answers.

The problem with the B₁ sentences is that the pre-*shi* circumstantial elements are not relationally given. This is a violation of the Relational Givenness Condition.

(7) A: *Ni shenme shijian keye lai?*
 you what time can come
 ‘When can you come?’

B₁: **TEMPORAL THEME**
 #*Mingtian* wo shi keyi lai de.
 tomorrow I SHI can come DE
 ‘Tomorrow, it’s being able to come that I am.’

B₂: *Wo shi mingtian keyi lai de.*
 I SHI tomorrow can come DE
 ‘It’s tomorrow that I can come.’

(8) A: *Ni zai nali jian-dao ta?*
 you at where see-ASP him
 ‘Where did you see him?’

B₁: **SPATIAL THEME**
 #*Zai gongyuan-li* wo shi jian-dao ta de.
 at park-in I SHI see-ASP him DE
 ‘In the park, it’s seeing him that I did.’

B₂: *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li jian-dao ta de.*
 I SHI at park-in see-ASP him DE
 ‘It’s in the park that I saw him.’

(9) A: *Ni weishenme bu lai?*
 you why not come
 ‘Why didn’t you come?’

B₁: **SITUATIONAL THEME**
 #*Wo bing-le,* wo shi bu lai.
 I be sick-ASP I SHI not come
 ‘I was sick, it’s not coming that I did.’

B₂: *Wo bu lai de yuanyin shi wo bing-le de.*
 I not come MOD reason SHI I be sick-ASP DE
 ‘The reason I did not come was that I was sick.’

The above discussion shows that all pre-*shi* elements in *SHI...DE* focus constructions are topical Themes because they are all subject to the topical Theme conditions. Next, I am going to show that the elements following *shi* are not Thematic. In other words, the post-*shi* elements of *SHI...DE* focus constructions are the Rhemes. The first piece of evidence is that while the pre-*shi*

participants are subject to the Topic-Familiarity Condition and the Relational Givenness Condition, the post-*shi* participants are not subject to these conditions.

(10) *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao yi-tiao gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP one-CL dog DE
 ‘It was in the park that I found a dog.’

(11) A: *Ni zai gongyuan-li zuo-le shenme?*
 you at park-in do-ASP what
 ‘What did you do in the park?’

B: *Wo zai gongyuan-li shi zhao-dao yi-tiao gou de.*
 I at park-in SHI find-ASP one-CL dog DE
 ‘It was find a dog that I did in the park.’

In (10), the post-*shi* participant ‘a dog’ is indefinite and the sentence is grammatical. This shows that ‘a dog’ is not subject to the Topic-Familiarity Condition. In (11), ‘a dog’ in the post-*shi* part of the sentence is relationally new. The acceptability of the sentence shows that the post-*shi* participant is not subject to the Relational Givenness Condition. Thus, post-*shi* participants are not topical Themes. They are instead part of the Rhemes of the sentences.

The following examples show that the post-*shi* circumstantial elements—temporal adjunct (in (12)), spatial adjunct (in (13)) and situational adjunct (in (14))—are not topical Themes. These adjuncts are relationally new; however, the sentences are acceptable. Thus, these adjuncts are not subject to the Relational Givenness Condition and therefore they are not topical Themes. Instead, they are parts of the Rhemes of the sentences. (Unlike participants and circumstances that can appear before and after *shi*, Chinese does not have post-*shi* individual elements that serve as the counterparts of individual Themes that appear before *shi*. Therefore, individual elements are not involved in this test.)

(12) A: *Ni shenme shijian keye lai?*
 you what time can come
 ‘When can you come?’

B: *Wo shi mingtian keyi lai de.*
 I SHI tomorrow can come DE
 ‘It’s tomorrow that I can come.’

- (13) A: *Ni zai nali jian-dao ta?*
 you at where see-ASP him
 ‘Where did you see him?’
- B: *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li jian-dao ta de.*
 I SHI at park-in see-ASP him DE
 ‘It’s in the park that I saw him.’
- (14) A: *Ni zenme lai?*
 you how come
 ‘How did you come?’
- B: *Wo shi zoulu lai de.*
 I SHI walk come DE
 ‘I came on foot.’

This section shows that Zhu’s (1997) claim that *shi* is a Theme-Rheme separator in *SHI...DE* focus constructions is correct. In a *SHI...DE* focus construction, the pre-*shi* part is Thematic and therefore all elements in that part are subject to the topical Theme conditions. The post-*shi* part is Rhematic and the elements there do not need to satisfy those conditions.

4.1.3 Variations of *SHI...DE* Focus Construction

In the previous section, I have shown that the *SHI...DE* focus construction is a Theme-Rheme structure with *shi* carrying a dual function—as a contrastive focus marker (discussed in chapter 2) and as a separator between topical Theme and Rheme. In this section, I will use the modified version of Downing’s (1991) classification of topical Themes to analyze various types of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. (15) are the variations of *SHI...DE* focus construction discussed in chapter 2. In this section, I will focus on the grammatical cases in (15a-c). The ungrammatical cases in (15d-e) will be discussed in the section 4.2.

- (15) a. Subject focus/sentence focus:
 SHI-[subject]-adjunct-verb-object-DE
 SHI-[subject-adjunct-verb-object]-DE
- Shi wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 SHI I at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It’s me who found your dog in the park.’
 ‘It’s the case that I found your dog in the park.’

- b. Adjunct/VP focus:
 Subject-SHI-[adjunct]-verb-object-DE
 Subject-SHI-[adjunct-verb-object]-DE

Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It’s in the park that I found your dog.’
 ‘It’s finding your dog in the park that I did.’

- c. VP/verb focus:
 Subject-adjunct-SHI-[verb-object]-DE
 Subject-adjunct-SHI-[verb]-object-DE

Wo zai gongyuan-li shi zhao-dao nide gou de.
 I at park-in SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It’s finding your dog that I did in the park.’
 ‘It’s finding that I did to your dog in the park.’

- d. Direct object focus:
 *Subject-adjunct-verb-SHI-[direct object]-DE

**Wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao shi nide gou de.*
 I at park-in find-ASP SHI your dog DE
 ‘It’s your dog that I found in the park.’

- e. Indirect object focus:
 *Subject-adjunct-verb-SHI-[indirect object]-direct object-DE

**Wo gei-le shi ta yi-ben shu de.*
 I give-ASP SHI him one-CL book DE
 ‘It was (to) him that I gave a book.’

In all of the grammatical cases (in (15a-c)), all pre-*shi* elements are possible topical Themes. That is, they all belong to one of the five types of topical Themes (participant, individual, temporal, spatial and situational). (15a) is an exceptional case where there is no pre-*shi* element. This special case will be discussed in section 4.4. In (b), ‘I’ is the participant Theme. In (c), there is a spatial Theme ‘in the park’ and a participant Theme ‘I’ in the pre-*shi* position.

(16)-(19) are additional examples which show that the pre-*shi* elements of the grammatical *SHI...DE* focus constructions always belong to one of the five types of topical Themes. The pre-*shi* elements in (16) are individual and participant Themes. (17) shows temporal and participant Themes appearing before *shi*. (18) shows an example of *SHI...DE* focus

constructions that contain spatial and participant Themes and (19) shows an example of *SHI...DE* focus constructions that contain situational and participant Themes.

- (16) **I.T.** Nide fangzi **P.T.** jiaqian *shi* *hen* *gui* *de.*
 your house price SHI very expensive DE
 ‘Your house, it is very expensive that the price is.’
- (17) **T.T.** Zuotian **P.T.** feng *shi* *tebie* *da* *de.*
 yesterday wind SHI especially big DE
 ‘Yesterday, it was especially strong the wind was.’
- (18) **SP.T** Zai gongyuan-li **P.T.** wo *shi* *kanjian* *ta* *de.*
 at park-in I SHI see him DE
 ‘In the park, it was seeing him that I did.’
- (19) **ST.T** Fansheng-le yiwai, **P.T.** ta *shi* *shou-le-shang* *de.*
 happen-ASP accident he SHI receive-ASP-injury DE
 ‘An accident occurred, it was getting injured that he was.’

In chapter 2, I listed all the possible types of *SHI...DE* focus construction based on givenness/newness, repeated as (20) below.

- (20) a. given information - *shi* - new information - (*de*)
 b. *shi* - new information - (*de*)
 c. *shi* - new information - given information - (*de*)
 d. given information - *shi* - new information - given information - (*de*)

If *shi* is a strict separator between Theme and Rheme, (20a) is considered the unmarked form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions, where the Theme-Rheme division is clear. (20b-c) are special cases where no Thematic material is present. (20d) is another special case where some given information does not become part of the Theme. In the next section, I will first discuss the formation of the most basic type of *SHI...DE* focus constructions (i.e.(20a)) and then the *SHI...DE* focus constructions with “stranded” Themes (i.e. (20d)). The other two cases will be discussed in section 4.4.

4.2 Formation of *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions

In this section, I am going to provide an account for the various forms of *SHI...DE* focus construction shown in the previous section. I will show that the form of a *SHI...DE* focus construction is determined by three factors—the *shi* rule, the topical Theme conditions and the word order rule.

The data suggest that these factors are ranked according to their strengths. The concept that involves ranking of factors originates from Optimality Theory. Within the Optimality Theoretic framework, a factor (or a constraint) that is stronger means that it can override the weaker factors. In other words, while the ideal case is that all factors are satisfied, in the case that two factors cannot be satisfied at the same time, the stronger factor has to be satisfied at the expense of not satisfying the weaker one. Moreover, being unable to satisfy a stronger factor is considered a more severe violation than being unable to satisfy a weaker one. A grammatical sentence is always the best one, where best is defined as committing the least number of violations and the violations are the least severe. In this chapter, I will not deal with the technical issues of Optimality Theory. Formal Optimality-Theoretic analysis of *SHI...DE* focus constructions will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.2.1 *Shi* Rule

As mentioned in chapter 2, *shi* as a contrastive focus marker is inserted in the pre-focus position by an insertion rule, repeated as (21) below.

$$(21) \quad (x_n)_{\text{Foc}} \rightarrow \textit{shi} (x_n) \quad (\text{Hengeveld, 1990, p. 307})$$

This rule appears to be the sole factor that determines the form of *SHI...DE* focus construction. For example, *shi* is inserted before the contrastive focus ‘find your dog’ in (22B₂).

$$(22) \quad \text{A:} \quad \begin{array}{llllll} \textit{Ni} & \textit{zai} & \textit{gongyuan-li} & \textit{zuo-le} & \textit{shenme?} \\ \text{you} & \text{at} & \text{park-in} & \text{do-ASP} & \text{what} \\ & & \text{‘What did you do in the park?’} \end{array}$$

B₁: *Wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou.*
 I at park-in find-ASP your dog
 ‘I found your dog in the park.’

B₂: *Wo zai gongyuan-li shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I at park-in SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was find your dog that I did in the park.’

Note that, however, *shi* is more than a contrastive focus marker, as suggested by Zhu (1997) and argued in the previous section. *Shi* has a dual function. The insertion of *shi* in a sentence does not only mark the contrastive focus, but also draws the boundary between the topical Theme(s) and the Rheme. For example, in (22B₂), *shi* clearly separates the topical Themes (the participant Theme ‘I’ and the spatial Theme ‘in the park’) and the Rheme ‘find your dog’. *Shi* truly functions as a Theme-Rheme separator in this sentence. In these unmarked cases of *SHI...DE* focus construction (i.e. (20a)), all given information are found before *shi* and all new information are found after *shi*. (The other cases of *SHI...DE* focus construction listed in (20b-d) will be discussed later.)

To ensure that the output sentence has the unmarked form as shown in (20a), when inserting *shi* in a sentence, there are two considerations. First, as a contrastive focus marker, *shi* has to be inserted immediately before the contrastive focus. This rule also ensures that no new element appears before *shi*, the Thematic position. Second, no given element should appear after *shi*, the Rhematic position.

The *shi* insertion rule needs to be modified. The modified rule does not only need to require *shi* inserted immediately before the contrastive focus, but it also needs to ensure that all given elements go before, not after, *shi*. I call this rule “*shi* rule”. This rule consists of two components. First, *shi* has to be inserted immediately before the contrastive focus. Second, no given information is allowed to appear after *shi*. In the next chapter, I will show that it is more desirable to divide this rule into two separate rules. However, for simplicity reasons, I treat it as a single rule for now.

The effects of the *shi* rule explain why (23B) is not an appropriate answer to (23A). In (23B), *shi* is inserted before the spatial adjunct ‘in the park’. This insertion leads to two undesirable results. First, the contrastive focus of this sentence, which is expected to be ‘find your dog’, becomes either ‘find your dog in the park’ or ‘in the park’. Second, the spatial adjunct ‘in the park’, which is given, is forced to remain after *shi* and become a part of the Rheme.

