RECIPROCAL CONDITIONS FOR ATTRIBUTIVE MIRROR INVERSED SENTENCES IN MODERN CHINESE

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ABSTRACT

Mirror inversed sentences (MISs) is a special syntactic-semantic phenomenon in modern Chinese with the typical characteristics of "reciprocal syntactic components and unchanged propositional meaning". At present, whether discussing the reciprocal conditions of MISs from the perspective of predicates, body words or constructions, they are all faced with a common problem: they can never answer the question of why the propositional meaning of MISs remains unchanged. This paper summarizes the common conditions for realizing the interchangeability of body words in attributive MISs, and explores the deep cognitive reasons for the interchangeability. This paper finds that the existence of "symmetry" semantic relations in attributive dimensions is the common necessary condition for this kind of MISs to realize the interchangeability of body words. In other words, the conceptual semantic symmetry of MIS is the premise of its formal symmetry, and formal symmetry is the reflection of its conceptual semantic symmetry.

Key Words: MISs; Attributive; Symmetric semantic relation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Chinese word order is relatively fixed. "X" and "Y" (body words) before and after "**P**" (predicates) in sentence pattern "X+**P**+Y" can't be exchanged arbitrarily. When the body words are reciprocal, the propositional meaning often changes or is no longer reasonable. However, there are some special phenomena that the propositional meaning does not change after the reciprocity. For example, "Xichang **tong** tielu ↔ Tielu **tong** Xichang (Xichang **connects** the railway ↔ The railway **connects** Xichang)". This kind of sentence pattern has the typical characteristics of "reciprocity of syntactic components and unchanged propositional meaning" and is thus named as "mirror inversed inversion (MISs)" and divided into six categories: attributive, spatial, temporal, attributive-temporal, spatial-temporal and attributive-spatial-temporal. (Gan, 2019)

Why can the body words in MISs carry out reciprocity around predicates while keeping the propositional meaning basically unchanged? Most of the existing researches make descriptive analysis of the internal factors of language (i.e. predicates and body words) but lack the analysis adequacy and explanation adequacy. Although some researchers began to pay attention to revealing the motivation of the interchangeability of body words from the external factors of language (i.e. constructions), these explanations are mostly one-sided, and often only aim at

some subclasses. In view of the fact that events have three basic elements of Attribute, space and time (Kant, 2004), this paper attempts to discuss the reciprocal conditions for body words in attributive MISs from both positive and negative aspects and explores the deep cognitive reasons for the interchangeability of body words.

2 PREVIOUS STUDIES ON THE RECIPROCAL CONDITIONS OF MISS
2.1 Studies from the perspective of predicates

Researchers notice the double-faced features of verbs (verb as the major component of predicates) on the interchangeability of MISs early. Ding et al. (1961) mentions that "Yige da bing **jia** yigen youtiao (a big cake **is filled with** a deep-fried dough stick)" and "Yigen youtiao **jia** yige da bing (a deep-fried dough stick **is filled with** a big cake)" can be grammatical only if the verb "**jia** (be filled with)" has double faces. Ma (1955) agrees and formally puts forward the definition of "double-faced verbs", while Bai (1994) further discusses their classification in detail.

Later researchers focus more on the semantic requirements of verbs in MISs. Zhu (1981) points out that "Zai heiban shang **xie** zi (On the blackboard **are written** the characters)" and "Zi **xie** zai heiban shang (The characters **are written** on the blackboarde)" can change each other because the verb "**xie** (write)" contains the meaning of "attaching" to "something". Chen (1986) states that there were transformational relationships between the body words of the sentences with the verbs containing the senses of "allow". For example, "Zhetiao lu **zou** qiche (This way **is allowed to** go by car)" can be said to be "Qiche **zou** zhetiao lu (The car **is allowed to go** on this way)". Similarly, Lu (1993) also believes that verbs with the meanings of "enough and permission" are the conditions for "Shige ren **chi** yiguo fan (Ten people eat a pot of rice)" to be derived from "Yiguo fan **chi** shige ren (*A pot of rice eat ten people)".

