When Speaker-Oriented Adverb also Functions as Focus Particle -- Syntax and Semantics of Mandarin Chinese *pianpian*

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In this study, we identify and analyze a frequently used adverb *pianpian* 偏偏 in Mandarin Chinese and claim that it is a speaker-oriented adverb as well as a strictly scalar exclusive focus particle. The analysis is based on data from CCL corpus. *Pianpian* is special as a speaker-oriented adverb in that it evaluates a pair or a group of related propositions on the scale of surprise or undesirableness and it is special as a focus particle as the scalar feature of *pianpian* is non-optional and does not depend on the lexical specification of the focus. In addition, the negation of the more expected alternatives by *pianpian* gives rise to interesting interactions with surprisal, speaker-orientedness etc.

1. Introduction

Previous studies have noticed the speaker-oriented adverb (hereinafter SOA) function of *pianpian* (Yang 2007, Hong 2012, Guo 2014 and Zhang 2014). Most of them classifies it into the sub-class of evaluative adverb (Yang 2007, Hong 2012, Guo 2014, and Zhang 2014), but some others state it is a modal adverb (Chen 2008 and Yu 2013).

For the subjective meaning *pianpian* expresses: some researchers argue it is associated with surprise (Ding 2005 and Yu 2013), some say it is associated with discontent (Hong 2012 and Xu 2013), others that *pianpian* can express both meanings (Fan 2009 and Hu 2009).

Literature from perspectives of both Mandarin focus particles and SOA pays no or little attention to focus particle function of *pianpian* (see for instance Lü 1980, Hou (ed.) 1998, Paris 1998, Hole 2004). Liu (2008), Guo (2014) and Zhang (2014) label *pianpian* as focus particle though without detailed analysis.

Guo (2014) states that *pianpian* is a modal adverb as well as a focus-sensitive operator. Zhang (2014) argues that *pianpian* is an evaluative adverb which could express the meaning of surprise and desire and the pragmatic functions of *pianpian* are information focus salience, presupposition indication and referent restriction.

(1) 校长偏偏也想去。
xiaozhang pianpian ye xiang qu.
The principal pianpian also wants to go.

(2) 偏偏校长也想去。

     pianpian xiaozhang ye xiang qu.

     Pianpian the principal also wants to go.

In (1) *pianpian* marks 'wants to go' as the focus[1], while in (2) *pianpian* marks 'the principal' as the focus.

From the perspective of discourse, Zhang (2014) argues that *pianpian* functions as a conjunct to add exceptional information which forms supplementary relationship with preceding clause.

I propose *pianpian* to be a SOA (to be more specific, an evaluative adverb) as well as an exclusively scalar exclusive focus particle, which means:

    a. It does not contribute to the truth-conditional meaning of a proposition but adds the speaker's evaluative judgment to the content of the proposition.

    b. It disallows the alternative(s) (explicit or implicit) to be possible answers for the open sentence (what the speaker takes as the Current Question) in the scope of the particle and displays only scalar reading of the sentence unlike *only*-like exclusive particles.

    c. The scale *pianpian* induces to the understanding of the sentence is constant in the direction of ordering and complex as to the parameter of dimension - ranking focus element at higher level of ordering with the scale of surprise or undesirability.

2. Syntactic properties of *pianpian*

Pianpian is a SOA expressing speaker's evaluation towards a proposition. It does not affect the truth-value of the proposition it appears in. In a sentence like "Laotian pianpian xiaqi le xue (It pianpian has started to snow)", *pianpian* is used to evaluate the whole proposition "It has started to snow" (i.e. committing the speaker's attitude) and at the same time maintains the truth-conditional content of the proposition. *Pianpian* can occur in both realis and irrealis sentences to express evaluative meaning. Like other evaluative adverbs, *pianpian* has a higher position in the syntactic hierarchy and usually appears in front and mid positions in a sentence.

Pianpian expresses speakers' evaluation in realis[2] sentences:

Generally, the focus proposition of *pianpian* is an event which happens or exists in the actual world, and the speaker uses *pianpian* to evaluate this realis event. For instance:

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[1] Focus is the part in a sentence which introduces alternatives. (See König 1991 etc.)

[2] Mithun (1999) describes the distinction of realis modality and irrealis modality as "The realis portrays situations as actualized, as having occurred or actually occurring, knowable through direct perception. The irrealis portrays situations as purely within the realm of thought, knowable only though imagination" (See also Palmer 2001).

(3) 眼看该上班了，可，老天偏偏下起了雪。[3]

    yankan gai shangban le, ke, laotian pianpian xiaqi le xue.

    It is almost time to go to work, but, it pianpian has started to snow.

(4) 这些不起眼而又不容易做到的事，文明的张家港人偏偏做好了。

    zhexie buqiyan er you bu rongyi zuodao de shi, wenming de Zhangjiagang ren pianpian zuohao le.

    These tiny though difficult things, the civilized citizens of Zhangjiagang pianpian have done them well.