- (23) A: *Ni zai gongyuan-li zuo-le shenme?*
 you at park-in do-ASP what
 ‘What did you do in the park?’
- B: *#Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was find your dog in the park that I did.’
 ‘It was in the park that I found your dog.’

4.2.2 Topical Theme Conditions

Ideally, the *shi* rule should account for all varieties of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. However, the ungrammatical direct and indirect object focused *SHI...DE* focus constructions show that the *shi* rule is not the only rule that determines the form of *SHI...DE* sentences. The following are examples of direct and indirect object focused *SHI...DE* focus constructions.

- (24) A: *Ni zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao-le shenme?*
 you at park-in find-ASP-ASP what
 ‘What did you find in the park?’
- B: **Wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao shi nide gou de.*
 I at park-in find-ASP SHI your dog DE
 ‘It was your dog that I found in the park.’
- (25) A: *Ni gei-le shui yi-xie dongxi?*
 you give-ASP who one-CL thing
 ‘Who did you give something to?’
- B: **Wo gei-le shi Zhangsan yi-ben shu de.*
 I give-ASP SHI Zhangsan one-CL book DE
 ‘It was Zhangsan that I gave a book to.’

If the *shi* rule is the only rule that accounts for the form of *SHI...DE* focus construction, the above B sentences are expected to be grammatical. In both cases, the *shi* rule is not violated.

Shi has been inserted in the correct position—it appears immediately before the contrastive focus. In addition, there is no given information following *shi*. All given information appears before *shi* (in the Thematic position) and all new information appears after *shi* (in the Rhematic position). Although the *shi* rule is satisfied, the above sentences are ungrammatical. This suggests that the *shi* rule is not the sole factor that determines the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions.

As mentioned in chapter 2, the ungrammaticality of the above sentences is explained by a linear constraint proposed by Luo (1992), which restricts the occurrence of *shi* in post-verbal position, as shown in (26) below.

- (26) Linear constraint:
*X MAIN VERB *shi* Y (Luo, 1992, p. 58)

While Luo (1992) does not provide an explanation for this constraint, the finding in the previous section explains it. As mentioned earlier in section 4.1.2, all pre-*shi* elements of a *SHI...DE* focus construction must be topical Themes. Therefore, they are subject to the topical Theme conditions. In the ungrammatical sentences (24B) and (25B), not all pre-*shi* elements are possible topical Themes. In both cases, the main verb that appears before *shi* is not a possible topical Theme because it does not belong to any one of the five types of topical Themes and does not serve any of their functions. The Thematic analyses of (24B) and (25B) are shown below.

- (27) a. **P.T.** **SP.T** **??**
**Wo* *zai* *gongyuan-li* *zhao-dao* *shi* *nide* *gou* *de*.
I at park-in find-ASP SHI your dog DE
‘It was your dog that I found in the park.’
- b. **P.T.** **??**
**Wo* *gei-le* *shi* *Zhangsan* *yi-ben* *shu* *de*.
I give-ASP SHI Zhangsan one-CL book DE
‘It was Zhangsan that I gave a book to.’

The ungrammatical results of (24B) and (25B) can be explained as having elements in the Thematic positions that do not satisfy the topical Theme conditions. Thus, direct and indirect object focused *SHI...DE* focus constructions are not available in Chinese due to the topical Theme conditions, which explain the linear constraint. In order to express direct and indirect

object focused propositions, alternative forms have to be sought. Zhu (1997) has pointed out that the pseudo-cleft construction in Chinese is an alternative form that fills the gap of “cleft sentences”, that is, *SHI...DE* focus constructions. In fact, it is the case that Chinese pseudo-clefts are commonly used in lieu of “clefts” when direct object and indirect object are the foci. The following are examples of pseudo-clefts.

- (28) a. **PARTICIPANT THEME**
Wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao de shi nide gou.
 I at park-in find-ASP NOM BE your dog
 ‘What I found in the park was your dog.’
- b. **PARTICIPANT THEME**
Wo gei-le yi-ben shu de ren shi Zhangsan.
 I give-ASP one-CL book MOD person BE Zhangsan
 ‘The person I gave a book to was Zhangsan.’

In both of the pseudo-cleft sentences in (28), there is only one topical Theme, a participant Theme. The participant Theme is an NP in both cases. Note that the nominalizer (or modification marker) *de* in both sentences nominalizes the sentence-initial elements. This nominalization process makes the sentence-initial elements ‘what I found in the park’ and ‘the person I gave a book to’ possible topical (participant) Themes.

Another alternative form available for the ungrammatical direct object focused *SHI...DE* focus construction is *SHI...DE* focus construction that involves the *ba*-construction, as shown in (29) (Luo, 1992). The *ba*-construction involves fronting of the direct object to the pre-verbal position, with the fronted object marked by *ba*. It changes the word order to SUBJECT-ADJUNCT-*BA*-OBJECT-VERB. This form of sentence solves the problem of direct object focused *SHI...DE* focus constructions where the verb occurs before *shi*. *SHI...DE* focus constructions that involve the *ba*-construction do not violate the topical Theme conditions because all pre-*shi* elements are possible topics. In the example, ‘I’ is a participant Theme and ‘in the park’ is a spatial Theme.

- (29) *Wo zai gongyuan-li shi ba nide gou zhao-dao de.*
 I at park-in SHI BA your dog find-ASP DE
 ‘It was your dog that I found in the park.’

4.2.3 Interim Summary

The previous sections show two factors that contribute to the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. The first factor is the *shi* rule. First, it requires that *shi* must be inserted in the correct position of a sentence. As a contrastive focus marker, *shi* has to appear immediately before the contrastive focus. Second, as a Theme-Rheme separator, no given information is allowed to appear after *shi*.

The ungrammaticality of direct and indirect object focused *SHI...DE* focus constructions suggests that the formation of a *SHI...DE* focus construction is not solely determined by the *shi* rule. In addition to *shi* rule, the topical Theme conditions have to be observed. The examples in (24) and (25) show that even if the *shi* rule is satisfied, the sentences are still ungrammatical if the topical Theme conditions are violated. This suggests that the topical Theme conditions is a stronger factor determining that form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions compared to the *shi* rule. That is,

- (30) Topical Theme conditions >> *shi* rule.

4.2.4 Word Order

The following example of verb focused *SHI...DE* focus construction raises another question on the factors that affect the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions.

- (31) A: *Ni zai gongyuan-li bujian-le wode gou ma?*
 you at park-in lose-ASP my dog Q
 ‘Did you lose my dog in the park?’
- B₁: *Wo zai gongyuan-li shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I at park-in SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was finding that I did to your dog in the park.’
- B₂: **Wo zai gongyuan-li nide gou shi zhao-dao de.*
 I at park-in your dog SHI find-ASP DE

- B₃: **Wo nide gou zai gongyuan-li shi zhao-dao de.*
 I your dog at park-in SHI find-ASP DE
- B₄: *Nide gou wo zai gongyuan-li shi zhao-dao de.*
 your dog I at park-in SHI find-ASP DE
 ‘As for your dog, it was finding that I did to it in the park.’

In B₁, *shi* is marking the contrastive focus ‘find’. This sentence violates the *shi* rule. In the sentence, ‘your dog’, which is given, remains in the post-*shi* position. However, even though the *shi* rule is being violated, B₁ remains grammatical. If ‘your dog’ is moved to a pre-*shi* position (after the subject), as shown in B₂ and B₃, the sentence is ungrammatical. In B₂ and B₃, the *shi* rule is observed. *Shi* correctly marks the contrastive focus ‘your dog’ and there is no given element in the post-*shi* position. Interestingly, even though the *shi* rule is satisfied in these two sentences, they are ungrammatical. B₄, with ‘your dog’ fronted to the sentence-initial position, is grammatical. These examples show that a factor other than the *shi* rule is affecting the form of the *SHI...DE* focus constructions.

The topical Theme conditions mentioned in the previous section are not the relevant factor here. In all of the above sentences, all pre-*shi* elements—‘I’, ‘in the park’ and ‘your dog’—are possible topical Themes and there is no violation of the topical Theme conditions.

The reason for (31B₂) and (31B₃) to be ungrammatical is because both sentences violate the word order of Chinese. The basic word order of Chinese is TOPIC-SUBJECT-ADJUNCT-VERB-OBJECT. In addition to this basic word order, Chinese allows fronting of constituents such as fronting of adjunct and direct object. ((31B₄) is an example of direct object fronting. More on fronting of constituents in *SHI...DE* focus constructions will be discussed in section 4.3.) However, the word orders in (31B₂) and (31B₃) are TOPIC/SUBJECT-ADJUNCT-OBJECT-VERB and TOPIC/SUBJECT-OBJECT-ADJUNCT-VERB, respectively. These word orders are prohibited in Chinese. By introducing the canonical word order into the analysis, the ungrammatical results of (31B₂) and (31B₃) are explained.

In (31B₁), the *shi* rule is violated. This problem should have been solved by rearranging the order of the constituents such as what happen in (31B₂) and (31B₃). However, these forms of *SHI...DE* focus construction are prohibited by the word order rule. (Note that (31B₄), although grammatical, is possibly also a violation of the word order rule because the fronting of the direct object somewhat alters the basic TOPIC-SUBJECT-ADJUNCT-VERB-OBJECT word order. This special case will be discussed again in section 4.3.)

(31B₁) shows that the canonical word order is preserved at the expense of violating the *shi* rule. This observation suggests that the word order rule is a stronger factor that determines the form of a *SHI...DE* focus construction than the *shi* rule. Therefore,

(32) Word order rule >> *shi* rule.

4.2.5 Summary

In this section, I have shown three factors that contribute to the formation of *SHI...DE* focus constructions in Chinese—the *shi* rule, the topical Theme conditions and the word order rule. The explanation of each factor is shown in (33).

- (33) a. *Shi* rule:
 (i) *Shi* appears immediately before the contrastive focus; and
 (ii) no given information can appear after *shi*.
- b. Topical Theme conditions:
 The topical Thematical elements must:
 (i) belong to a type of topical Theme (participant, individual, temporal, spatial or situational) and serve the corresponding function,
 (ii) satisfy the Relational Givenness Condition; and
 (iii) satisfy the Topic Familiarity Condition (for participant and individual Themes only).
- c. Word order rule:
 The basic order (TOPIC-SUBJECT-ADJUNCT-VERB-OBJECT) has to be observed.

The above discussion showed that both the topical Theme conditions and the word order rule are stronger factors that determine the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions compared to the

shi rule. However, up to this point, there is no evidence suggesting whether the topical Theme conditions or the word order rule is stronger. The following example of an adjunct focused *SHI...DE* focus construction is a case where all three factors are relevant, which may reveal the ranking of these two factors.

- (34) A: *Ni zai nali zhao-dao wode gou?*
 you at where find-ASP my dog
 ‘Where did you find my dog?’
- B₁: *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was in the park that I found your dog.’
- B₂: **Wo zhao-dao nide gou shi zai gongyuan-li de.*
 I find-ASP your dog SHI at park-in DE
- B₃: **Zhao-dao nide gou wo shi zai gongyuan-li de.*
 find-ASP your dog I SHI at park-in DE

In B₁, although *shi* is inserted in the position that correctly marks the contrastive focus ‘in the park’, the *shi* rule is still violated. Part of the given information ‘find your dog’ remains in the post-*shi* position, where new information is expected. This problem can be corrected by putting ‘find your dog’ in a pre-*shi* position, such as what happens in B₂ and B₃. However, the results of both cases are ungrammatical. First, ‘find your dog’ is not a possible topical Theme because it does not belong to one of the five types of topical Themes. Second, moving the verb and the object to a position before the adjunct is a violation of the word order of Chinese. Thus, in B₂ and B₃, both the topical Theme conditions and the word order rule are violated.

The data in (34) are not able to tell whether the topical Theme conditions or the word order rule is stronger. Without further evidence, the ranking of the strengths of the topical Theme conditions and the word order rule in determining the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions remains unknown. Thus, the following conclusion is drawn.

- (35) Word order rule, topical Theme conditions >> *shi* rule.

4.3 *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions with Fronted Constituents

The examples of *SHI...DE* focus constructions discussed in the previous section involve only the basic cases. This section will discuss examples of *SHI...DE* focus construction in which fronting of various types of constituents is involved. I begin by showing different types of elements that participate in fronting. The study of fronting leads to a question. That is, whether multiple topical elements are possible in Chinese or not. I am going to show that multiple topical Themes, although syntactically possible, are subject to semantic and pragmatic restrictions. The last part of this section discusses how the current model can be expanded in order to account for the *SHI...DE* focus constructions that involve constituent fronting.