Different from the above emphasis on "verbs", some researchers think that we should pay more attention to the "verb complement (the other component of predicates)". The importance of "verbs" and "their complements" should be reversed, that is, "complements" should be considered to be more important than "verbs" (Li, 1984). Zhan (1989) agrees and puts forward that "man (be filled with)" in the sentence "Si kuang **tian man le** hong liu lv qin (Four boxes **are filled with** red willows and green birds)" can be used to both describe the two body words. Wang (1992) also points out that the complement "si (much)" after the verb "xiang (miss)" in "Wo **xiang si** ni (* I **miss much** you)" either points toward "wo" or "ni". Lu & Zhang (2013) also finds that "si (much)" plays a key role in the inversion of the generalized verb-resultative construction.

Ren (2001), however, finds that there are some examples that are difficult to explain only from the single perspective of verbs or complements. He points out that the "verbs and its complements" are equally important in the reciprocity of MISs. For example, in the sentence "Lao Wang **he zui le** jiu (Lao Wang **is drunk with** wine)", the structural center of the predicate "he zui le（is drunk）" is the verb " he (drink)". In the sentence "Jiu **he zui le** Lao Wang (* Wine **is drunken with** Lao Wang)", the center shifts to the result complement "drunk". However, Ren cannot explain why "Wo **ting dong le** zheju hua（I **understood** this sentence）" can be said, but "*Zheju hua **ting dong le** wo (*this sentence **understood** me)" cannot be said.

Exploring the reciprocal conditions of MISs from the perspective of predicates (verbs and their complements) can explain the reasons for the interchangeability of body words in some

sentence patterns, but most of them are beyond the scope of discussion. Therefore, many scholars try to examine the reciprocity conditions from the perspective of the body words.

2.2 Studies from the perspective of body words

Lv (1987) firstly notices that the semantics of body words had an important influence on the grammatical format of the sentences. When discussing "Shui **shi** Zhang Laosan (Who **is** Zhang Laosan)" and "Zhang Laosan **shi** shui (Zhang Laosan **is** who)", he puts forward that "shui (who)" has two functions: "shui" in the former sentence refers to "the person"; while "shui" in the latter is used for "explanation". However, not all the body words have different functions, such as the body words "a candle" and "a dime" in "Yizhi lazhu yimao qian (A candle **costs** a dime) ↔ Yimao qian yizhi lazhu (A dime **costs** a candle)" both express the quantity of goods and the quantity of prices.

More scholars noticed that the semantic roles of body words in the reciprocity of MISs. Chen (1994), based on Dowty's prototype role theory (1991), puts forward the semantic role priority sequence of the body words, namely: agent > sentiment > tool > being > location > theme > patient. Based on this sequence, Chen finds that the reciprocity conditions for MISs are: "semantic roles close to the middle of the sequence" and "semantic roles not at the two ends of the sequence, but close to each other". For example, the reason why "Zhuantou **dian le** qiang (a)" can be changed into "Qiang **dian le** zhuantou (b)" is that the role of the body word "Zhuantou" in sentence (a) is "tool" and the role of the body word "Qiang" is "location". Their semantic roles are close to the middle of the sequence. However, the above sequence cannot explain the "inversion of agent and patient", such as "Bage ren **chi** zheguo fan (eight people **eat** this pot of rice)" and "Zheguo fan **chi** bage ren (This pot of rice **eat** eight people)".

Her (2009) tries to explain the "inversion of agent and patient" by adding the concept of compound semantic roles and the semantic role priority sequence "agent > beneficiary > goal/experience > tool > patient/object > location/amplitude" proposed by Huang (1993). Her assumes that some body words can acquire two semantic roles at the same time. For example, in the MISs "Shige ren **chi** yiguo fan (Ten people **eat** a pot of rice) ↔ Yiguo fan **chi** shige ren (A pot of rice **eat** ten people)", the body word "Shige ren (Ten People)" can get a compound semantic role of "agent- amplitude", while the other body word "yiguo fan (a pot of rice)" can only get the role of "object". In "Shige ren **chi** yiguo fan", the role "agent" of "shige ren" is highlighted, they are in front of "patient" in the priority sequence and get the subject position; However, in the case of "Yiguo fan **chi** shige ren", the role "amplitude" of "ten people" is highlighted, and it is behind the "patient" in the priority sequence to obtain the object position. From the perspective of highlighting the composite semantic role, Her explains the "inversion of agent and patient", but fails to further explore where the composite roles are from.