In these two sentences, "It has started to snow" and "the civilized citizens of Zhangjiagang did them well" are typical realis events. And *pianpian* represents speakers' evaluation towards these propositions without changing their truth-conditional level of meanings. This argument is supported by the fact that the truth-conditional content of a *pianpian* sentence remains the same when we remove *pianpian* from the sentence. The above two examples (3) and (4) are re-marked as 0 and (6) after deleting *pianpian* from the original versions:

(5) 眼看该上班了，可，老天 Ø 下起了雪。

    yankan gai shangban le, ke, laotian xiaqi le xue.

    It is almost time to go to work, but, it has started to snow.

(6) 这些不起眼而又不容易做到的事，文明的张家港人 Ø 做好了。

    zhexie buqiyan er you bu rongyi zuodao de shi, wenming de Zhangjiagang ren zuohao le.

    These are tiny difficult things. The civilized citizens of Zhangjiagang have done them well.

Comparing (3) and 0 , (4) and (6) respectively, we can see that the truth-conditional content of focus proposition maintains: "It pianpian has started to snow" and "It has started to snow" truth-conditionally both express that snowfall happened in the near past and will continue for some time; and "the civilized citizens of Zhangjiagang pianpian did well" and "the civilized citizens of Zhangjiagang did well" both represent same truth-conditional semantic content that people in Zhangjiagang did something well.

    Pianpian expresses speakers' evaluation in irrealis sentences:

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[3] Our data is from CCL Contemporary Chinese Corpus. We retrieved 3740 *pianpian* sentences from the CCL Contemporary Chinese Corpus, among which we extracted 500 random sample sentences with preceding context and following context. We then precluded 68 pianpian sentences either because *pianpian* in those situations mean intentionally or context information is missing. In total, we annotated 432 random *pianpian* sentences for this study.

Pianpian could also occur in irrealis sentences other than realis situations we have mentioned before. For instance, *pianpian* could appear in some interrogatives and the antecedents of conditional:

(7) 这是我万万没有想到的， 我刚到这儿几个月，他们为什么偏偏选择了我这个"外人"来担此重任呢？

zhe shi wo wanwan meiyou xiangdao de, wo gangdao zheer jige yue, tamen weishenmo pianpian xuanze wo zhege wairen lai dan ci zhongren ne?

I would never have expected something like this. I only came here for a few months. Why have they pianpian chosen me – an outsider to take this heavy responsibility?

(8) 如果你偏偏是一个胆怯的人，只是不得已才过上独身生活，那你就更容易感受到芸芸众生施于你的压力了。

ruguo ni pianpian shi yige danqie de ren, zhishi budeyi cai guoshang le dushen shenghuo, na ni jiu geng rongyi danshou dao yunyun zhongseng shiyu ni de yali le.

If you pianpian are very timid and you only live by yourself unavoidably, then it would be easier for you to feel pressure more people around you.

After removing pianpian in these two examples, We re-label them as (9) and (10).

(9) 这是我万万没有想到的， 我刚到这儿几个月，他们为什么 Ø 选择了我这个"外人"来担此重任呢？

zhe shi wo wanwan meiyou xiangdao de, wo gangdao zheer jige yue, tamen weishenmo xuanze wo zhege wairen lai dan ci zhongren ne?

I would never have expected something like this. I only came here for a few months. Why have they chosen me – an outsider to take this heavy responsibility?

(10) 如果你 Ø 是一个胆怯的人，只是不得已才过上独身生活，那你就更容易感受到芸芸众生施于你的压力了。

ruguo ni shi yige danqie de ren, zhishi budeyi cai guoshang le dushen shenghuo, na ni jiu geng rongyi danshou dao yunyun zhongseng shiyu ni de yali le.

If you are very timid and you only live by yourself unavoidably, then it would be easier for you to feel pressure more people around you.

In (9), what is under question is still the same as (7) – the reason why I as outsider have been chosen to be the leader of the group. Similarly, (8) and (10) have the same antecedent of conditional – you are timid.

From these two examples, we can see that in irrealis situations *pianpian* does not affect the truth-conditional level of meaning. *Pianpian*, interrogative markers and conditional markers (and other irrealis modality markers) are separate operators act on

the truth-conditional content. The existent of irrealis markers does not affect the function of *pianpian*.

The fact that *pianpian* does not influence the truth-conditional contents of both realis sentences and irrealis sentences illustrates that *pianpian* is a subjective adverb which commits the speaker's attitude or evaluation to either a realis event or an irrealis event.

Pianpian is higher in the syntactic hierarchy and usually occurs before negatives adverbs, modal adverbs and degree adverbs etc. in a sentence.

Pianpian occurs before negative adverbs:

Pianpian could only occur before negative adverbs bu (not) and meiyou (not), and never occur after them. For example:

(11) 他偏偏没有去北京。

    ta pianpian meiyou qu Beijing.

    He pianpian didn't go to Beijing.

(12) *他没有偏偏去北京。

    ta meiyou pianpian qu Beijing.

    *He didn't pianpian go to Beijing.