4.3.1 *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions with Fronted Circumstantial Elements

This section discusses the *SHI...DE* focus constructions with fronted circumstantial elements. The following are examples of *SHI...DE* focus constructions with fronted locative adjuncts.

- (36) a. Subject focus/sentence focus with fronted adjunct:
Adjunct-SHI-[subject]-verb-object-DE
Adjunct-SHI-[subject-verb-object]-DE

Zai gongyuan-li shi wo zhao-dao nide gou de.
at park-in SHI I find-ASP your dog DE
'In the park, it's me who found your dog.'
'In the park, it's the case that I found you dog.'

- b. VP/verb focus with fronted adjunct:
Adjunct-subject-SHI-[verb-object]-DE
Adjunct-subject-SHI-[verb]-object-DE

Zai gongyuan-li wo shi zhao-dao nide gou de.
at park-in I SHI find-ASP your dog DE
'In the park, it's finding your dog that I did.'
'In the park, it's finding that I did to your dog.'

Typically, following the canonical word order, locative adjuncts in *SHI...DE* focus constructions appear after subject. However, the examples in (36) show that they can be fronted

to the sentence-initial position. In (a), the fronted adjunct ‘in the park’ is the spatial Theme. However, the participant Theme is not available. This case is similar to (15a) where no participant Theme is present and both cases will be revisited in section 4.4. In (b), there are two topical Themes appearing before *shi*. Based on the current model, the fronted adjunct ‘in the park’ is analyzed as the spatial Theme and ‘I’ is analyzed as the participant Theme.

In addition to spatial Theme, other types of circumstantial elements such as temporal and situational adjuncts can also be fronted, as shown in (37) and (38) below.

(37) *Zuotian wo shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 yesterday I SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘Yesterday, it’s finding your dog that I did.’
 ‘Yesterday, it’s finding that I did to your dog.’

(38) *Yong wangyuanjing wo shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 use binocular I SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘By using binoculars, it’s finding your dog that I did.’
 ‘By using binoculars, it’s finding that I did to your dog.’

The above cases can also be handled by the current model. In (37), there are two topical Themes preceding *shi*. The fronted temporal adjunct ‘yesterday’ is the temporal Theme and the subject ‘I’ is the participant Theme. In (38), the fronted situational adjunct ‘by using binoculars’ is the situational Theme and the subject ‘I’ is the participant Theme.

While Chinese has a TOPIC-SUBJECT-ADJUNCT-VERB-OBJECT basic word order, the above discussion shows that different types of circumstantial elements or adjuncts can be fronted to the sentence-initial position. However, these cases of fronting do not cause a problem in the current model of analysis. These fronted adjuncts can still be analyzed as different types of topical Themes according to their functions.

4.3.2 *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions with Fronted Individual Elements

The examples in (39) show the fronting of individual elements in *SHI...DE* focus constructions.

- (39) a. **I.T.** **P.T.**
Nei-xie shumu shuye *shi* *hen* *da* *de.*
 that-CL tree leaf SHI very big DE
 ‘As for those trees, it is very big that the leaves are.’
- b. **P.T.** **I.T.**
 *Shuye nei-xie shumu *shi* *hen* *da* *de.*
 leaf that-CL tree SHI very big DE

In (39a), ‘those trees’, which appears sentence-initially, is not the participant of the sentence. In the current model of analysis, it is known as individual Theme and its function is to limit the applicability of the predicate to ‘those trees’. The participant Theme is ‘leaf’.

Individual elements are different from the fronted circumstantial elements mentioned above. While adjuncts can optionally be fronted or remain in situ (i.e. following participant Themes) as shown in the previous section, individual Themes always precede participant Themes. (39b) shows that it is impossible to have the position of the participant Theme and the position of the individual Theme switched. Therefore, it appears that the sentence-initial position is the only available slot for individual elements in (39).

However, the following examples show that the individual Theme does not necessarily appear sentence-initially. It can precede or follow temporal, spatial and situational Themes. The sentences are grammatical as long as the individual Theme precedes the participant Theme. Thus, it is only the relative order of individual Themes and participant Themes that is fixed. The relative order of individual Themes and other types of Themes is flexible.

- (40) a. **T.T.** **I.T.** **P.T.**
Yiqian, nei-xie shumu shuye *shi* *hen* *da* *de.*
 before that-CL tree leaf SHI very big DE
 ‘Before, as for those trees, it is very big that the leaves are.’
- b. **I.T.** **T.T.** **P.T.**
Nei-xie shumu, yiqian shuye *shi* *hen* *da* *de.*
 that-CL tree before leaf SHI very big DE
 ‘As for those trees, before it is very big that the leaves are.’
- (41) a. **SP.T.** **I.T.** **P.T.**
Zai nali, nei-xie shumu shuye *shi* *hen* *da* *de.*
 at there that-CL tree leaf SHI very big DE
 ‘Over there, as for those trees, it is very big that the leaves are.’

- b. **I.T.** **SP.T.** **P.T.**
Nei-xie shumu, zai nali, shuye shi hen da de.
 that-CL tree at there leaf SHI very big DE
 ‘As for those trees, over there, it is very big that the leaves are.’
- (42) a. **ST.T.** **I.T.** **P.T.**
Mei ren zhuyi, nei-xie shumu shuye shi hen da de.
 no person notice that-CL tree leaf SHI very big DE
 ‘No one notices, as for those trees, it is very big that the leaves are.’
- b. **I.T.** **ST.T.** **P.T.**
Nei-xie shumu, Mei ren zhuyi, shuye shi hen da de.
 that-CL tree no person notice leave SHI very big DE
 ‘As for those trees, no one notices, it is very big that the leaves are.’

4.3.3 *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions with Fronted Participant Elements

This section discusses *SHI...DE* focus constructions with fronted participant elements. I will show that the current approach to *SHI...DE* focus constructions needs to be expanded in order to handle these cases.

There are two types of fronted participant elements, direct object and indirect object. (43) shows examples of *SHI...DE* focus construction with direct object fronting and (44) shows examples of *SHI...DE* focus construction with indirect object fronting.

- (43) a. Subject focus/sentence focus with fronted direct object:
 Direct object-SHI-[subject]-adjunct-verb- \emptyset -DE
 Direct object-SHI-[subject-adjunct-verb- \emptyset]-DE
- Nide gou shi wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao de.*
 your dog SHI I at park-in find-ASP DE
 ‘Your dog, it’s me who found it in the park.’
 ‘Your dog, it’s the case that I found it in the park.’
- b. Adjunct/VP focus with fronted direct object:
 Direct object-subject-SHI-[adjunct]-verb- \emptyset -DE
 Direct object-subject-SHI-[adjunct-verb- \emptyset]-DE
- Nide gou wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao de.*
 your dog I SHI at park-in find-ASP DE
 ‘Your dog, it’s in the park that I found it.’
 ‘Your dog, it’s finding it in the park that I did.’

- c. VP/verb focus with fronted direct object:
 Direct object-subject-adjunct-SHI-[verb]-Ø-DE
 Direct object-subject-adjunct-SHI-[verb-Ø]-DE
- Nide gou wo zai gongyuan-li shi zhao-dao de.*
 your dog I at park-in SHI find-ASP DE
 ‘Your dog, it’s finding it that I did in the park.’
 ‘Your dog, it’s finding that I did to it in the park.’
- (44) a. Subject focus/sentence focus with fronted indirect object:
 IO-SHI-[subject]-adjunct-verb-IO(pronoun)-DO-DE
 IO-SHI-[subject-adjunct-verb-IO(pronoun)-DO]-DE
- Zhangsan shi wo gei-le ta yi-ben shu de.*
 Zhangsan SHI I give-ASP him one-CL book DE
 ‘Zhangsan, it’s me who gave him a book.’
 ‘Zhangsan, it’s the case that I gave him a book.’
- b. Adjunct/VP focus with fronted indirect object:
 IO-subject-SHI-[adjunct]-verb-IO(pronoun)-DO-DE
 IO-subject-SHI-[adjunct-verb-IO(pronoun)-DO]-DE
- Zhangsan wo shi zuotian gei-le ta yi-ben shu de.*
 Zhangsan I SHI yesterday give-ASP him one-CL book DE
 ‘Zhangsan, it’s yesterday that I gave him a book.’
 ‘Zhangsan, it’s giving him a book yesterday that I did.’
- c. VP/verb focus with fronted indirect object:
 IO-subject-adjunct-SHI-[verb]-DO-IO(pronoun)-DE
 IO-subject-adjunct-SHI-[verb-IO(pronoun)-DO]-DE
- Zhangsan wo shi gei-le ta yi-ben shu de.*
 Zhangsan I SHI give-ASP him one-CL book DE
 ‘Zhangsan, it’s give that I did to him and a book.’
 ‘Zhangsan, it’s giving him a book that I did.’

In (43), the direct object is preposed to the sentence-initial position. In (43a), the only pre-*shi* element is the direct object ‘your dog’ and thus it is analyzed as the participant Theme of the sentence. However, in (43b-c), there are two potential participant Themes before *shi*—the fronted direct object and the subject. It is not clear how these two potential participant Themes can be handled. This problematic case will be discussed in the next section.

(44) are examples of *SHI...DE* focus constructions with fronted indirect object. Note that in the case of indirect object fronting, an overt pronoun in the indirect object position is obligatory. (Note also that in some cases, the adjuncts are left out in the examples when they are

irrelevant.) Indirect object fronting causes the same problem as direct object fronting does. In these sentences (except (44a)), there are two potential participant Themes in the pre-*shi* position, the fronted indirect object and the subject. It is unclear which one of the candidates should be analyzed as the participant Themes or whether double participant Themes are possible in Chinese. These problems will be discussed in detail below.

4.3.4 Multiple Participant Themes

The above discussion of *SHI...DE* focus constructions associated with constituent fronting reveals that the current model, which argues for three factors that contribute to the formation of *SHI...DE* focus constructions, is insufficient to account for all possible forms of *SHI...DE* focus construction. While fronting of non-participant elements can be included in the current model, it is unclear how the *SHI...DE* focus constructions that involve fronting of participant elements (i.e. direct and indirect objects) fit into the model. As mentioned earlier, the problem with these sentences is that there is more than one candidate for participant Theme in the pre-*shi* position. It is unclear whether both of them or one of them should be analyzed as participant Theme.

To solve this problem, the current model needs modifications. There are two questions that need to be answered. First, how to expand the current model in order for it to be able to handle the cases that involve two possible participant Themes? Second, how does the current model account for the fronting of constituents in *SHI...DE* focus constructions? This section focuses on answering the first question. The second question will be discussed in sections 4.3.7 and 4.3.8.

Downing (1991) does not explicitly mention how many possible participant Themes are allowed in a sentence. Based on Halliday's (1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) original proposal that each clause can only have one topical Theme, it is assumed that there is only one

participant Theme per sentence. However, in Chinese, it appears that multiple participant Themes are possible, as shown in the following examples.

- (45) a. *Zhangsan ma, wo bu tai xihuan ta.*
 Zhangsan TOP I not quite like him
 ‘As for Zhangsan, I don’t like him.’
 ‘As for Zhangsan, as for me, I don’t like him.’
- b. *Zhangsan ma, wo ma, bu tai xihuan ta.*
 Zhangsan TOP I TOP not quite like him
 ‘As for Zhangsan, as for me, I don’t like him.’

In (45a), only the fronted direct object ‘Zhangsan’ is marked by the topic marker *ma*. Based on the current model, Zhangsan is analyzed as the participant Theme and the rest of the sentence is the Rheme. However, (45b) reveals that the (a) sentence can have more than one possible interpretation. (45b) shows that not only the fronted direct object ‘Zhangsan’, but the subject ‘I’ can also be marked by the topic marker *ma*. The presence of this topic marker shows that both the fronted direct object and the subject are topical. Thus, (a) is in fact ambiguous. The subject ‘I’ can be analyzed either as one of the topical elements (which can be optionally marked by the topic marker) or as part of the Rheme.

(45b) suggests that it is possible to have double participant Themes in Chinese. The same observation is found in *SHI...DE* focus constructions, as shown below.

- (46) a. *Nide gou ma, wo shi zhao-dao-le ta de.*
 your dog TOP I SHI find-ASP-ASP it DE
 *‘As for your dog, it was finding that I did to it.’
 ‘As for your dog, as for me, it was finding that I did to it.’
- b. *Nide gou ma, wo ma, shi zhao-dao-le ta de.*
 your dog TOP I TOP SHI find-ASP-ASP it DE
 ‘As for your dog, as for me, it was finding that I did to it.’