Li (2010) argued that Her (2009) faces one problem: the subject or the object cannot acquire a single role while the other acquires a compound role. He points out that the examples of "Shige ren **chi** yiguo fan" and "Yiguo fan **chi** shige ren" were not really inversion of agent and patient, because the meanings of "Chi（eat）" in the two sentences are different. Specifically, "chi" in "Shige ren chi yiguo fan" can mean both "event" and "relationship". "chi" in "Yiguo fan **chi** shige ren", however, can only mean "relationship". The problem lying in Li (2010) is that two different explanations for verbs are bound to cause redundancy in the meaning of the verbs.

Furthermore, like Her (2009), Li does not point out the specific conditions for obtaining semantic roles. In addition, what is "relationship"? Where does this "relationship" come from? He also does not explain.

Starting from the body words, this perspective can explain the reasons for the reciprocal of body words in some sentence patterns to a certain extent, but most of them are still beyond the scope of its discussion.

2.3 Studies from the perspective of the constructions

The discussion from this perspective mainly focuses on the "supply-verb" sentence patterns. Lu (2004) clearly points out that the reason why the body words of "Yiguo fan **chi** sanshige ren (One pot of rice for 30 people)" and "Sanshige ren **chi** yiguo fan (30 people for one pot of rice)" can realize reciprocity lies in the fact that such sentence patterns express the construction meaning of "accommodation". Ding (2006) further attributes the framework of "accommodation" to the basic cognitive framework of "container-content".

In addition, Yue (2009) also believes that one of the deep reasons for the reciprocity of body words is the independent construction meaning when discussing the pattern "S + W + Si (death) + O". Its construction meaning is that they all represent subjective feelings of polarity.

To a certain extent, the study of reciprocal conditions of MISs from the perspective of constructions has increased the intensity of the study, but it is mainly carried out in a small range such as "supply-verb" sentences. Moreover, the discussion cannot answer such questions: if the meaning of a sentence comes from the construction, then where does this "construction" come from?

2.4 Summary

In a word, at present, no matter from the perspective of predicates, body words or constructions, all the previous studies are facing a common problem: they have never been able to answer the question of why the "propositional meaning" of MISs remains unchanged, that is, they have not touched on the deep root of the reciprocal of body words in this kind of sentence patterns.

3 ATTRIBUTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Attribute refers to the nature and characteristics of an object. How to understand the attribute (that is, to understand the world) has always been the core issue among philosophers. As early as ancient Greece, Aristotle puts forward that the world we know is composed of "Category (Katigorie)". Aristotle once devoted himself to finding various categories. He picked them up when he touched them. At first, he found out ten categories: entity, quantity, nature, relationship, residence, time, state, posture, activity and suffering. Later, he believed that he had found five more categories: opposition. meanwhile, before that, movement and having. However, Aristotle did not have any principle to find categories, the categories he found were thus always incomplete.

Kant (2004) discovers Aristotle's problem and tries to deduce the categories through logical reasoning. First of all, Kant expands Aristotle's binary judgment system (positive-negative) to a triple system (positive-negative-combined), and further proposes his transcendental logical judgment system, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1 Kant's transcendental logical judgment system

Judgments / Levels	Positive	Negative	Combined
Quantity	Total	Specific	Single
Quality	Positive	Negative	Restrictive
Relationship	Categorical	Hypothetical	Disjunctive
Mode	Possible	Real	Necessary

Then, Kant further put forward the corresponding intellectual category table, as shown in Table 2:

Table 2 Kant's intellectual category table

Judgments / Levels	Positive	Negative	Combined
Quantity	Singleness	Majority	Totality
Quality	Positiveness	Negativeness	Restrictiveness
Relationship	Entity-duality	Cause-result	Synergy
Mode	Possibility-impossibility	Realilty-nonrealilty	Necessity-nonnecessity

The following is a detailed explanation of Kant's intellectual category table, taking a simple judgment of "S is P" (such as "flowers are red") as an example. Specifically, the subject word "S" belongs to the level of quantity and can be divided into three categories: "singleness", "majority" and "totality". Predicate "P" belongs to the qualitative level and can be divided into three categories: "Positiveness", "Negativeness" and "Restrictiveness". The relationship between "S" and "P" belongs to the relationship level and can be divided into three categories: "Entity-duality", "cause-result" and "synergy". Finally, "is", which connects "S" and "P", belongs to the modal level and can be divided into three categories: "possibility-impossibility", "reality-nonreality" and "necessity-nonnecessity".