(11) is grammatical, (12) is ungrammatical because negative adverb meiyou (not) appears before *pianpian*. The speaker's evaluation *pianpian* conveys cannot be negated. This is different from fact-based content which contrarily can be negated. But there is of course some device to challenge or disagree with some subjective information. For (12), a legal way to express disagreement or distinct evaluation is to say " I don't find it surprising at all".

The following are two examples to show that in negative sentences, *pianpian* always appears before negative adverbs bu (not) and meiyou (not). Reversed order is not grammatical: neither "mei pianpian xueguo youyong (havn't pianpian learned how to swim)" nor "bu pianpian tongyi (don't pianpian agree)" are acceptable.

(13) 但可悲的是，掉下水的偏偏没学过游泳。

    dan kebei de shi, diaoxia shui de pianpian mei xueguo youyong.

    But what is pathetic is that those who fell into the water pianpian haven't learned to swim.

(14) 可刚的父母偏偏不同意。

    kegang de fumu pianpian bu tongyi.

    Kegang's parents pianpian don't agree.

    Pianpian occurs before modal adverbs:

(15) 而当我们无端担心害怕它时，它却偏偏会找上门来。

    er dang women wuduan danxin haipa ta shi, ta que pianpian hui zhaoshang men lai.

But when we are worried with no reason, it pianpian would happen.

(16) "天上掉馅饼"的事情少之又少。不过对于在德国高校求学的大学生而言，就偏偏能碰上这样的好事——因为那里不收学费。

tianshang diao xianbing de shiqing shaozhiyoushao. Buguo duiyu zai Deguo gaoxiao qiuxue de daxuesheng eryan, jiu pianpian neng pengshang zheyangde haoshi – yinwei nali bushou xuefei.

It is very rare to have free lunches. But college students in Germany are lucky enough to have them as colleges do not charge tuition fees there.

In the above two sentences, the subjective adverb *pianpian* positions before modal adverbs hui (would) and neng (could). If we change the relative order into "hui pianpian zhaoshang men lai (would pianpian come to us)" and "neng pianpian have this kind of luck", then sentences become ungrammatical.

Pianpian occurs before degree adverbs:

(17) 可是，他现在 28 岁，正是成家立业最需要钱的时候，而此时偏偏最没有现金，还负债！

keshi, ta xianzai 28 sui, zheng shi chengjialiye zui xuyao qian de shihou, er cishi pianpian zui meiyou xianjin, hai fuzhai.

He is 28 years old now. He needs money to get married and start up his career urgently. However he pianpian doesn't have any money now, on the contrary, he is in debt!

(18) 当天却偏偏有些多云，我不免有些担心。

dangtian pianpian youxie duoyun, wo bumian youxie danxin.

But that day it pianpian was a bit cloudy. So I was a bit worried.

In (17) and (18), subjective adverb *pianpian* occurs before zui (most) and youxie (to some degree), but when it appears after them, we find the two expressions become unacceptable: "*zui pianpian meiyou xianjin (pianpian is quite poor)" and "*youxie pianpian duoyun (it is pianpian a bit cloudy)".

3. Exclusiveness of *pianpian*

Exclusiveness of *pianpian* means that it excludes (or negates) the alternative proposition of the focus proposition *pianpian* occurs in. For instance, if someone says, "Banli de henduo tongxue yiqi qu kao yanjiusheng, pianpian Xiaoli kaoshang le (A large number of students in our class have participated in the graduate school entrance examination, pianpian Xiaoli passed the exam.)", we know that other students didn't pass the exam, i.e. the proposition that other student passed the exam is false. However, if the speaker has not used *pianpian* in the utterance, and only says, "Banli de henduo tongxue yiqi qu kao yanjiusheng, Xiaoli kaoshang le (A large number of students in our class have

participated in the graduate school entrance examination, Xiaoli passed the exam.)", then as hearers we are not sure whether other classmates have succeeded in the exam or not. This simple test shows the exclusiveness of *pianpian*.

In the following part, we further discuss alternative propositions which are related to the *pianpian* clause based on corpus data. We mainly discuss about two points: a) whether we have observed or inferred the alternative propositions of the *pianpian* sentence; b) how do we judge *pianpian* has excluded the alternative proposition or not.

Focus proposition and alternative proposition of *pianpian* clause:

As we have discussed above, *pianpian* does not change the truth value of the sentence it appears in, for instance, the sentence "Laotian pianpian xiaqi le xue (It pianpian has started to snow)" in (19) maintains true if pianpian is deleted. However, this does not mean that *pianpian* does not contribute any information on the truth-conditional level at all. *Pianpian* commits to the truth-value of the focus proposition and at the same time judges the alternative proposition as false, i. e. *pianpian* requires or restricts a possible world w where focus proposition is true and alternative proposition is false. So, strictly speaking, *pianpian* does contribute some information from the truth-conditional content's perspective though the truth-conditional content of the original proposition maintains, for instance, in the utterance "It pianpian has started to snow", *pianpian* commits to the truth of focus proposition "It has started to snow" and judges the implicit alternative proposition "It won't snow" as false, i.e. it excludes an implicit contradictory proposition: "It won't snow". This implicit proposition can be made explicit in the context:

(19) 眼看该上班了，（我觉得不会下雪了），可，老天偏偏下起了雪。
    yankan gai shangbanle, (wojuede buhui xiaxue le), ke, laotian pianpian xiaqi le xue.
    It is almost time to go to work, (I thought it won't snow), however, it pianpian has started to snow.