In (46a), the most convenient analysis is to treat the fronted direct object ‘your dog’ as the participant Theme, and the rest of the sentence as the Rheme. However, the fact that *shi* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions functions as a Theme-Rheme separator does not allow this analysis. According to the existing model, ‘I’ has to be analyzed as a topical Theme because it appears before *shi*. Thus, (46a), unlike (45a), has only one possible interpretation. (46b) shows that both

the fronted direct object ‘your dog’ and the subject ‘I’ are in fact topical in the *SHI...DE* focus construction and therefore they can both be marked by the topic marker. *SHI...DE* focus constructions with fronted indirect object such as those in (44) work in the same way. Both of the elements preceding *shi*—the fronted indirect object and the subject—are participant Themes of the sentence and all post-*shi* elements belong to the Rheme.

There is also a syntactic argument for multiple participant Themes. Recall from the previous chapter that Chinese has the following rule.

$$(47) \quad S' \rightarrow \text{TOP} \{S, S'\} \quad (\text{Xu \& Langedoen, 1985, p. 2})$$

The above rule is recursive and thus it suggests that multiple topical Themes are possible in Chinese. Xu and Langedoen (1985), when proposing this rule, do not specifically mention which type of topical Theme is possible to multiply in a sentence. In other words, it does not restrict multiple participant Themes in a sentence. Moreover, based on the rule in (47), it appears that a limitless number of topical Themes (of any type) are possible in Chinese. However, the following examples show that sentences with three participant Themes are undesirable.

- (48)
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|------------|-----------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| a. | <i>Zhangsan</i> | <i>ma,</i> | <i>wo</i> | <i>gei-le</i> | <i>ta</i> | <i>nei-ben</i> | <i>shu.</i> | | | |
| | Zhangsan | TOP | I | give-ASP | him | that-CL | book | | | |
| | ‘As for Zhangsan, I gave him that book.’ | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| b. | <i>Zhangsan</i> | <i>ma,</i> | <i>wo</i> | <i>ma,</i> | <i>gei-le</i> | <i>ta</i> | <i>nei-ben</i> | <i>shu.</i> | | |
| | Zhangsan | TOP | I | TOP | give-ASP | him | that-CL | book | | |
| | ‘As for Zhangsan, as for me, I gave him that book.’ | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| c. | <i>?Zhangsan</i> | <i>ma,</i> | <i>wo</i> | <i>ma,</i> | <i>nei-ben</i> | <i>shu</i> | <i>ma,</i> | <i>wo</i> | <i>gei-le</i> | <i>ta.</i> |
| | Zhangsan | TOP | I | TOP | that-CL | book | TOP | I | give-ASP | him |
| | ‘As for Zhangsan, as for me, as for that book, I gave (it) to him.’ | | | | | | | | | |

(48a-b) show that in Chinese a sentence can have either one or two participant Themes. However, sentences with three participant Themes such as (48c) are problematic. (48c) is not ungrammatical and it is acceptable in some special contexts, for example, when the speaker is hesitating. However, processing (48c) is relatively difficult. Similar results are found in *SHI...DE* focus constructions, as shown in (49) below. While *SHI...DE* focus constructions allow either one or two participant Themes, as shown in (49a-b), (49c) shows that *SHI...DE* focus

constructions with more than two participant Themes are undesirable and are only acceptable in some particular contexts.

- (49) a. *Zhangsan ma, wo shi gei-le ta nei-ben shu de.*
Zhangsan TOP I SHI give-ASP him that-CL book DE
'As for Zhangsan, it was giving him that book that I did.'
- b. *Zhangsan ma, wo ma, shi gei-le ta nei-ben shu de.*
Zhangsan TOP I TOP SHI give-ASP him that-CL book DE
'As for Zhangsan, as for me, it was giving him that book that I did.'
- c. *?Zhangsan ma, wo ma, nei-ben shu ma, shi gei-le ta de.*
Zhangsan TOP I TOP that-CL book TOP SHI give-ASP him DE
'As for Zhangsan, as for me, as for that book, it was giving him (that book) that I did.'

The above discussion shows that multiple participant Themes are possible in Chinese. The data show that typically, the maximum number of participant Themes a sentence can have is two. However, it appears that this restriction is merely a pragmatic one. Apparently, there is no syntactic rule against having three participant Themes. The undesirable results of the sentences with three participant Themes are mainly result of the difficulty of processing these sentences. (Moreover, because of its valency, Chinese verb can only take at most three arguments and thus there can only be at most three participant Themes in a sentence.)

4.3.5 Multiple Individual Themes

The previous section has solved the problem of analyzing *SHI...DE* focus constructions with fronted direct and indirect objects by showing that multiple participant Themes are possible in Chinese. This leads to the question whether other Themes (individual, spatial, temporal and situational Themes) can multiply in Chinese. In this section, I will show that similar to the case of multiple participant Themes, multiple individual Themes are syntactically possible but their existence is restricted by pragmatic factors. Other types of topical Themes (i.e. circumstantial Themes) will be discussed in the next section.

The examples in (50) show sentences with multiple individual Themes. These sentences are not acceptable. However, according to the phrase structural rule suggested by Xu and Langedoen (1985), (50a-b) do not violate any syntactic rule. It appears that the unacceptability of these sentences is again due to pragmatic factors. It is difficult to process sentences with more than one individual Theme. (51) shows that (50a) can be improved by conjoining the individual Themes (in (51a)) or by adding the adverb *dou* ‘all’ (in (51b)).

- (50) a. ?*Nei-ge nuren, nei-ge xiaohai, toufa hen chang.*
 that-CL woman that-CL child hair very long
 ‘That woman, that child, their hair is very long.’
- b. ?*Nei-ge nuren, nei-ge xiaohai, nei-ge nanren, toufa hen chang.*
 that-CL woman that-CL child that-CL man hair very long
 ‘That woman, that child, that man, their hair is very long.’
- (51) a. *Nei-ge nuren he nei-ge xiaohai, toufa hen chang.*
 that-CL woman and that-CL child hair very long
 ‘That woman and that child, their hair is very long.’
- b. *Nei-ge nuren, nei-ge xiaohai, toufa dou hen chang.*
 that-CL woman and that-CL child hair all very long
 ‘That woman, that child, both of their hair is very long.’

4.3.6 Multiple Spatial, Temporal and Situational Themes

As for sentences with multiple spatial, temporal and situational Themes, the data suggest that multiple Themes are also possible. (52) contains examples of sentences with more than one spatial Theme. (52a) is normally unacceptable but (52b) is acceptable. This can be explained by the fact that the two spatial Themes in (a) conflict with each other. The action of seeing cannot take place at two different places simultaneously. In (b), the two spatial Themes are compatible with each other. Literally, the sentence means the speakers saw the addressee at the entrance in the park.

- (52) Multiple spatial Themes:
 a. #*Zai gongyuan-li, zai xuexiao, wo kanjian ni.*
 at park-in at school I see you
 ‘In the park, at school, I saw you.’

- b. *Zai gongyuan-li, zai rukou nali, wo kanjian ni.*
 at park-in at entrance there I see you
 ‘In the park, at the entrance, I saw you.’

A similar observation is found in sentences with multiple temporal Themes. In (53), (a) is unacceptable because a single action of seeing cannot take place at two different times. In (b), the two temporal Themes are compatible with each other and therefore the sentence is acceptable.

(53) Multiple temporal Themes:

- a. *#Zuotian, jintian, wo kanjian ni.*
 yesterday today I see you
 ‘Yesterday, today, I saw you.’
- b. *Zuotian, zai xiawu, wo kanjian ni.*
 Yesterday at afternoon I see you
 ‘Yesterday, in the afternoon, I saw you.’

The examples in (54) show that for sentences with multiple situational Themes, the two situational Themes are also required to be compatible with each other. In (a), there is a conflict between the two situational Themes ‘taking bus’ and ‘taking train’. These two situations cannot happen at the same time. The sentence can be improved by conjoining the two Themes by saying ‘taking bus and then train’ as shown in (b). (c) is perfectly acceptable because there is no conflict between the situational Themes ‘taking bus’ and ‘carrying luggage’.

(54) Multiple situational Themes:

- a. *#Cheng gongche, cheng huoche, wo lai kan ni.*
 ride bus ride train I come see you
 ‘Taking bus, taking train, I come and visit you.’
- b. *Cheng gongche, zai cheng huoche, wo lai kan ni.*
 ride bus then ride train I come see you
 ‘Taking bus, then taking train, I come and visit you.’
- c. *Cheng gongche, dai-zhe xinli, wo lai kan ni.*
 ride bus bring-ASP luggage I come see you
 ‘Taking bus, carrying the luggage, I come and visit you.’

In the last three sections, I have shown that multiple topical Themes, regardless of being participant, individual or circumstantial, are possible in Chinese as long as they do not affect the processing of the sentences. Syntactically, there is no restriction on the maximum number of topical Themes in a sentence. In other words, a Chinese sentence can have a limitless number of

topical Themes of any type. However, there appears to be a pragmatic restriction that constrains the number of participant and individual Themes. Having too many participant or individual Themes in a sentence causes difficulties in understanding the sentence. For circumstantial (spatial, temporal and situational) Themes, it is required that multiple circumstantial Themes in a sentence must be compatible with each other (i.e. no contradiction). Thus, the restriction on multiple circumstantial Themes appears to be a semantic one instead of a syntactic one. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, a sentence with too many participant or individual Themes will cause difficulty in interpretation. This pragmatic restriction also applies to circumstantial Themes. The following sentence, with multiple non-participant Themes, fails to communicate information effectively.

- (55) #*Zuotian, xiawu shijian, zai gongyuan-li, zai rukou*
 yesterday afternoon time at park-in at entrance
nali, nei-ge nuren, dai-zhe gou, tin-zhe yinyue, toufa
 there that-CL woman lead-ASP dog listen-ASP music hair
hen chang.
 very long

‘Yesterday, during afternoon time, in the park, at the entrance, that woman, leading a dog, listening to music, her hair was very long.’

In the above sentence, there are multiple non-participant Themes—two temporal Themes, two spatial Themes, one individual Theme, and two situational Themes. This sentence is difficult to interpret and it is unnatural in normal situations. However, it is still grammatical and acceptable in certain contexts, for example, when the speaker is uncertain, hesitating or is trying to recall the situation. In these special situations, longer pauses and fillers between each topical Theme are expected. Note that this pragmatic restriction is likely to be a universal restriction. It is not only the case that (55) is difficult to process. The multiple Themes in the English translation of (55) also impede the understanding of the sentence.

4.3.7 Accounting for the Fronting of Constituents

This section aims at modifying the model used to account for the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions discussed in section 4.2. According to the existing model, the form of a *SHI...DE* focus construction is shaped by three factors—the word order rule, the topical Theme conditions and the *shi* rule. After the introduction of *SHI...DE* focus constructions with fronted constituents to the existing model, these three factors are not sufficient to account for all possible forms of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. In particular, these factors do not explain the fronting of constituents. This problem leads to two questions. The first question is what triggers the fronting. This question will be answered by introducing an additional factor to the existing model—the strong topic movement rule. The addition of this new factor leads to the second question, that is, how this new factor fits into the existing model. The second question will be addressed in the next section.

I will first discuss the analysis of *SHI...DE* focus constructions that involve fronting of circumstantial elements. Analysis of cases that involve fronting of individual elements and fronting of participant elements (direct and indirect objects) will be discussed later.

Fronting of various types of adjunct in *SHI...DE* focus constructions does not affect the current model of analysis. As shown in the following examples, as long as these non-participant elements appear before *shi*, they are analyzed as different types of topical Themes according to their function. (56), (57) and (58) are examples of temporal, spatial and situational Themes.

- (56) a. **P.T** **T.T.**
 Wo zuotian *shi* *kanjian* *ni* *de.*
 I yesterday SHI see you DE
 ‘It was seeing you that I did yesterday.’
- b. **T.T** **P.T.**
 Zuotian, wo *shi* *kanjian* *ni* *de.*
 yesterday I SHI see you DE
 ‘Yesterday, it was seeing you that I did.’