Since the two objects involved in the attributive relationship correspond to the characteristics of the subject "S" mentioned above, this study regards the attribute relationship as

the relationship between quantity categories. Accordingly, discussing the classification of attribute relationship becomes discussing the types of relationship between quantity categories. The following focuses on the specific derivation process.

According to Kant's intellectual category table, the quantity level includes "singleness", "majority" and "totality". The category of quantity can be defined as:

Quantity={singleness, majority and totality}　　　　（1）

Thus, the category relationship of quantity has the following 9 types:

Quantity I = (singleness, singleness)

Quantity II = (singleness, majority)

Quantity III = (singleness, totality)

Quantity IV = (majority, singleness)

Quantity V = (majority, majority)

Quantity VI = (majority, totality)

Quantity VII = (totality, singleness)

Quantity VIII = (totality, majority)

Quantity IX = (totality, totality)

Accordingly, attribute relationships should also have the following 9 ordered pair types:

Attributive relationship I = (singleness, singleness)

Attributive relationship II = (singleness, majority)

Attributive relationship III = (singleness, totality)

Attributive relationship IV = (majority, singleness)

Attributive relationship V = (majority, majority)

Attributive relationship VI = (majority, totality)

Attributive relationship VII = (totality, singleness)

Attributive relationship VIII = (totality, majority)

Attributive relationship IX = (totality, totality)

Among them, the attributive relationships of "singleness-singleness", "majority-majority" and "totality-totality" belong to the relationships between the same type of categories and are the semantic relations of "symmetry".

4.RECIPROCAL CONDITIONS FOR ATTRIBUTIVE MIRROR INVERSED SENTENCES

Attributive mirror inversed sentences only have the subtype of simple attributive relationship, such as examples (1)-(11) (note: all the examples have been taken from the previous literatures). This section carefully examines the reciprocal conditions of this type of mirror inversed sentences.

（1）　Yizhi lazhu　　　yimao qian ↔ Yimao qian　　　yizhi lazhu（Xing，1984）

　　　　A candle (costs) a dime ↔ A dime (costs) a candle

（2）　Yige ren　　　yiba chutou ↔ Yiba chutou　　　yige ren（Xing，1984）

　　　　 A person (owns) a hoe ↔ A hoe (is owned by) a person

（3）　Yi tian　ershisige xiaoshi ↔ Ershisige xiaoshi　yi tian（Xing，1984）

　　　　A day (is) 24　hours ↔ 24　hours (is) a day

（4）　A **dengyu** B ↔ B **dengyu** A（Bai，1994）

A **is equal to** B ↔ B **is equal to** A

（5） Beijing **shi** Zhongguo de shoudu ↔ Zhongguo de shoudu **shi** Beijing（Zhang & Chen，2000）

Beijing **is** the capital of China ↔ The capital of China **is** Beijing

（6） Wo **xiang** wo gege ↔ Wo gege **xiang** wo（Bai，1994）

I **resembles** my brother ↔ My brother **resembles** me.