Pianpian informs us that the focus proposition "it has started to snow" is true, and the alternative proposition "It won't snow" is false. The contradiction between the two propositions is further marked by the contrastive maker ke (however). The predicate "Has started to snow" is the focus of *pianpian* sentence. This type of focus is the most frequent one among all the possible focus types in a *pianpian* sentence.

Alternative propositions can also explicitly occur in the discourse, for example,

(20) 本来，它应该在 14 年前就名震全国的，可偏偏命运多舛，使它成了我国石化行业里经历最坎坷的企业。
    benlai, ta yinggai zai 14 nian qian jiu mingzhenquanguode, ke pianpian mingyunduochuan, shi ta chengle woguo shihua hangye li jingli zui kanke de qieye.

It is expected to get famous nationwide 14 years ago, but it pianpian has languished and became the bumpiest company in the petrochemical industry.

"The process of its development is full of setbacks" is the focus proposition, which contrasts with the explicit alternative proposition "It became successful nationwide" in the preceding context. Focus proposition is true and alternative proposition is false, i.e. alternative proposition is excluded.

Among our 432 sample sentences of *pianpian*, 204 examples (47.22%) have explicit alternative proposition in the discourse; 107 examples (24.77%) contain negated components or contradiction triggering expressions in the focus propositions from which we can infer alternatives propositions; the left 121 examples (28.00%) require contextual information to infer alternative propositions. That is, about half of the data show explicit alternative propositions and the other half either requires information from focus propositions or information from context to infer alternative propositions.

In CCL corpus, focus proposition of *pianpian* sentence appears in current context; expectation of alternative proposition appears in preceding context; evaluation of focus proposition being more surprising than alternative proposition appears either in preceding context or current context and the evaluation of focus proposition being more undesirable than alternative proposition appears in preceding context, current context or following context.

Pianpian excludes explicit alternative propositions:

In the 204 *pianpian* sentences where alternative proposition appear in the context, 94 items (48.04%) at the same time explicitly mark the contrast between the focus proposition and the alternative proposition. For instance,

(21) 印尼队赛前被看成热门队，可偏偏成为了马来西亚队的手下败将。
yinnidui saiqian bei kancheng remen dui, ke pianpian chengwei le Malaixiya de shouxiabaijiang.
Team Indonesia was expected to win before the game, however it pianpian has lost to Team Malaysia.

In this example, the focus proposition *pianpian* appears in – "Indonesian national team has lost to Malaysian national team" has an explicit alternative proposition in the preceding context – "Indonesian national team would win". The focus "Has lost" and the alternative "would win" form a contradictory relation. It is true that Indonesian national team has lost to Malaysian national team while it is false that Indonesian national team would win, i.e. the proposition "Indonesian national team would win" is excluded.

(22) 有些你以为一辈子都不会碰见的人，偏偏就在你眼前这样走过。
youxie ni yiwei yibeizi dou buhui pengjian de ren, pianpian jiuzai ni yanqian zheyang zouguo.

450

Some people, who you thought you wouldn't meet them in your whole life, pianpian went by before your eyes.

Focus proposition of this example is "they just pass by you in front of your eyes", and in preceding context, we find its alternative proposition - "you would never meet them". The focus "Passing by you" and the alternative "never meeting them" are contradictory. It is true that you they have passed by you and it is false that you have never met them, which means that alternative proposition is excluded.

Pianpian excludes implicit alternative propositions:

1) Implicit alternative propositions inferred from focus propositions

When focus propositions include contrast triggering expressions like negative components, degree components, components related to the meaning of deficiency, the self-contained exclusiveness of some propositions, corresponding alternative propositions can be inferred.

Contrast triggered by negative components in focus propositions:

(23) "青州下面有六个郡，五个郡都有党人，怎么平原偏偏会没有？

qingzhou xiamian you liu ge jun, wu ge jun dou you dangren, zenmo Pingyuan pianpian hui meiyou?

"There are six cities under Qingzhou. And communists exist in five of the cities. How come pianpian there is no communist in Pingyuan?"

In the above example, the focus proposition *pianpian* occurs in contains a negative component "meiyou (does not have)", which triggers a contrastive item "you (have)" and forms an implicit alternative proposition "Pingyuan you dangren (There are communists in Pingyuan)". The focus proposition is true and the alternative proposition is false, i.e. alternative proposition is excluded. The implicit proposition can be inserted into the discourse:

(24) 五个郡都有党人，（平原也应该有党人，）怎么平原偏偏会没有？

wu ge jun dou you dangren, (Pingyuan ye yinggai you dangren,) zenmo pingyuan pianpian hui meiyou?

