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IN THE ŠĀHNĀME

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Władysław Dulęba (1920-1987) was an Oriental scholar and certainly one of the best connoisseurs of Iranian poetry in this century, a talented translator and experienced editor. In his dissertation he discusses the question of whether and in which part Persian tales about Cyrus the Great, known already to Herodotus, Ctesias, and other ancient authors, influenced Iranian epic writings. The most beautiful expression of this influence can be found in Firdousi's *Šāhnāme*.

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MULTI-CATEGORY MORPHEMES
AND RELATIONAL ELEMENTS IN CHINESE

Multi-category morphemes

The aim of this article is to briefly present multi-category morphemes in Chinese, with *shang* „top, on” discussed as the main example, as well as to try to account for the simultaneous occurrence of prepositions and postpositions in this language.

A multi-category morpheme or word may be defined as a lexical element belonging to several grammatical categories. In other words, it can function as an element possessing the characteristics of several parts of speech. Multi-category morphemes occur in languages which are to a large extent analytic, such as English and Chinese. For instance, the English word *round* can be treated as a multi-category morpheme: it is possible to employ it as a noun, verb, adjective, adverb and preposition. Sentences (1)-(5) illustrate the different uses of *round*.

- (1) He gave two *rounds* of bread to the girl.
- (2) The boy *rounded* his lips to whistle.
- (3) They were sitting at a round table.
- (4) The Earth turns round.
- (5) The shop is round the corner.

As can be seen, the actual category of *round* depends on its position in relation to the other words in the sentence. Once it functions as a particular category, *round* exhibits characteristic features of this category. Sentences (1) and (2) illustrate this phenomenon in the field of morphology: as a noun, *round* takes the plural ending *-s*; as a verb, it takes the past form ending *-ed*.

Uses of *shang*

The Chinese morpheme *shang* is found to be capable of performing more functions than *round*. It can be used as a noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition and postposition. In Sentence (6) *shang* is employed as a noun:

- (6) Zhuo *shang* you shu.
 table top have book.
 „There is a book on the table.”

As mentioned above, *shang* can be used as a verb as well, which is exemplified by such phrases as *shang zuo* „to begin to do (sth)” (*shang* „begin”, *zuo* „do, perform”), *shang xue* „to go to school” (*shang* „go”, *xue* „school”) and *shang jie* „to go downtown, to go to market” (*shang* „go”, *jie* „street”). Sentence (7) illustrates the use of the phrase *shang jie*:

- (7) Ta *shang* jie mai shu.
 He go street buy book
 „He is going to town to buy books.”

Shang is employed as an adjective in phrases like *shang yue* „last month” (*shang* „last”, *yue* „month”), and *shang bu* „upper part” (*shang* „upper”, *bu* „part”), and as an adverb, e.g. *shang xing* „to go upward” (*shang* „upward”, *xing* „go”). As a relational word, *shang* is employed both prepositionally and postpositionally, e.g.

- (8) *Shang* nar qu?
 to where go
 „Where are you going?”
 (9) *Shang* gongchang qu.
 to factory go
 „I am going to the factory.”
 (10) Shu zai zhuo *shang*.
 book be table on
 „The book is on the table.”
 (11) Zhuxi zuo zai tai *shang*.
 chairman sit be platform on
 „The chairman is sitting on the platform.”

As can be seen, the postpositional use of *shang* refers to movement toward a place/object, exemplified by (8) and (9); whereas the prepositional use of this morpheme expresses location on the surface of an object, exemplified in (10) and (11). In one of the most famous Chinese geographical names, *Shanghai*, *shang* is used prepositionally. For this reason, *Shanghai* can be interpreted as „to sea” (*hai* „sea”).