（7） Liulang **shi** lianhua ↔ lianhua **shi** Liulang（Bai，1994）

Liulang **resembles** lotus ↔ Lotus **resembles** Liulang

（8） Xiaowang **zhang de xiang** Xiaozhang ↔ Xiaozhang **zhang de xiang** Xiaowang（Zhang & Chen，2000）

Xiaowang **resembles** Xiaozhang ↔ Xiaozhang **resembles** Xiaowang

（9） Ganxing renshi **bu tong yu** lixing renshi ↔ Lixing renshi **bu tong yu** ganxing renshi（Tao，1987）

perceptual knowledge **is different from** rational knowledge ↔ rational knowledge **is different from** perceptual knowledge

（10） Ni benren **bu xiang** zhaopian ↔ Zhaopian **bu xiang** ni benren（Sun，2004）

You **don't look like** the picture ↔ The picture **doesn't look like** you

（11） Hong **qubie yu** lv ↔ Lv **qubie yu** hong（Zhu，2006）

Red **is different from** green ↔ Green **is different from** red

According to Section 3, attributive relationship can be divided into 9 types, such as "singleness-singleness", "singleness-majority", "singleness-totality", "majority-singleness", "majority-majority", "majority-totality", "totality-singleness", "totality-majority", "totality-majority" and "totality-totality". In the above examples, sentence (1)-(3) belong to the attributive relationship of "singleness-singleness", while sentence (4)-(11) belong to the attributive relationship of "totality-totality".

Let's take sentence (1) "Yizhi lazhu yimao qian ↔ Yimao qian yizhi lazhu" as an example to explain in detail the reciprocal conditions of the "singleness-singleness" attributive mirror inverse sentences.

First of all, according to Kant's transcendental logic judgment system (see Table 1 for details) and the corresponding intellectual category table (see Table 2 for details), the body words "yizhi lazhu" and "yimao qian" in sentence (1) belong to the judgment of "total" and correspond to the category of "singleness". In this way, sentence (1) belongs to the attributive relationship of "singleness-singleness".

Then, we replace the category of the two body words "yizhi lazhu" and "yimao qian" in sentence (1) with the categories of "singleness" and "majority", "singleness" and "totality", "majority" and "singleness", "majority" and "majority", "majority" and "totality", "totality" and "singleness", "totality" and "majority", "totality" and "totality". After that, we examine whether

the replaced examples can realize the reciprocity of body words and form mirror inversed sentence patterns, the results are shown in Table 3:

Table 3 Sentence Variants and Body Words Reciprocity Test of Example (1)

Categories	Sentences before the reciprocity	Sentences after the reciprocity	MISs ?
(singleness, majority)	*Yizhi lazhu mouxie qian (*A candle costs some money)	*Mouxie qian yizhi lazhu (* Some money costs a candle)	n.a
(singleness, totality)	*Yizhi lazhu zhebi qian (*A candel costs this money)	*Zhebi qian yizhi lazhu (This money costs a candle)	n.a
(majority, singleness)	*Mouxie lazhu yimao qian (*Some candles cost 10 cents)	*Yimao qian mouxie lazhu (*10 cents cost some candles)	n.a
(majority, majority)	*Mouxie lazhu mouxie qian (*Some candles cost some money)	*Mouxie qian mouxielazhu (*Some money cost some candles)	n.a
(majority, totality)	*Mouxie lazhu zhebi qian (*Some candles cost this money)	*Zhebi qian mouxie lazhu (*This money costs some candles)	n.a
(totality, singleness)	Zhezhi lazhu yimaoqian (This candle costs ten cents)	*Yimao qian zhezhi lazhu (*Ten cents cost this candle)	n.a
(totality, majority)	*Zhezhi lazhu mouxie qian (*This candle costs some money)	*Mouxie qian zhezhi lazhu (*Some money costs this candle.)	n.a
(totality, totality)	*Zhezhi lazhu zhebi qian (*This candle costs this	*Zhebi qian zhezhi lazhu (*This money costs this	n.a

	money)	candle)	

As shown in Table 3, when we change the "singleness-singleness" attributive relationship of sentence (1), none of the changed sentences can make body words reciprocal to form mirror inverse sentences. Thus, the necessary condition for this kind of MISs to realize the reciprocity of body words is that the sentence patterns all present the attributive relationship of "singleness-singleness".

Taking sentence (5) "Beijing shi Zhongguo de shoudu (Beijing is the capital of China) ↔ Zhongguo de shoudu shi Beijing (the capital of China is Beijing)" as an example, this paper specifically explains the reciprocal conditions of the attributive relationship of "totality-totality".