- (57) a. **P.T. SP.T.**
Wo zai gongyuan-li *shi* *kanjian* *ni* *de.*
 I at park-in SHI see you DE
 ‘It was seeing you that I did in the park.’
- b. **SP.T. P.T.**
Zai gongyuan-li, wo *shi* *kanjian* *ni* *de.*
 at park-in I SHI see you DE
 ‘In the park, it was seeing you that I did.’
- (58) a. **P.T. ST.T.**
Wo yong wangyuanjing *shi* *kanjian* *ni* *de.*
 I use binocular SHI see you DE
 ‘It was seeing you that I did by using binoculars.’
- b. **ST.T. P.T.**
Yong wangyuanjing, wo *shi* *kanjian* *ni* *de.*
 use binocular I SHI see you DE
 ‘Using binoculars, it was seeing you that I did.’

In the above examples, the (a) sentences are *SHI...DE* focus constructions that do not involve fronting of circumstantial elements. The (b) sentences are the ones where circumstantial element fronting occurs. As mentioned earlier, *SHI...DE* focus constructions with circumstantial element fronting do not cause a problem in the current model because, as shown in the examples, the adjuncts, with or without fronting, are always analyzed as topical Themes.

The concern here is what causes the fronting of the circumstantial elements. Chu (1998) and Li and Thompson (1981) argue that this type of fronting is related to givenness. They claim that the sentence-initial element is given information and it is fronted to achieve discourse cohesion. According to this view, the fronted adjuncts in the above examples are fronted in order to serve as links to the previous utterances. However, this givenness argument is not adequate in explaining the observation in (56), (57) and (58). The tests in section 4.1.2 have already shown that in each of the above examples, both pre-*shi* elements (i.e. the circumstantial element and the subject) are topical and subject to the Relational Givenness Condition. Thus, givenness alone cannot provide a good explanation for the order of the topical Themes in the sentences in (56), (57) and (58).

Downing (1991), who proposes the classification of topical Themes, does not specifically discuss the order of topical Themes. In Chinese, it appears that the order of participant Theme and temporal, spatial and situational Themes is relatively unrestricted. However, there are differences between the pragmatic meanings of (a) and (b) in (56), (57) and (58). In (56), although (a) and (b) have the same truth conditions, their pragmatic meanings are different. The following examples show their differences.

- (59) a. *Wo zuotian shi kanjian ni de.*
 I yesterday SHI see you DE
 ‘It was seeing you that I did yesterday.’
- Zhangsan Ø ye kanjian ni.*
 Zhangsan Ø also see you
 ‘Zhangsan also saw you (at some time).’
- b. *Zuotian, wo shi kanjian ni de.*
 yesterday I SHI see you DE
 ‘Yesterday, it was seeing you that I did.’
- Ø Zhangsan ye kanjian ni.*
 Ø Zhangsan also see you
 ‘(Yesterday) Zhangsan also saw you.’
 #‘(At some time) Zhangsan also saw you.’

The above examples show that in *SHI...DE* focus construction, the fronted temporal adjunct is more “topical” than the in-situ temporal adjunct. In both (a) and (b), there is a subsequent discourse and the temporal adjuncts in both cases are elided. In (a), where no fronting of adjunct occurs, the subsequent discourse has no restriction of time. However, in (b), the temporal framework of the subsequent discourse, even though not being told overtly, is restricted to ‘yesterday’. This shows that the temporal adjunct in (b) is more “topical”—that it has a greater effect on the subsequent discourse—than the temporal adjunct in (a). In other words, the temporal framework that it sets up is stronger than the temporal framework set up by the non-sentence-initial temporal Theme in (a).

It is the order of the topical Themes that causes the differences in the pragmatic meanings of the sentences. When interpreting this type of *SHI...DE* focus constructions, the fronted

circumstantial element is always the one that receives more attention or the one that is being more salient. It is thus more likely to be continuing in the subsequent discourse where the circumstantial frameworks are not overly specified.

On the fronting of direct and indirect objects in *SHI...DE* focus constructions, the following examples show that, similar to fronted adjuncts, fronted direct and indirect objects are more salient participant Themes compared to the subject.

- (60) a. *Wo shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It was find that I did to your dog.’
- Ø hai yao Zhangsan yi-kou.*
 Ø also bite Zhangsan one-CL
 ‘(I/Your dog) also bit Zhangsan once’
- b. *Nide gou, wo shi zhao-dao de.*
 your dog I SHI find-ASP DE
 ‘As for your dog, it was find that I did to it.’
- Ø hai yao Zhangsan yi-kou.*
 Ø also bite Zhangsan one-CL
 ‘Your dog also bit Zhangsan once.’
 #‘I also bit Zhangsan once.’
- (61) a. *Wo shi gei-le Zhangsan nei-ben shu de.*
 I SHI give-ASP Zhangsan that-CL book DE
 ‘It was give that I did to Zhangsan and the book.’
- Ø hai meiyou du-gou nei-ben shu.*
 Ø also not read-ASP that-CL book
 ‘(I/Zhangsan) have never read that book.’
- b. *Zhangsan, wo shi gei-le nei-ben shu de.*
 Zhangsan I SHI give-ASP that-CL book DE
 ‘As for Zhangsan, it was give that I did to him and the book.’
- Ø hai meiyou du-gou nei-ben shu.*
 Ø also not read-ASP that-CL book
 ‘Zhangsan has never read that book.’
 #‘I have never read that book.’

As discussed earlier, Chinese allows multiple participant Themes. In sentences that involve fronting of participant elements, both the fronted direct (or indirect) object and the

participant Themes both denote entities while other Themes denote circumstantial information. Without a fixed order or other markings, there is no way to identify and distinguish individual Theme and participant Theme.

4.3.8 Modifications of the Model

A new factor, the strong topic movement rule, is now added to the existing model. In this section, I will show how this new factor interacts with the three existing factors—the word order rule, the topical Theme conditions and the *shi* rule.

First, I will revisit the word order rule. With the introduction of *SHI...DE* focus constructions with fronted constituents, the current definition of the word order rule causes some confusion. The word order rule, as shown in (33), is repeated in (64).

- (64) Word order rule:
The basic order (TOPIC-SUBJECT-ADJUNCT-VERB-OBJECT) has to be observed.

In the earlier discussion, this word order rule is used to explain the fact that a topical direct object cannot be moved to a pre-*shi* position in a regular verb focused *SHI...DE* focus construction (without fronting), as shown in (31B₂-B₃), repeated as (65B₂-B₃). I have argued that moving the direct object to a position before *shi* violates the canonical TOPIC-SUBJECT-ADJUNCT-VERB-OBJECT word order. In the grammatical cases that involve fronting of direct object to the sentence-initial position, such as (31B₄), repeated as (65B₄) below, it also appears that the word order rule is violated.

- (65) A: *Ni zai gongyuan-li bujian-le wode gou ma?*
you at park-in lose-ASP my dog Q
'Did you lose my dog in the park?'
- B₁: *Wo zai gongyuan-li shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
I at park-in SHI find-ASP your dog DE
'It was finding that I did to your dog in the park.'
- B₂: **Wo zai gongyuan-li nide gou shi zhao-dao de.*
I at park-in your dog SHI find-ASP DE

- B₃: **Wo nide gou zai gongyuan-li shi zhao-dao de.*
 I your dog at park-in SHI find-ASP DE
- B₄: *Nide gou wo zai gongyuan-li shi zhao-dao de.*
 your dog I at park-in SHI find-ASP DE
 ‘As for your dog, it was finding that I did to it in the park.’

According to the rule in (64), *SHI...DE* focus constructions that involve direct and indirect object preposing in (65B₂-B₄) appear to violate the word order rule because some constituents move to some other positions in the sentences. However, note that, unlike English, as a topic-prominent language, the canonical word order of Chinese is TOPIC-SUBJECT-ADJUNCT-VERB-OBJECT(INDIRECT AND DIRECT). As mentioned in chapter 2, according to Li and Thompson (1981), topic is considered as a grammatical category in Chinese sentences just like subject and object. Thus, the word order of sentences such as (65B₂-B₄) cannot be said to be non-canonical. In these sentences, ‘your dog’, ‘I’, and ‘in the park’ can all be seen as multiple topics (or topical Themes) that appear sentence-initially. Hence, in (65B₂-B₄), the canonical word order of Chinese is observed and there is no real violation of the word order rule stated in (64).

The word order rule described in (64) cannot capture what happens in sentences such as (65B₂-B₄), where some constituents move and the basic order of constituents is altered. It is clear that the word order has been somewhat changed in those sentences, but the existing word order rule cannot describe such changes. This calls for a modification of the word order rule.

The modified rule must serve two functions. First, similar to the existing word order rule, it must function to preserve the canonical TOPIC-SUBJECT-ADJUNCT-VERB-OBJECT word order of Chinese. Second, this rule must be able to capture the movements shown in (65B₂-B₄), which the existing rule is not able to capture. By getting the idea of the STAY constraint from Optimality-Theoretic syntax (Kagar, 1999), which will be taken up again in the next chapter, I propose a no movement rule to replace the word order rule, defined as follows.

- (66) No movement rule:
 No movement of constituents is allowed.

This no movement rule prohibits any type of movement. Thus, *SHI...DE* focus constructions such as (65B₂-B₄) that involve direct and indirect object fronting are all violations of this no movement rule. However, as shown in (65B₄), *SHI...DE* focus constructions with fronted direct and indirect objects due to strong topicality are in fact acceptable. This suggests that the strong topic movement rule is stronger than the no movement rule in the formation of *SHI...DE* focus constructions and therefore it can override the no movement rule. In addition, the previous discussion has shown that the word order rule (now called no movement rule) is stronger than the *shi* rule. Thus,

(67) Strong topic movement rule >> no movement rule >> *shi* rule.

The last task is to put the fourth factor—the topical Theme conditions—back into the ranking. The earlier discussion only shows that the topical Theme conditions are stronger than the *shi* rule. There is no evidence suggesting whether the topical Theme conditions are stronger or weaker than the no movement rule.

The following observation provides a strong motivation for ranking the topical Theme conditions above strong topic movement rule. If the topical Theme conditions are ranked lower than the strong topic movement rule, it implies that when a constituent is strongly topical, it is no longer subject to the topical Theme conditions. If this is true, (68a) is predicted to be acceptable if the VP ‘find your dog’ is strongly topical.

- (68) a. **Zhao-dao nide gou, wo shi zai gongyuan-li de.*
 find-ASP your dog I SHI at park-in DE
 ‘As for finding your dog, it was in the park that I did.’
- b. *Wo zhao-dao nide gou zhe-jian shi shi zai gongyuan-li*
 I find-ASP your dog this-CL incident SHI at park-in

fasheng de.
 happen DE

 ‘It was in the park that the incident that I found your dog happened.’

However, under no circumstances is (68a) acceptable. The unacceptability of (68a) is explained by the topical Theme conditions. The pre-*shi* VP ‘find your dog’ is not an acceptable

topical Theme because it does not belong to any type of topical Theme. It can never appear in the pre-*shi* position even if it is a strong topic. The above sentence can be improved by nominalizing the VP such as what happens in (68b). (68b) is grammatical because the pre-*shi* element, an NP, is a possible topical (participant) Theme.

The above data show that the strong topic movement rule cannot override the topical Theme conditions. In other words, no matter how strongly topical an element is, it cannot become a topic without satisfying the topical Theme conditions. Therefore, the four factors that account for the formation of Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions are ranked as follows.

- (69) Topical Theme conditions >> strong topic movement rule >>
no movement rule >> *shi* rule.

4.3.9 Summary

This section modifies the earlier conclusion that the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions can be accounted for by the interplay of three factors—the topical Theme conditions, the word order rule and the *shi* rule. By bringing *SHI...DE* focus constructions with fronted constituents into consideration, the problems of the existing model are revealed. The existing model is incapable of handling the cases that involve constituent fronting. By introducing the strong topic movement rule, modifying the word order rule and renaming it as no movement rule, the problems are solved. The new model has been shown in (69).

This section also reveals a few things about Chinese topical Themes in general. Chinese allows multiple topical Themes. For participant Themes, theoretically speaking, all participants of a sentence (subject, direct object and indirect object) can be fronted. The only restriction that applies to these fronting processes is a pragmatic factor. Fronting of participants is possible as long as it does not interfere with sentence processing. As for individual Themes, multiple individual Themes are also possible. However, it is again the pragmatic factor that restricts its number. For spatial, temporal and situational Themes, multiple Themes are acceptable but

semantics and pragmatics are playing roles here. Multiple Themes in one sentence are only acceptable if they are compatible with each other. In addition, having a large number of topical Themes in a sentence is undesirable because they create difficulties in understanding the sentence.