Communists exist in five of the cities. (Communists are also expected to appear in Pingyuan.) How come pianpian there is no communist in Pingyuan?

The interpretation remains the same with the only difference being the implicit alternative proposition becoming explicit.

Contrast triggered by degree components in focus propositions:

(25) 因为我是南方人，所以原来一直怕冷。不巧的是，导演偏偏选的是北京最冷的时候来拍这部《西楚霸王》，因此吃了不少苦。

yinwei wo shi nanfang ren, suoyou yuanlai yizhi paleng. Buqiao de shi, daoyan pianpian xuan de shi Beijing zui leng de shihou lai pai zhe bu Xichubawang, yinci chile bushao ku.

I'm from the south, so I not very used to the cold weather. Unfortunately, I suffered a lot as the director pianpian chose to shoot the film The Great Conqueror's Concubine during the coldest days in Beijing.

In the focus proposition of this example, we find degree component "zui leng (the coldest)". It triggers contrasting items "not so cold, a little bit cold, warm…" and forms implicit alternative propositions "The director chose to shoot the movie when it is not so cold", "The director chose to shoot the movie when it is a bit cold", "The director chose to shoot the movie when it is warm"…The focus proposition is true and alternative propositions are false. The alternative propositions are then excluded or negated.

Contrast triggered by components of deficiency meaning in focus propositions:

(26) 真可惜，目前出现的某些自称为中国画创新之作，偏偏缺乏这种富于独特个性的重要因素。

zhen kexi, muqian chuxian de mouxie zicheng wei zhongguohua chuangxin zhi zuo, pianpian quefa zhezhong fuyu dute gexing de zhongyao yinsu.

Unfortunately, nowadays some so called creative Chinese painting pianpian do not demonstrate the important character of being distinctive.

In this example, the focus proposition *pianpian* occurs in contains a component "quefa (in short of)"which belongs to the semantic type of deficiency. "Quefa (in short of)" would trigger a contrastive item "juyou (possess)" and form the alternative proposition "Some of the creative Chinese paintings demonstrate this important character of being distinctive". The focus proposition is true and the alternative proposition is false, i.e. the alternative proposition is excluded.

Contrast triggered by the original exclusiveness of focus propositions:

(27) 可偏偏此时，即吃过饭仅 3 小时，那张 86 元的账单不见了。

ke pianpian cishi, ji chiguo fan jin 3 xiaoshi, na zhang 86 yuan de zhangdan bujian le.

But pianpian now – three hours after dinner, the 86 yuan bill is gone.

The focus proposition in this item is "Cishi zhangdan bujianle (The bill is gone in this moment)". The event "the bill is gone" only happened at one time point - 3 hours after dinner. The alternative proposition is "Zhangdan zai qita shijian bujianle (The bill is gone at other moments)". A given event can only happen at a given time but not other time points, which means that the focus proposition itself in this example is exclusive. So we can infer that the alternative proposition is excluded.

2) Implicit alternative propositions inferred from context

Other than obviously occurring in the discourse or being inferred from focus proposition, alternative proposition can also be inferred from context information. For example (28) and (29):

(28) 眼看该上班了，可，老天偏偏下起了雪。
yankan gai shangban le, ke, laotian pianpian xiaqi le xue.
It is almost time to go to work, but, it pianpian has started to snow.

(29) 常常有这样的情况，好容易有一点空闲，她打算为丈夫和孩子做一顿可口的晚饭，尽一尽作为妻子和母亲的义务，可这时候却偏偏有人找上门来谈案子。
changchang you zheyang de qingkuang, hao rongyi you yidian kongxian, ta dasuan wei zhangfu he haizi zuo yidun kekou de wanfan, jinyijin zuowei qizi he muqin de yiwu, ke zheshihou que pianpian you ren zhaoshang men lai tan an zi.
This kind of thing happens to her often: when she finally can have one or two days off and thinks of making dinner for her husband and children and taking the responsibility of being a wife and a mother.

In (28), there is neither explicit alternative proposition in preceding or following context of *pianpian* sentence nor components in the focus propositions that can infer alternatives which form alternative propositions. However, based on contextual information, at the time the speaker needs to go to work, he or she has not wished it to snow as it would be troublesome for the traffic. However, undesirable event "xiaqi xue le (it has started to snow)" has happened and the alternative proposition "It won't snow" becomes is excluded. Similar situation is found in (29). Based on the discourse information in this example, at the days off, "Youren zhao shang men lai tan anzi (Someone came to discuss about legal cases)" is not what the speaker predicted or wished to happen. But the surprising event has happened and the related alternative proposition "Meiyou ren zhao shang men lai tan anzi (No one came to discuss about legal cases)" is excluded. In both examples, alternative propositions are false and focus propositions are true, i.e. alternative propositions are excluded.