Actually, one may object to the analysis of Chinese morphemes in terms of categories, or, using traditional terminology, parts of speech, claiming that if a morpheme (or word) can potentially function as a noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition and postposition, then no parts of speech actually exist in Chinese. Maspero (1938:211) states that the differentiations necessary for the expression of thought in Chinese are drawn in specific ways and within specific frames which have nothing in common with the parts of speech. This opinion is, however, not satisfactorily justified. Chmielewski (1952:78f) points out that in the earlier stages of the development of the Chinese language, a noun and verb which are now identical used to be different lexical items in many cases. Besides, a noun and a verb may be represented by a single ideogram, but are pronounced in different tones, which can also point to different origins. Once the existence of parts of speech or categories is denied for Chinese, it must consequently be denied for such languages as English, which would deprive the linguist of a convenient set of terms which can be used to discuss various linguistic phenomena.

Prepositions and postpositions in Chinese

It has already been pointed out that Chinese multi-category morphemes are capable of performing more functions than the English ones. The difference is that it is not possible for English words such as *round* to be employed as postpositions, whereas Chinese morphemes such as *shang* may be placed after nouns they modify. Let us recall Sentences (9) and (10):

- (9) *Shang* gongchang qu.
 to factory go
 „I am going to the factory.”
 (10) Shu zai zhuo *shang*.
 book be table on
 „The book is on the table.”

The position of *shang* in the adverbial phrase determines whether this morpheme is used to express location at a place or movement to a place. As a preposition, *shang* is used to express movement; used postpositionally, it refers to location.

In other languages, this distinction is made with lexical and morphological devices such as the use of different lexical items, or inflectional endings. For instance, in English different prepositions are employed, e.g., *at the cinema*, *to the cinema*.

- (12) Peter is going *to* the cinema.
 (13) Peter is *at* the cinema.

However, it has to be borne in mind that in all these examples, the relations of movement and location are expressed not only by the use of relational elements, but also by the meaning of the verbs: the English verb *go* as well as its equivalent in Chinese are associated with movement, whereas *be* and its Chinese equivalent refer to a static situation.

Word order

As can be seen, the Chinese language makes use of word order to differentiate between movement to a place and location at a place. In other words, the users of Chinese exploit the possibility of changing the position of the modifying element with respect to the modified element to express distinct spatial relations.

Most languages have either prepositions or postpositions. The occurrence of both classes of relational words is reported in a relatively small number of languages which, apart from Chinese, include Finnish, Latin, Lithuanian, Dutch, German, Takelma and some Indo-Iranian languages. In Chinese and Finnish, postpositions occur as frequently as prepositions; whereas in Latin, Lithuanian or German they are a marginal phenomenon. Greenberg (1966) claims that the occurrence of prepositions and postpositions in a language depends on basic word order as well as the position of the genitive in relation to the modified noun or pronoun. Prepositions are found in VSO and most SVO languages, whereas postpositions occur in numerous SOV languages. The occurrence of prepositions correlates with the genitive following the modified noun; whereas in languages with postpositions, the genitive usually precedes the noun. The simultaneous occurrence of prepositions and postpositions in Chinese, Finnish, Lithuanian and Latin can be accounted for by what might be called disagreement between basic word order and the position of the genitive (see Stanulewicz, 1996). For instance, the SVO order coexists with the genitive preceding the noun, or the SOV order with the genitive following the noun.

It is possible to observe this kind of disagreement in Chinese. The basic word order in this language happens to be SVO. However, the genitive precedes the modified noun. The SVO order correlates with the occurrence of prepositions, whereas the genitive placed before the noun justifies the postpositional use of relational elements.

Final Remarks

The existence of multi-category morphemes capable of functioning as nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives and relational words is associated with the fact that Chinese is largely analytic. The occurrence of both prepositions and postpositions can be accounted for by the basic word order and the position of the genitive with respect to the modified noun. It is tempting to suggest that being an analytic language, Chinese makes use of word order as efficiently as possible. Instead of using different lexical items, just like in the English examples (12) and (13), Chinese draws the distinction between two spatial relations, i.e. location and movement to a place, exploiting the possibilities offered by word order.

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