4.4 *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions without Topical Theme

Halliday (1985), whose work Downing's (1991) study and the current study build upon, has argued that each clause must contain one and only one topical Theme. Downing has modified Halliday's argument and proposed that a clause can have multiple topical Themes of different types. In the previous section, I have shown that multiple topical Themes of the same type are possible as long as the sentence is semantically and pragmatically feasible. However, the above discussion has not dealt with one case, which is *SHI...DE* focus constructions that do not appear to have a topical Theme at all, as shown below.

- (70) a. *Shi wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 SHI I at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 'It's I found your dog in the park that happens.'
 'It's me who found your dog in the park.'
- b. *Shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 'It's in the park that (I) found your dog.'

Both of the above sentences are *SHI...DE* focus constructions that do not appear to have a topical Theme. Halliday's (1985) claims that all sentences that do not have a realized topical Theme (as a result of ellipsis, for example) are considered as special cases where only the Rheme is present. Thus, both sentences in (70) would be classified as all-Rheme sentences (Egins, 1994; Halliday, 1985).

However, the case in Chinese is more complicated. (70a) is a *SHI...DE* focus construction that truly does not contain any topical Theme. This sentence has two possible interpretations. It can be interpreted either as sentence-focused or subject-focused. When the sentence is interpreted as subject-focused, only the subject 'I' is new information and the rest of

the sentence is given. However, the given information is not fronted in this case and this violates the *shi* rule that prohibits given information appearing in the post-*shi* position. Based on the conclusion of the previous section, the topical or given adjunct and direct object in (70a) remain in situ because they are not strongly topical. It is the no movement rule that prohibits the fronting of elements that are not strongly topical. As shown in the model in (69), the no movement rule is stronger than the *shi* rule and thus (70a) is another example of satisfying the stronger rule at the expense of violating the weaker one.

(70a) under the sentence-focused interpretation is termed an all-comment cleft in Zhu (1997). Zhu suggests that this type of sentence does not contain any topical or pre-*shi* element and all elements in the sentence are new information. Under this interpretation, no rules in the model in (69) are violated.

(70b) appears to be a *SHI...DE* focus construction without a topical Theme. However, (70b) in fact contains an elided subject in the pre-*shi* position. Li and Thompson (1981) has argued that in Chinese, when a topical element is salient and known in the context, it can be deleted. This type of *SHI...DE* focus construction can also be fit into the model in (69). As mentioned earlier, in Chinese, deletion of the topic is possible when it is highly salient (Li & Thompson, 1981; Zhu 1997). While saliency is not clearly defined by Li and Thompson or Zhu, Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski's (1993) Givenness Hierarchy provides a good six-level classification of cognitive statuses. The Givenness Hierarchy suggests that in Chinese, a zero pronoun is only possible when the entity is in-focus. In other words, an in-focus NP can be elided. Moreover, the following data show that not only in-focus NPs can be elided, but in-focus adjuncts and VPs can also be elided.

- (71) A: *Shui* *zai* *gongyuan-li* *zhao-dao* *nide* *gou?*
 who at park-in find-ASP your dog
 ‘Who found my dog in the park?’
- B₁: *Shi* *wo* *zai* *gongyuan-li* *zhao-dao* *nide* *gou* *de.*
 SHI I at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It’s me who found your dog in the park.’

- B₂: *Shi wo zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 SHI I find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It’s me who found your dog.’
- B₃: *Shi wo zhao-dao de.*
 SHI I find-ASP DE
 ‘It’s me who found it.’
- B₄: **Shi wo zai gongyuan-li de.*
 SHI I at park-in DE
- B₅: *Shi wo.*
 SHI I
 ‘It’s me.’

In-focus element deletion explains the existence of *SHI...DE* focus constructions that do not appear to contain a realized topical Theme, such as (70b). However, this deletion rule is optional and is a general rule that applies to any type of sentence (instead of *SHI...DE* focus constructions alone). Therefore, I consider it an independent rule and external to the model in (69).

4.5 Object-final *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions

In the previous discussion, I have omitted a special type of *SHI...DE* focus constructions, which I call object-final *SHI...DE* focus constructions. The following are some examples.

- (72) a. *Wo shi xie de shi.*
 I SHI write DE poem
 ‘It is poetry I wrote.’
- b. *Wo shi yao de juzi-shui, ni que*
 I SHI want DE orange-juice you but

songlai-le pijiu.
 bring-ASP beer
 ‘It’s orange juice I asked for, but you brought beer.’

(Paul & Whitman, 2001, p. 5)

These object-final *SHI...DE* focus constructions are in fact direct object focused *SHI...DE* focus constructions. As mentioned earlier, the standard direct object focused *SHI...DE*

focus constructions, as shown in (73), are prohibited. The ungrammaticality of (73a-b) has been explained by the fact that the pre-*shi* verbs *xie* ‘write’ and *yao* ‘want’ are impossible topical Themes and thus the sentences violate the topical Theme conditions.

- (73) a. **Wo xie shi shi de.*
 I write SHI poem DE
 ‘It is poetry that I wrote.’
- b. **Wo yao shi juzi-shui de.*
 I want SHI orange-juice DE
 ‘It’s orange juice that I asked for.’

The problem of understanding object-final *SHI...DE* focus constructions is that the focus marker *shi* is not directly marking the contrastive focus (i.e. the direct object) in these sentences (Paul & Whitman, 2001). Thus, the *shi* rule appears to be violated. However, this type of sentences do not violate the topical Theme conditions, which are violated by the standard object focused *SHI...DE* focus constructions. In both sentences in (72), the only pre-*shi* element, *wo* ‘I’, is a possible topical Theme.

Using the object-final *SHI...DE* focus construction instead of the standard object focused *SHI...DE* focus construction seems to imply that the lower-ranked *shi* rule is violated in order to satisfy the higher-ranked topical Theme conditions. The object-final *SHI...DE* focus construction which violates the *shi* rule can be viewed as an alternative form to be used in lieu of the standard object focused *SHI...DE* focus construction, which commits more severe violations (violating the higher-ranked topical Theme conditions). However, there are two problems that need to be solved. First, how can the direct object in this type of sentences be marked as focus while it does not immediately follow the focus marker *shi*? Second, what triggers the fronting of *de* (or the postposition of the direct object)? Currently, there is no answer to these questions and I will leave these questions for future studies.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter discusses the formation of various types of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. It accounts for the forms of three main types of *SHI...DE* sentences—regular *SHI...DE* focus constructions without constituent fronting, *SHI...DE* focus constructions with constituent fronting and *SHI...DE* focus constructions without, or that appear to be without, a topical Theme. I have argued that the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions is shaped by four factors—the topical Theme conditions, the strong topic movement rule, the no movement rule and the *shi* rule. The above data have shown that these four factors are ranked according to their strengths, as shown in (69) and repeated as (74) below. In addition, semantic and pragmatic factors explain why some *SHI...DE* focus constructions with multiple topical Themes are unacceptable and an independent in-focus deletion rule has explained the *SHI...DE* sentences that do not contain a realized topical Theme.

- (74) Topical Theme conditions >> strong topic movement rule >>
no movement rule >> *shi* rule.

The availability of the above ranking of factors suggests that the form of *SHI...DE* focus construction can be accounted for by Optimality Theory. The next chapter is an attempt at taking an Optimality-Theoretic approach to account for the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. Under Optimality Theory, these factors are viewed as violable constraints. The output sentences, or the so-called grammatical *SHI...DE* focus constructions, are the most optimal forms that commit the least number of violations and the least severe violations.

5 TOWARDS AN OPTIMALITY-THEORETIC ACCOUNT OF *SHI...DE* FOCUS CONSTRUCTIONS

The previous chapter has provided a model that can account for the grammatical forms of Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions and explain the ungrammatical cases. The model consists of four factors, ranked according to their strengths, repeated as (1).

- (1) Topical Theme conditions >> strong topic movement rule >> no movement rule >> *shi* rule

In chapter 2, I have shown that the sentence-final morpheme *de* in *SHI...DE* focus constructions is expressing the speaker's certainty towards the proposition. As mentioned in the chapter, *de* is inserted in a sentence when the speaker wants to express his or her certainty. Thus, to provide a complete account of the formation of *SHI...DE* focus constructions, a *de* insertion rule, as shown in (2), should be added. To simplify the discussion, this insertion rule has been excluded in the previous chapters and is going to be neglected in the following discussion because it is a rule that works independently and it does not participate in the ranking. (*De* is always inserted sentence-finally.) However, it is important to keep in mind that this independent rule also contributes to the formation of *SHI...DE* focus constructions.

- (2) *De* insertion rule:
De is inserted to the sentence-final position when the speaker is certain about the proposition.

In this chapter, I attempt to use Optimality Theory (OT) to account for the various forms of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. Optimality Theory is a constraint-based theory that explains patterns observed in the grammar. According to OT, the grammatical form of a sentence is the best or the optimal form out of a set of candidates, where best or optimal is defined by the number and the severity of constraint violations. The first section of this chapter relates OT to the current study—the formation of Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions. In particular, the factors that shape *SHI...DE* focus constructions shown in (1) are going to be translated into constraints in OT and I will show how a grammatical *SHI...DE* focus construction is selected from the list of

candidates based on constraint violations. The second section provides more complicated examples of *SHI...DE* focus constructions that can be accounted for by OT.

5.1 Optimality Theory and *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions

This section is a brief introduction to Optimality Theory and the formation of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. In OT, a grammatical sentence is selected from a list of candidates based on constraint violations. In this section, I am going to show how this selection is done in the forming of *SHI...DE* focus constructions.

5.1.1 Input and Candidates

The first component in OT is the input. Every sentence must have an input, or an underlying form. According to Kagar (1999) (based on Grimshaw's (1997) idea), the input consists of three things, as shown below.

- (3) (i) A lexical head plus its argument structure,
 (ii) an assignment of lexical heads to its arguments, and
 (iii) a specification of the associated tense and semantically meaningful auxiliaries.

(Kagar, 1999, p. 344-345)

Kagar's (1999) model is limited only to formal syntactic analysis. However, the previous discussion shows that the formation of *SHI...DE* focus constructions involves more than pure syntactic considerations. Factors beyond formal syntax, such as topic and focus, are involved. Thus, the components in (3) are not sufficient to account for the formation of *SHI...DE* sentences. Information such as topic and focus, as well as the strong topical element discussed in the previous chapter, should be included in the input. Thus, the input of the *SHI...DE* focus construction in (4a) is shown in (4b). Note also that, as Chinese does not have tense, aspect is used instead.

- (4) a. *Wo shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 'It's find your dog that I did.'

- b. (i) *find*(x, y)
- (ii) x = I
- y = *your dog*
- (iii) aspect = achievement
- (iv) topic = I
- focus = VP
- strong topic = \emptyset

The information in (4) generates candidate sentences competing to become the optimal or grammatical form. Assuming the following are all of the possible candidates.

- (5)
- a. *Wo shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
I SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 - b. *Wo zhao-dao nide gou de.*
I find-ASP your dog DE
 - c. *Shi zhao-dao nide gou wo.*
SHI find-ASP your dog I

To select the optimal output from (5), each of the candidates has to be compared with each other. As mentioned earlier, in OT, the optimal form is the one which commits the least number of violations of constraints and commits the least severe violations. The next section discusses the constraints.

5.1.2 Constraints

As discussed in the previous chapter, the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions is determined by four factors. To allow the model to work within OT, these four factors are translated into constraints here. The *shi* rule requires that the morpheme *shi* be inserted immediately before the contrastive focus and no given elements appear after *shi*. This rule can be seen as two separated constraints. First, the fact that *shi* is required to mark the contrastive focus of a sentence is a result of satisfying a constraint that requires obligatory marking of the contrastive focus in a sentence. I propose that this constraint is known as MARKING CONTRASTIVE FOCUS (MCF) constraint, as shown in (6). This constraint requires that the

contrastive focus of a sentence must be marked by some device. As discussed in chapter 2, in Chinese, two of the available devices are the contrastive marker *shi* and stress placement.

- (6) MARKING CONTRASTIVE FOCUS (MCF):
The contrastive focus of a sentence must be marked.

The second function of *shi* is a Theme-Rheme separator. In *SHI...DE* focus constructions, all post-*shi* elements are ideally non-topical or non-given. This is in fact the result of satisfying the FINALFOCUS (FF) constraint proposed by Büring (2000). This constraint requires that all focus elements must be placed sentence-finally. (In *SHI...DE* focus constructions, sentence-final position refers to the post-*shi* position.) In the ideal cases of *SHI...DE* sentences, this constraint is adhered to—all topical (i.e. non-focused) elements are placed before *shi* to save the position after *shi* for the non-topical (i.e. focused) elements.

- (7) FINAL FOCUS (FF):
Focus should be sentence final.