4. The surprise and undesirableness scales of *pianpian*

4.1 The surprise scale of *pianpian*

From the perspective of the related events in the context, the focus proposition which *pianpian* appears in is more surprising for the speaker than the alternative

proposition. The focus proposition and the alternative proposition are on the same scale[4] of surprise. The alternative proposition is what the speaker predicted and the focus proposition disconfirms the speaker's prediction, i.e. the speaker is unsurprised if the alternative proposition is ture and is surprised that the focus proposition has happened or existed. We present this contrast as:

Surprise: focus proposition >[5] alternative proposition

For instance, "Ta pianpian qu Beijing le (He pianpian went to Beijing)", compared with "Ta qu beijing le (He went to Beijing)", contains the same semantic information load on the truth-conditional level, but the former sentence convey another level of meaning that the speaker thinks that "He went to Beijing" is more surprising than some specific alternative proposition.

In our data, 377 of 432 sentences (87.27%) explicitly show that the focus proposition is un-surprising compared with alternative proposition. The following are the types of markers for surprise in the corpus (form strong to weak):

Markers expressing obvious surprise :

meixiangdao 没（有）想到，*meicengxiangdao* 谁曾想到，*shichuyiwai* 事出意外，*buliaoxiang* 不料想，*jingran* 竟（然），*juran* 居然… ("unexpectedly, surprisingly, out of one's expectation") ;

(30) 他们根本没想到丁凡会动这个念头，论资历、论经验，他差远了，可他偏偏就[动了这个脑筋]F。

tamen genben meixiangdao Ding Fan hui dong zhegge niantou, lun zili, lun jingyan, ta cha yuan le, ke ta pianpian jiu dong le zhe ge naojin.

They have never expected that Dingfan would have thought about that as he is not even qualified according to his sonority and experience. But he pianpian has thought about it.

Surprise: Ding Fan has thought about that > Ding Fan has not thought about that

(31) 可事出意外，偏偏车主来了[不少]F。

ke shichuyiwai, pianpian chezhu lai le bushao.

But out of expectation, pianpian a lot of car owners came.

Surprise: Many of the car owners have come > Not so many car owners come

Markers expressing prediction and contrast:

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[4] Scale is a set of degree values. This group of degree values is metric values of points or intervals about a specific property (for instance height, temperature, price etc.). And these degree values form a ranking relation (See Kenndy 2001, Kennedy and MacNally 2005 etc.).

[5] We use "proposition A > proposition B" to represent that proposition A is more surprising than proposition B (For the dimension of undesirability, we also use this representation).

anlishuo......keshi/danshi...... 按 理 说 ...... 可 是 / 但 是 ...... ；
benlaiyinggai......keshi/danshi...... 本来应该......可是/但是...... ("it is supposed to…, however…");

(32)产品打入东南亚、西欧市场，按说该满足了，但他们却偏偏["人心不足蛇吞象"] F。

chanpin da ru dongnanya, xiou shichang, anshuo gai manzu le, dan tamen que pianpian renxin bu zu she tun xiang.

They were expected to be satisfied as their products have been exported to markets in Southeast Asia and Western Europe. However they are not satisfied with their success.

Surprise: They are not satisfied with their success > They are satisfied with their success

(33)本来，它应该在 14 年前就名震全国的，可偏偏[命运多舛]F，使它成了我国石化行业里经历最坎坷的企业。

benlai, ta yinggai zai 14 nian qian jiu mingzhenquanguo de, ke pianpian mingyunduochuan, shi ta cheng le wo guo shihua hangye li jingli zui kanke de qiye.

It is expected to get famous nationwide 14 years ago, but it pianpian has languished and became the bumpiest company in the petrochemical industry.

Surprise: The process of its development is with ups and downs > It became successful nation-wide

Markers expressing contrast :

keshi 可是，*danshi* 但是，*que* 却...... ("but,however") ;

(34)南非的电话费可以在邮局交，但偏偏邮政业的效率令人[不敢恭维]F。

nanfei de dianhuafei keyi zai youju jiao, dan pianpian youzhengye de xiaolv ling ren bugangongwei.

People can pay their phone bills in post offices in South Africa; however the efficiency of the postal service is not satisfactory.

Surprise: The efficiency of the postal service in South Africa is not satisfactory > The efficiency of the postal service in South Africa is satisfactory

(35)常常有这样的情况，好容易有一点空闲，她打算为丈夫和孩子做一顿可口的晚饭，尽一尽作为妻子和母亲的义务，可这时候却偏偏[有人找上门来谈案子]F。

changchang you zheyang de qingkuang, hao rongyi you yidian kongxian, ta dasuan wei zhangfu he haizi zuo yidun kekou de wanfan, jinyijin zuowei qizi he muqin de yiwu, ke zheshihou que pianpian you ren zhaoshang men lai tan an zi.

This kind of thing happens to her often: when she finally can have one or two days off and thinks of making dinner for her husband and children and taking the responsibility of being a wife and a mother.

Surprise: Someone came to discuss about a legal case > No one came to discuss about legal cases

Markers expressing difficulty to explain:

lingrenbujiede 令人不解的，*lingrenfeijiede* 令人费解的，*guaishi* 怪事("it is difficult to explain that…").