First of all, according to Kant's transcendental logic judgment system (see Table 1 for details) and the corresponding intellectual category table (see Table 2 for details), the body words "Beijing" and "Zhongguo de shoudu (capital of China)" in sentence (5) both belong to the judgment of "single" and correspond to the category of "totality". In this way, sentence (5) belongs to the attributive relationship of "totality-totality".

Then, we replace the category of the two body words "Beijing" and "Zhongguo de shoudu" in sentence (5) with the categories of "singleness" and "singleness", "singleness" and "majority", "singleness" and "totality", "majority" and "singleness", "majority" and "majority", "majority" and "totality", "totality" and "singleness", "totality" and "majority". After that, we examine whether the replaced examples can realize the reciprocity of body words and form mirror inverted sentence patterns, the results are shown in Table 4:

Table 4 Sentence Variants and Body Words Reciprocity Test of Example (5)

Categories	Sentences before the reciprocity	Sentences after the reciprocity	MISs ?
(singleness, singleness)	*Suoyoude Beijing shi shoudu (* All Beijing are the capital)	*Shoudu shi suoyoude Beijing (*the capital is all Beijing)	n.a
(singleness, majority)	*Suoyoude Beijing shi mouxie shoudu (* All Beijing are some capitals)	*Mouxie shoudu shi suoyoude Beijing (*Some capitals are all Beijing)	n.a
(singleness, totality)	*Suoyoude Beijing shi Zhongguode shoudu (* All Beijing are the capital of China)	*Zhongguode shoudu shi suoyoude Beijing (* The capital of China is all Beijing)	n.a
(majority, singleness)	*Mouxie Beijing shi shoudu (Some Beijing is a captial)	*Shoudu shi mouxie Beijing (*a capital is some Beijing)	n.a

(majority, majority)	*Mouxie Beijing shi mouxie shoudu (*Some Beijing are some capitals)	*Mouxie shoudu shi mouxie Beijing (*Some capitals are some Beijing)	n.a
(majority, totality)	*Mouxie Beijing shi Zhongguode shoudu (*Some Beijing is the capital of China)	*Zhongguode shoudu shi mouxie Beijing (*The capital of China is some Beijing)	n.a
(totality, singleness)	Beijing shi shoudu (Beijing is a capital)	*Shoudu shi Beijing (* a capital is Beijing)	n.a
(totality, majority)	*Beijing shi mouxie shoudu (*Beijing is some capitals)	*Mouxie shoudu shi Beijing (*Some capitals is Beijing)	n.a

As shown in Table 4, when we change the "totality-totality" attributive relationship of sentence (5), none of the changed examples can make body words reciprocal to form mirror inverse sentences. In this way, the necessary condition for this kind of MISs to realize the reciprocity of body words to become mirror inverse sentence is that the mirror inverse sentence patterns all present the attributive relation of "totality-totality".

Further research finds that the attributive relationship of "singleness-singleness" and the attributive relationship of "totality-totality" belong to the relationship between the same categories and are the semantic relation of "symmetry". It can be inferred from this that the existence of "symmetry" semantic relation is a necessary condition for the simple attributive mirror inverse sentences to realize the reciprocity of body words.

5. CONCLUSION

From the perspective of different attributive relationships, this paper focuses on the specific conditions for realizing the reciprocity of body words in attributive mirror inverse sentence patterns.

Firstly, this paper discusses the specific classification of attributive relationship. According to Kant's category table, attributive relationship can be divided into 9 kinds of relationships: singleness and singleness, singleness and majority, singleness and totality, majority and singleness, majority and majority, majority and totality, totality and singleness, totality and majority, totality and totality.

Then, this paper focuses on the specific conditions for the realization of body word reciprocity in attributive mirror inversed sentence patterns. The necessary condition for the reciprocity of body words in attributive mirror inversed sentences is the "symmetrical" attributive relationship between the two body words. In short, the existence of "symmetry" semantic relationship in the attribute dimension is a common necessary condition for such sentences to realize the reciprocity of body words. In other words, the symmetry of the

conceptual semantics of the attributive sentence patterns is the premise of its formal symmetry, and the formal symmetry is the reflection of its conceptual semantic symmetry. This is related to the iconicity of human cognition, specifically, to the iconicity motivation of human symmetry.

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