(Büring, 2000, p. 73)

As for the no movement rule, it already exists in the literature. The ECONOMY OF MOVEMENT or STAY constraint prohibits any kind of movement in a sentence (Kagar, 1999).

- (8) ECONOMY OF MOVEMENT (STAY):
Trace is not allowed.

(Kagar, 1999, p. 351)

The third factor that determines the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions is the strong topic movement rule which requires all strong topical elements to appear first in a sentence. This rule is translated as the strong topic movement constraint, as shown below.

- (9) STRONG TOPIC MOVEMENT (S-TOPMOVE):
Strong topical element must appear sentence-initially.

The topical Theme conditions proposed in chapter 3 are the last factor that shapes Chinese *SHI...DE* sentences. The topical Theme conditions are a collection of conditions that restrict the topical Themes to certain types. Thus, each condition can be viewed as a constraint. However, for a simpler analysis, I will leave the topical Theme conditions as a single constraint.

Since different languages can have different collections of topical Theme conditions, this topical Theme condition constraint only applies to Chinese.

- (10) TOPICAL THEME CONDITIONS (TTC):
 Topical Themes of a sentence must:
- (i) belong to a type of topical Theme (participant, individual, temporal, spatial or situational) and serve the corresponding function,
 - (ii) satisfy the Relational Givenness Condition; and
 - (iii) satisfy the Topic Familiarity Condition (for participant and individual Themes only).

As argued in the previous chapter, the ranking of these constraints is shown in (11).

- (11) TTC >> S-TOPMOVE >> STAY >> FF, MCF

5.1.3 Selecting the Optimal Output

With the above ranking, it is possible to select the optimal form of *SHI...DE* focus construction for the input in (4) from the candidates listed in (5). The following tableau shows the constraint violations of each candidate.

- (12) Input:
- (i) *find* (x, y)
 - (ii) x = I
y = *your dog*
 - (iii) aspect = achievement
 - (iv) topic = I
focus = VP
strong topic = \emptyset

Candidates	TTC	S-TOPMOVE	STAY	FF	MCF
☞ (5a)					
(5b)					*!
(5c)			*!	*!	

The above tableau shows the constraint violations of the three candidates in (5). Since the input does not contain a strong topic, S-TOPMOVE is not relevant in this competition and this constraint is not violated in any of the cases. In addition, none of the candidates violates TTC because they either do not have impossible topical Themes (in (5a) and (5b)) or have no topical Theme (in (5c)). As shown above, (5c) violates STAY and FF, (5b) violates MCF, and there is no violation in (5a). When selecting the optimal output, (5c) is the first candidate to be ruled out.

The reason for ruling it out is that it violates the higher ranked constraint STAY by fronting the focused VP. Since STAY is ranked higher than FF and MCF, this violation is considered as fatal. (5b) is also ruled out eventually because it violates MCF. In other words, the contrastive focus in the sentence is not marked accordingly. This violation is also fatal because there is a better candidate. (5a) is the best form out of the three candidates because there is no violation. Therefore, the optimal or grammatical form of *SHI...DE* focus construction for the input in (4) is (5a), repeated as (13).

- (13) *Wo shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘It’s find your dog that I did.’

This section used a VP focused *SHI...DE* focus construction as an illustration of how Optimality Theory fits into the model. In this example, only three of the five constraints are involved in the competition. However, it introduces how the selection of the optimal form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions is done. In the next section, more examples of *SHI...DE* focus constructions that involve more constraints will be discussed.

5.2 More Examples

The last section showed how the formation of a very basic case of *SHI...DE* focus construction works within Optimality Theory. In this section, I am going to provide three additional examples that involve more complicated cases. The first example is the ungrammatical direct object focused *SHI...DE* focus construction, followed by the interesting case of a verb focused *SHI...DE* focus construction where a topical direct object is forced to remain in situ. The last case is a *SHI...DE* focus construction that involves fronting of constituents. I am going to show that OT is able to explain the fact that fronting of a strongly topical direct object is possible while fronting of a strongly topical VP is not possible.

5.2.1 Direct Object Focused *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions

In the section, I am going to show how Optimality Theory explains the ungrammaticality of direct object focused *SHI...DE* focus constructions. The following is the input of a direct object focused *SHI...DE* focus construction.

- (14) (i) *find* (x, y)
 (ii) x = I
 y = *your dog*
 (iii) aspect = achievement
 (iv) topic = I
 focus = *your dog*
 strong topic = \emptyset

Based on the above input, a list of possible candidates is generated. Some of them are shown in (15). The tableau that shows the constraint violations is shown in (16).

- (15) a. *Wo zhao-dao shi nide gou de.*
 I find-ASP SHI your dog DE
 b. *Wo zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I find-ASP your dog DE
 c. *Wo shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 d. *Shi nide gou wo zhao-dao de.*
 SHI your dog I find-ASP DE

- (16) Input:
 (i) *find* (x, y)
 (ii) x = I
 y = *your dog*
 (iii) aspect = achievement
 (iv) topic = I
 focus = *your dog*
 strong topic = \emptyset

Candidates	TTC	S-TOPMOVE	STAY	FF	MCF
(15a)	*!				
(15b)					*
(15c)				*!	*
(15d)			*!	*	

In this competition, S-TOPMOVE is not relevant because there is no strong topic. The above tableau shows that direct object focused *SHI...DE* focus construction (i.e. (15a)) is

ungrammatical and therefore does not exist. Even though (15a) does not violate the other three constraints (STAY, FF and MCF), its violation of TTC is fatal. When competing with the other three candidates, which all violate some constraints, (15a) is the first one being ruled out because TTC is the highest ranked constraint. In other words, the violation committed by (15a) is the most severe. This is the same reason for ruling out (15d), which violates STAY. (15b) and (15c) both violate the constraints of the same level (FF and MCF are ranked equally). But in the above case, (15b) wins the competition because it has only one violation, whereas (15c) has two. (15c) violates FF because it contains a non-focused element in sentence-final (post-*shi*) position. As a result, (15b), repeated as (17) below, is the optimal form for the input. (17) is not a *SHI...DE* focus construction. The contrastive focus is not marked by *shi* (i.e. it violates MCF). However, out of the list of candidates, there is no better form other than (17).

- (17) *Wo zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I find-ASP your dog DE
 ‘I found your dog.’

5.2.2 Verb Focused *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions

The input in (18) calls for a sentence that marks the verb as the contrastive focus. (19) shows some possible candidates that are generated.

- (18) Input:
 (i) *find*(x, y)
 (ii) $x = I$
 $y = \textit{your dog}$
 (iii) aspect = achievement
 (iv) topic = *I, your dog*
 focus = *find*
 strong topic = \emptyset
- (19) a. *Wo shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI find-ASP your dog DE
- b. *Wo zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I find-ASP your dog DE
- c. *Wo nide gou shi zhao-dao de.*
 I your dog SHI find-ASP DE

- d. *Nide gou wo shi zhao-dao de.*
 your dog I SHI find-ASP DE

The following tableau shows the results of the competitions between the candidates.

(19a), a verb focused *SHI...DE* focus construction, repeated in (21), is the optimal output.

- (20) Input:
 (i) *find* (x, y)
 (ii) x = I
 y = *your dog*
 (iii) aspect = achievement
 (iv) topic = I, *your dog*
 focus = *find*
 strong topic = \emptyset

Candidates	TTC	S-TOPMOVE	STAY	FF	MCF
☞ (19a)				*	
(19b)				*	*!
(19c)			*!		
(19d)			*!		

- (21) *Wo shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI find-ASP your dog DE
 'It's find that I did to your dog.'

5.2.3 *SHI...DE* Focus Constructions with Fronted Constituents

The last two examples I am going to show are *SHI...DE* focus constructions with fronted constituents. The first example has the following input.

- (22) Input:
 (i) *find* (x, y)
 (ii) x = I
 y = *your dog*
 (iii) aspect = achievement
 (iv) topic = I, *your dog*
 focus = *find*
 strong topic = *your dog*

The difference between the input in (22) and the one in (18) is that the direct object 'your dog' in this case is a strong topic. By the strong topic movement rule, it is expected that the strong topic is fronted to the sentence-initial position. (23) shows some possible candidates and (24) is the tableau.

- (23) a. *Wo shi zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I SHI find-ASP your dog DE
- b. *Wo zhao-dao nide gou de.*
 I find-ASP your dog DE
- c. *Wo nide gou shi zhao-dao de.*
 I your dog SHI find-ASP DE
- d. *Nide gou wo shi zhao-dao de.*
 your dog I SHI find-ASP DE

- (24) Input:
 (i) *find(x, y)*
 (ii) *x = I*
y = your dog
 (iii) aspect = achievement
 (iv) topic = *I, your dog*
 focus = *find*
 strong topic = *your dog*

Candidates	TTC	S-TOPMOVE	STAY	FF	MCF
(23a)		*!		*	
(23b)		*!		*	*
(23c)		*!	*		
☞ (23d)			*		

All of the above examples except (23d) violate S-TOPMOVE, which requires strong topical elements to appear sentence-initially. S-TOPMOVE is a highly ranked constraint and thus violations of other lower ranked constraints are no longer relevant in this competition. (23d), repeated as (25), is the optimal output. It is a verb focused *SHI...DE* focus construction with a fronted direct object.

- (25) *Nide gou, wo shi zhao-dao de.*
 your dog I SHI find-ASP DE
 ‘Your dog, it’s find that I did to it.’

The last example is going to show how all of the five constraints work together in selecting the optimal output. The following is the input.

- (26) Input:
 (i) *find(x, y), in(z)*
 (ii) *x = I*
y = your dog
z = the park

- (iii) aspect = achievement
- (iv) topic = *I, your dog*
focus = *in the park*
strong topic = VP

Some possible candidates are listed below, followed by the tableau.

- (27) a. *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
- b. *Wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
I at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
- c. *Wo zhao-dao nide gou shi zai gongyuan-li de.*
I find-ASP your dog SHI at park-in DE
- d. *Zhao-dao nide gou wo shi zai gongyuan-li de.*
find-ASP your dog I SHI at park-in DE

- (28) Input:
- (i) *find(x, y), in(z)*
 - (ii) *x = I*
y = your dog
z = the park
 - (iii) aspect = achievement
 - (iv) topic = *I, your dog*
focus = *in the park*
strong topic = VP

Candidates	TTC	S-TOPMOVE	STAY	FF	MCF
(27a)		*		*	
(27b)		*		*	*!
(27c)	*!	*	*		
(27d)	*!		*		

The above tableau shows that both (27c) and (27d) are ruled out at the initial stage. Both of these two sentences violate the TTC. In particular, they have the VP ‘find your dog’, an impossible topical Theme, preceding *shi*. Both (27a) and (27b) violate the next highest ranked constraint S-TOPMOVE. In both sentences, the strong topic (the VP) is not fronted to the sentence-initial position. However, (27a) is more optimal compared to (27b) because it commits a lower number of violations. Thus, the correct form of the input in (28) is (27a), repeated as (29) below.

- (29) *Wo shi zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.*
I SHI at park-in find-ASP your dog DE
'It's in the park that I found your dog.'

5.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided examples to illustrate how Optimality Theory fits into the model proposed in the previous chapter. It answered two questions. First, how the grammatical (or optimal) form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions is selected. Second, why some forms of *SHI...DE* focus constructions, such as direct object focused *SHI...DE* focus construction, do not exist (i.e. are ungrammatical). It appears that this OT approach to *SHI...DE* focus constructions works very well in explaining all of the patterns mentioned in the current study.

6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The current study of Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions accomplishes several goals. First, it leads to a better understanding of *SHI...DE* focus constructions, or what have been called cleft sentences, in Chinese. While the status of *shi* has been controversial, chapter 2 has justified some earlier claims that *shi* is not a copula verb but a contrastive focus marker being inserted immediately before the focused elements. This finding reveals that strictly speaking, *SHI...DE* focus constructions are not real cleft sentences. Despite the fact that Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions and English cleft sentences bear a similar function of focus marking, their structures are completely different. Moreover, the understanding of *shi* as a contrastive focus marker in *SHI...DE* focus constructions helps the understanding of other sentences that contain *shi*, such as (inverted) pseudo-clefts and emphatic sentences. While these sentences sometimes appear to be identical, the *shi* (as well as the *de*) contained in these sentences are different and it is the multiple meanings of *shi* that cause these sentences to mean differently.