(36) 更令人不解的是，不了解中国法律的原告，却还偏偏要请同样[不懂中国法律、不懂中国语言的外国律师] F来进行诉讼代理。

geng lingrenbujie de shi, bu liaojie Zhongguo falv de yuangao, que hai pianpian yao qing tongyang bu dong Zhongguo falv, bu dong Zhongguo yuyan de waiguo lvshi lai jinxing susong daily.

It is difficult to understand why the prosecutor who is not familiar with Chinese laws pianpian has hired a foreign lawyer who also not familiar with Chinese laws and Chinese language for legal representation.

Surprise: The accusers who are not familiar with Chinese laws hire lawyers who are also not familiar with Chinese laws and Chinese language to conduct litigation > The accusers who are not familiar with Chinese laws don't hire lawyers who are familiar with Chinese laws to conduct litigation

(37) 天下就有这样的怪事，你越是想去排斥和压抑它的东西，人们偏偏[要接近它、喜爱它] F。

tianxia jiu you zheyang de guaishi, ni yue shi xiang qu paichi he yayi ta de dongxi, renmen pianpian yao jiejinta, xiai ta.

Though being odd, it happens that people try to access and like what they want to repel and suppress.

Surprise: People try to access and like what they want to repel and suppress > People try to avoid and hate what they want to repel and suppress

4.2 The undesirableness scale of *pianpian*:

Except the surprise interpretation, we also noticed that in our data 236 examples (54.63%) show the meaning of undesirableness or negativity, i.e. *pianpian* tends to

appear in negative events but it is not limited to be only used in negative events. We found three types of markers for negativity in our sample data:

Negative emotion words :

taiyihanle 太遗憾了 "regretful"，*buxingde* 不幸的 "unfortunate"，*kebeide* 可悲的"pathetic"，*zhenkexi* 真可惜 "unfortunate"，*daomeide* 倒霉的"unlucky";

(38)可电话里偏偏传来一个[不幸的消息]_F：妻子在武汉难产。

ke dianhua li pianpian chuanlai yige buxing de xiaoxi: qizi zai wuhan nanchan.

Undesirableness: A sad news came that his wife was having a difficult labor in Wuhan > some other news came

(39)但可悲的是，掉下水的偏偏[没学过]_F游泳。

dan kebei de shi, diaoxia shui de pianpian mei xueguo youyong.
But what is pathetic is that those falling into the water have never learned to swim.

Undesirableness: Those who fell into the river have never learned how to swim > Those who fell into the river have learned how to swim

Entities loaded with negative emotion:

beiju 悲剧 "tragic"，*sunshi* 损失 "loss"， *weihai* 危害 "harm"， *mafan* 麻烦 "trouble";

(40)防汛的重点在防，可我们偏偏就有那么一些城市有河却[不设防]_F。

fangxun de zhongdan zai fang, ke women pianpian jiu you namo yixie chengshi you he que bu shefang.
The emphasis of flood prevention is preventing, but some cities pianpian do not prevent even though there are rivers in these cities.

Undesirableness: Those cities that have rivers never prevent floods > Those cities that have rivers prevent floods

(41)然而这一场完全可以避免的悲剧偏偏[发生了]_F!

raner zhe yi chang wanquan ky bimian de beiju pianpian fasheng le.
However this tragedy which is absolutely avoidable pianpian has happened.

Undesribleness: this tragedy has happened > this tragedy has not happened
Negative events :

shengbing 生病 "being sick", *chushi* 出事 "having an accident", *shiqu jihui* 失去机会 "losing an opportunity", *niangcheng zhezhong jieju* 酿成这种结局 "causing a bad consequence"

(42)而现在，偏偏在一次重大失败后就[失去了]_F再实践的机会。
er xianzai, pianpian Zia yici zhongda shibai hou jiu shiqu le zai shijian de jihui.
However now they have lost the chance to try agian after the major defeat.

Undesirableness: They have lost the chance to try again > They have not lost the chance to try again

(43)可事情偏偏[酿成了这种结局]_F。
ke shiqing pianpian niangcheng le zhezhon jieju.
However it has caused a bad consequence.

Undesirableness: It has caused a bad consequence > It has not caused a bad consequence

Most of the *pianpian* sentences show both unexpectedness and negativity evaluations. This is consistent with the frequent co-occurrence of surprise and negativity (unfortunateness) in the studies of language and emotion (Gendolla & Koller 2001，Lin & Yao 2016). We classify *pianpian* sentences into three groups: first group with only surprise interpretation, second group with only undesirablenss interpretation and last group with both surprise and undesirbaleness interpretation. Below, we show some examples of each group.

Pianpian sentences with only surprise meaning:

(44)那么多人参加比赛，偏偏[我]_F得了一等奖。
namo duo ren canjia bisai, pianpian wo de le yidengjiang
So many people participated in the competition, I pianpian won the first prize.

Surprise: I won the first prize > Someone else won the first prize
Pianpian marks 我 wo ("I") as the focus as well as the maximal level of prediction disconfirmation of the fact that the speaker won. It renders the alternatives (a person other than me winning) ranked as more likely (or less improbable). This is a case showing only-surprise-dimension scale.

(45)这些不起眼而又不容易做到的事，文明的张家港人偏偏[做好了]_F。

zhexie buqiyan er you bu rongyi zuodao de shi, wenming de Zhangjiagang ren pianpian zuohao le.
Those tiny though difficult things, the civilized citizens of Zhangjiagang pianpian have done them well.

Surprise: Citizens of Zhangjiagang have done these things well > Citizens of Zhangjiagang haven't done these things well

Pianpian marks "did something well" in the clause it occurs in as the focus. The focus proposition "the civilized citizens of Zhangjiagang have done them well" shows that the speaker's attitude towards the current event is positive. On the other hand, the surprise interpretation can be inferred: based on the fact that these things are tiny and difficult, the speaker infers that people usually cannot do those things well. Then it follows the prediction that people from Zhangjiagang cannot do these things well, while the speaker finds fact to be the contrastive with what he or she predicts, he feels surprised by the mismatch.

Pianpian sentences with only undesirableness meaning:

(46) 不早不晚，电脑偏偏[这时候]$_F$坏了。
bu zao bu wan, diannao pianpian zheshihou huai TAM
Neither one minute earlier, nor one minute later, the computer broke now right at this (critical) moment.

Undesirableness: The computer broke at this moment > The computer broke at some other moment

Pianpian in this example is associated with the focus 这时候 zheshihou ("this (critical) moment"). The sentence asserts the fact that the computer broke now and also implies that it did not break at any other time points. And the scale *pianpian* induces in this sentence is only of negativity as the computer is equally likely to break at any time points, however the speaker finds it very unfortunate that the computer stopped working now. The scalar expectation here is that this particular time point is the worst time for the computer to breakdown (compared with all the possible time points).

(47) 陈奶奶小时候家里穷，特别想读书，但偏偏[读不上]$_F$。
chennainai xiaoshihou jiali qiong, tebie xiang du shu, dan pianpian du bu shang.
Grandma Chen grew up in a very poor family. She wants to go to school so much when she was young, but her family pianpian cannot afford school.

Undesirbleness: Grandma Chen can afford school > Grandma Chen cannot afford school

Pianpian marks 读不上 dubushang ("cannot afford school") as the focus of the sentence. 读书 dudeshangshu ("can go to school") is the corresponding alternative. The focus proposition "Chennainai cannot afford school" is true. And this could be logically inferred from the fact that her family was really poor, i.e. the focus event that she cannot afford school accords to our prediction. However, this contrasts with her wish that she can go to school. So this is an example where only undesirableness interpretation is displayed.

Pianpian sentences with both Surprise and undesirableness meanings:

(48) 这么重要的面试,他偏偏[搞砸了]F。
zhemo zhongyao De mianshi, ta pianpian gao za TAM
This interview is so important, he pianpian blew it.

Surprise: He blew the interview > He didn't blow the interview
Undesirableness: He blew the interview > He didn't blow the interview
Sentence (48) exemplifies the focus being the predicate and the scalar reading being of both surprise and undesirableness. To be specific, 搞砸了 gaozale ("blow (something)") is the focus element in this sentence. The related alternatives are "did great (in the interview)" etc. Not doing well in a very important interview is evaluated as surprising and undesirable by the speaker.

(49) 算你们运气，人家也当兵，一茬一茬的复员了，都没有赶上打仗，偏偏让你们这一茬的[赶上了] F。
suan nimenn yunqi, renjia ye dangbing, yichayichade fuyuan le, dou meiyou ganshang dazhang,pianpian rang nimen zheyichade ganshang le
It is so unlucky of you. Other people also served in the army. Year after year, they have all been demobilized and have not encountered any war; pianpian you have encountered the war.

Surprise: You have encountered the war > You haven't encountered the war
Undesirableness: You have encountered the war > You haven't encountered the war
"Ganshangle (encoutered the war)" is the focus associated with *pianpian* in this case, which is contrasted with its alternative "Meiganshang (haven't encoutered the war)". Form the irony "suan nimen yunqi (it is lucky for you to have encountered the war)", we can see that the speaker's evaluation is negative towards the event that they encountered war. Based on the context information that year after year soldiers have not encountered war, the speaker predicts that the audience would not encounter either. However, when he finds out the contrastive fact, he expresses the surprise feeling by using the marker

pianpian. This is an example showing both negative and surprise meaning of *pianpian* sentences.

5. Conclusion

To summarize, the scalar property of *pianpian* is non-optional and does not depend on the lexical specification of the focus, but must be associated with the contextually stipulated scale. Furthermore, the negation of the more expected/positive alternatives by *pianpian* gives rise to interesting interactions with the contrary to expectation modality and speakerorientedness. This study provides evidence for the exclusive and strict scalar focus particle category and shows one possible way of how subjective adverbs could have multi-dimensional meanings.

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