In this study, Downing's (1991) classification of topical Themes has been expanded in order to account for all possible topical Themes in Chinese. In particular, individual Theme is introduced to the classification. The study of topical Themes in chapter 3 also leads to new understanding of Chinese topics. By incorporating the works by, for examples, Chafe (1976), Downing (1991), Gundel (1985, 1988) and Halliday (1985), the topical Theme conditions, a collection of restrictions on topical Themes, which specifically works for Chinese, is proposed. Topical Theme conditions must be language specific because different languages have different collections of restrictions on topical Themes. For example, Chinese has individual Themes, which are not found in languages such as English. However, some restrictions may appear to be, or have been assumed to be, universal. For example, Gundel (1988) suggests that the Topic Familiarity and Identifiability Conditions are universal.

Zhu's (1997) claim that the topic (Theme) and comment (Rheme) of *SHI...DE* focus constructions are separated by *shi* is justified. This leads to the application of the topical Theme conditions to the pre-*shi* elements in *SHI...DE* focus constructions. Consequently, it unfolds the mysteries of the “uncleftability” of direct and indirect objects in Chinese. Furthermore, it shows that *SHI...DE* focus constructions are not simply formed by the insertion of the morphemes *shi* and *de* to regular sentences. Factors such as topical Theme conditions are playing a role. More factors that contribute to the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions have been discovered by including more data of *SHI...DE* focus constructions in this study. The direct object in situ phenomenon in verb focused *SHI...DE* focus constructions shows the effects of the canonical word order, or the no movement rule. *SHI...DE* focus constructions that involve fronting of constituents suggest the strong topic movement rule. The strong topic movement rule that requires highly salient elements to be fronted to the sentence-initial position is proposed based on the fact that when there is more than one topical Theme in a sentence, the first topical Theme appears to have stronger effects on the subsequent discourse. The data in this study supports this view. However, this strong topic movement rule still needs to be attested by further research. In particular, a clearer definition of “strong topic” is needed.

The data in this study suggest that the factors that shape Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions are ranked according to their strengths. The ranking has been shown to be correct and this model or approach to *SHI...DE* focus constructions fits well into the Optimality Theoretic framework. Within OT, the formation of *SHI...DE* focus constructions is viewed as a competition between the candidates generated from the input. The factors that contribute to the form of *SHI...DE* focus constructions are viewed as violable constraints. The winner of the competition is the candidate that commits the least number of violations and the least severe violations.

It is possible that this OT approach to *SHI...DE* focus constructions can be expanded into a typological study of focus constructions cross-linguistically. In OT, all constraints are universal.

However, the ranking of the constraints is language specific. Different ranking of the constraints leads to the fact that different languages have different “grammar rules” of forming focus constructions. However, several challenges have to be overcome in order to study the pattern of focus constructions cross-linguistically. First, languages are likely to have more than one way of marking focus. In Chinese, for example, in addition to *SHI...DE* focus construction, pseudo-clefts and sentences with special stress placement are some possible means of marking focus. It is still unclear what the differences between the functions of these constructions are and why in some cases a particular construction is preferred over the others. To answer these questions, the current OT approach to *SHI...DE* focus constructions will at least have to be expanded by including more constraints.

Second, it is also challenging to define “focus constructions”. In addition to the first problem that a language can have more than one focus construction, the function of the so-called focus constructions may not be purely marking foci. For example, although it appears that Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions and English cleft sentences are functionally similar, it is unclear whether they are truly functionally identical. The roles these sentences play in discourse, for examples, how they are related to the preceding or subsequent utterances and in what situations they are used, have not been fully understood. This definition problem makes cross-linguistic comparison extremely difficult.

The third challenge is that different languages have different grammatical rules. In other words, a considerable amount of constraints have to be added to the model. The topical Theme conditions constraint is one of the examples. As mentioned earlier, the topical Theme conditions used in the current model is language specific. However, in OT, all constraints must be universal. A possible solution is to consider the topical Theme conditions as several different constraints and these constraints, along with other constraints, are ranked differently in different languages.

On two possible directions for future study of Chinese *SHI...DE* focus constructions, first, it is necessary to conduct phonological studies on *SHI...DE* focus constructions. As mentioned

earlier, stress plays a role in information structure. Given elements, information focus and contrastive focus are marked differently phonologically. In addition, a heavy stress on the focused element is an alternative way of marking contrastive focus in lieu of *shi* insertion. These need to be worked out in order to understand the whole picture of *SHI...DE* focus constructions. Second, the proposal in this study has not yet been tested by natural language data. Future study on *SHI...DE* focus constructions can use this model to account for real language data. In natural language, especially in spoken discourse, it is reasonable to expect more patterns of *SHI...DE* focus constructions, even those that violate the rules in standard grammar. Consequently, this current model should be expanded to account for those facts.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Breul, C. (2004). *Focus structure in generative grammar*. Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Büring, D. (2000). Let's phrase it! Focus, word order, and prosodic phrasing in German double object constructions. In G. Müller and W. Sternefeld (Eds.). *Competition in syntax* (pp. 69-106). Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Chafe, W. L. (1976). Givenness, contrastiveness, definiteness, subjects, topics, and point of view. In C. N. Li (Ed.). *Subject and topic* (pp. 25-56). New York: Academic Press.
- Chan, W. M. (1990). Shi in modern standard Chinese. *Columbia University Working Papers in Linguistics*, 9, 1-45.
- Chen, L. L., & Sybesma, R. (1999). Bare and not-so-bare nouns and the structure of NP. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 30(4), 509-542.
- Chen, X., & Luo, Q. (2005). Syntactic properties of Mandarin Chinese 'shi'. *Waiyu Jiaoxue yu Yanjiu (=Foreign Language Teaching and Studies)*, 37(3), 192-198.
- Chierchia G., & McConnell-Ginet, S. (2000). *Meaning and grammar: an introduction to semantics* (2nd ed.). Cambridge; London: The MIT Press.
- Chiu-Ming, L., & Li, L. (1994). A comparison of cleft sentences in English and shi sentences in Chinese. *Papers and Studies in Contrastive Linguistics*, 29, 47-60.
- Chu, C. C. (1993). The prototypicality of topic in Mandarin Chinese. *Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association*, 28(1), 25-45.
- Chu, C. C. (1998). *A discourse grammar of Mandarin Chinese*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Collins, P. C. (1991). *Cleft and pseudo-cleft constructions in English*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Downing, A. (1991). An alternative approach to theme: a systemic-functional perspective. *Word*, 42(2), 119-143.
- Egins, S. *An introduction to systemic functional linguistics*. London; New York: Continuum.
- Fang, Y., McDonald, E., & Cheng, M. (1995). On theme in Chinese: from clause to discourse. In R. Hasan and P. H. Frieds (Eds.). *On subject and theme: a discourse functional perspective* (pp. 235-273). Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Gundel, J. K. (1985). 'Shared knowledge' and topicality. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 9, 83-107.
- Gundel, J. K. (1988). Universals of topic-comment structure. In M. Hammond, E. A. Moravcsik and J. R. Wirth (Eds.). *Studies in syntactic typology* (pp. 209-239). Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

- Gundel, J. K. (1999). On three kinds of focus. In P. Bosch and R. van der Sandt (Eds.), *Focus: linguistic, cognitive and computational perspectives* (pp. 293-305). Cambridge; New York; Oakleigh: Cambridge University Press.
- Gundel, J. K., & Fretheim, T. (2004). Topic and focus. In L. Horn and G. Ward (Eds.), *Handbook of pragmatics* (pp. 175-196). Malden: Blackwell.
- Gundel, J., Hedberg, N., & Zacharski, R. (1993). Cognitive status and the form of referring expressions in discourse. *Language*, 69, 274-307.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar* (3rd ed.). London: Arnold.
- Hedberg, N. (1990). *Discourse pragmatics and cleft sentences in English*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota.
- Hedberg, N. (1999). The discourse function of English clefts and Mandarin *shi...de* constructions. Paper presented at the Workshop on the Discourse Function of Clefts. Berlin, Germany: Humboldt University.
- Hedberg, N. (2000). The referential status of clefts. *Language*, 76, 891-920.
- Hengeveld, K. (1990). A functional analysis of copula constructions in Mandarin Chinese. *Studies in Language*, 14(2), 291-323.
- Hoh, P.-S., & Chiang, W.-Y. (1989). A focus account of moved wh-phrases at s-structure in Chinese. *Lingua*, 81, 47-73.
- Huang, G., & Fawcett, R. P. (1996). A functional approach to two 'focussing' constructions in English and Chinese. *Language Sciences*, 18(1-2), 179-194.
- Her, O.-S. (1991). Topic as a grammatical function in Chinese. *Lingua*, 84, 1-23.
- Kagar, R. (1999). *Optimality theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kitagawa, C., & Ross, C. N. G. (1982). Prenominal modification in Chinese and Japanese. *Linguistic Analysis*, 9(1), 19-53.
- Lee, H. (2005). On *de* in *shi...de* construction. *University System of Taiwan Working Papers in Linguistics*, 1, 131-160.
- Li, C. N., & Thompson, S. A. (1976). Subject and topic: a new typology of language. In C. N. Li (Ed.), *Subject and topic* (pp. 457-490). New York: Academic Press.
- Li, C. N., & Thompson, S. A. (1981). *Mandarin Chinese: a functional reference grammar*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Li, W. (2004). Topic chains in Chinese discourse. *Discourse Processes*, 37(1), 25-45.

- Lu, S. (1943). Lun 'di', 'di' zhi bian ji 'di' zi de youlai (=On the differences between 'di' and 'di' and the origin of 'di'). *Zhongguo Wen Hua Yan Jiu Hui Kan* (=Collections of Chinese Cultural Studies), 3, 229-238.
- Luo, C. (1992). On the uncleftability of direct object in Chinese. *Linguistica Atlantica*, 14, 55-71.
- Modini, P. (1993). A theory of evolution of the Mandarin focus construction 'shì...de'. *Asian and African Studies*, 2(2), 154-168.
- Paris, M.-C. (1998). Focus operators and types of predication in Mandarin. *Cahiers de Linguistique, Asie Orientale* (=East Asia Language Journal), 27(2), 139-159.
- Paul, W., & Whitman, J. (2001). The complement structure of *shi de* clefts. Paper presented at the Joint Conference of IACL-10/NACCL-13. Irvine: University of California, Irvine.
- Prince, E. F. (1981). Topicalization, focus-movement, and Yiddish-movement: a pragmatic differentiation. In D. K. Alford, K. A. Hunold, M. A. Macaulay, J. Walter, C. Brugman, P. Chertok, I. Čivkulis and M. Tobey (Eds.). *Proceedings of the seventh annual meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society* (pp. 249-264). Berkeley: Berkeley Linguistics Society.
- Ross, C. (1983). On the functions of Mandarin *de*. *Journal of Chinese Linguistics*, 11(2), 214-246.
- Shen, X. S. (1988). Identifying topic in Chinese through prosodic features. *Journal of Chinese Language Teacher Association*, 23(2), 17-32.
- Shi, D. (1989). Topic chain as a syntactic category. *Journal of Chinese Linguistics*, 17(2), 223-262.
- Shi, D. (2000). Topic and topic-comment constructions in Mandarin Chinese. *Language*, 76(2), 383-408.
- Shi, D. (2003). Theoretical grammar and Chinese language teaching. *Shijie Hanyu Jiaoxue* (=Chinese Teaching in the World), 2(June), 5-11.
- Tao, L. (1996). Topic discontinuity and zero anaphora in Chinese discourse: cognitive strategies in discourse processing. In B. Fox (Ed.). *Studies in anaphora* (pp. 487-513). Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Teng, S. (1979). Remarks on cleft sentences in Chinese. *Journal of Chinese Linguistics*, 7, 101-114.
- Xu, L., & Langendoen, D. T. (1985). Topic structures in Chinese. *Language*, 61(1), 1-27.
- Yariv-Laor, L. (1999). Syntactic versus communicative function: the case of two Chinese morphemes. *Folia Linguistica*, 33(3-4), 441-461.
- Yen, S. L. (1986). The origin of copula *shi* in Chinese. *Journal of Chinese Linguistics*, 14(2), 227-241.

- Yip, P.-C., & Rimmington, D. (1997). *Chinese: a comprehensive grammar*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Zhao, S. (1979). Guanyu 'shi...de' ju (=On 'shi...de' sentences). *Yuyan Jiaoxue yu Yanjiu* (=Language Teaching and Studies), 1, 57-66.
- Zhu, Y. (1996). Modality and modulation in Chinese. In M. Berry, C. Butler, R. Fawcett and G. Huang (Eds.). *Meaning and form: systemic-functional interpretations* (pp. 183-209). Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Zhu, Y. (1997). *The focus-marking function of shi in Mandarin Chinese*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota.