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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and classification of *yě*

Why write a dissertation on *yě* ‘also’? On the surface, there is nothing special about the Mandarin particle compared to its counterparts in other languages, e.g., English *also/too/as well*, Dutch *ook*, German *auch* and so on. One of its typical usages can be illustrated by the following Mandarin sentence.¹

- (1) *Nǐ qù Běijīng, tā yě qù Běijīng.*
you go Beijing, he YE go Beijing.
English: ‘You will go to Beijing and he will also go to Beijing.’
Dutch: ‘Jij gaat naar Beijing en hij gaat ook naar Beijing’

As is demonstrated in (1), the Mandarin sentence can be translated into English and Dutch using an equivalent of the particle in the target languages. Mandarin *yě*, along with its English and Dutch counterparts, is often regarded as an additive focus particle in the sense that it “includes some alternative as possible values for the variable of its scope” (König 1991: 33). Taking (1) as an example, we see that, on the basis of the proposition that ‘you will go to Beijing’ conveyed by the first clause, the second clause with *yě* (henceforth the sentence with *yě* will be called “the host sentence”) includes or adds a new proposition into the current discourse. Additive particles are contrasted with another group of focus particles, i.e., the restrictive or exclusive particles, which exclude other alternatives under consideration, for instance, English *only*, German *nur* ‘only’. If Mandarin *yě* is simply an additive particle, what makes it so interesting?

One observation that instigated and propelled this research is that the particle can also occur in other contexts. Like its counterparts in some other languages, e.g., German *auch*, Dutch *ook* and Japanese *-mo* (König 1991: 66-67), the Mandarin additive particle *yě* makes various semantic or pragmatic contributions to sentences depending on the context. For instance, *yě* can also be used in a sentence with a preceding interrogative phrase expressing the “free-choice” meaning or some kind of universal quantification, as is illustrated in (2):

¹ The source of all the attested data will be indicated. Data without a source are provided by me and have always been tested with other native speakers. Glosses and translations are generally mine.

- (2) *Shéi yě shuǐfú-bu-liǎo tā.*
 who YE not.be.able.to.persuade him
 ‘Nobody can persuade him.’

The use of *yě* in this context is to some extent similar to German *wer...auch* or Dutch *wie dan ook* ‘whoever’. However, in Mandarin, *yě* is not the only word that can be used in this context. An alternative particle *dōu*, literally translated as ‘all’, can also be used here. For instance, *dōu* is interchangeable with *yě* in (2) without changing the meaning or interpretation.²

- (3) *Shéi dōu shuǐfú-bu-liǎo tā.*
 who DOU not.be.able.to.persuade him
 ‘Nobody can persuade him.’

The use of *dōu* has been extensively discussed in previous literature (e.g., Lee 1986; Cheng 1991, Cheng 1995, Lin 1998, Cheng 2009, Cheng and Giannakidou 2013) and will not be the focus of this research. However, for comparison purposes, *dōu* will occasionally be mentioned.

Yě (and *dōu*) can also be used in a purely scalar context with a preceding phrase expressing *even* or *even if*, as is illustrated in (4) and (5) from Hole (2004):

- (4) *Lián nǚwáng yě huì lái.*
 even queen YE will come
 ‘Even the queen will come.’
- (5) *Jìshǐ guówáng lái, wǒ yě bú qù.*
 even king come I YE not go
 ‘Even if the king comes, I won’t go.’
 (Hole 2004: 223)

Finally, one relatively less discussed usage of *yě* is its modal use in some contexts. Using *yě* in these contexts is claimed to “make the statement more gentle or mild” (Liu, etc. 2001: 246) or “express tactful criticism to the addressee or the fact that the speaker accepts the things the way they are” (Hole 2004: 41). Consider (6):

² The terms “meaning” and “interpretation” are used interchangeably in this dissertation.

- (6) *Nǐ yě tài xiǎokàn rén le, tā*
 you YE too belittle person SFP he
kě shì kēbān chūshēn.
 in.fact is professional.training background
 ‘You’d rather not look down on him [lit. you look down on him too much]. After all, he has received professional training.’
 (Hou 1998: 620)

Until now, I have mentioned a few contexts where *yě* can be used. Clearly, there are more concrete contexts where *yě* is used apart from those that are mentioned here. For instance, Li (2010) divides the uses of *yě* into four big categories according to its semantic usages and fourteen sub-categories according to the syntactic structures of the embedded clause. This brings us to a contentious question that has stirred up many debates: do we have one *yě* or several different *yě*s in different contexts? (e.g., Hole 2004; Chen 2008; Liu 2009; Deng 2017). I will not take a “meaning minimalist” viewpoint (“there are as many *yě*s as there are meanings/usages”) but I am not in favour of a uniform treatment for *yě* in all various contexts either. This is because of the objective existence of different interpretations and different syntactic positions of *yě*, as I will discuss at great length below. However, it is also important to note that the fact that it can occur in various contexts does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that *yě* has as many meanings or functions. Talking about the contribution of *yě*, it is quite important to distinguish the contextual aspects from the role of the particle per se. Meanwhile, I do not attempt to provide an exhaustive survey of all contexts where *yě* occurs, but choose instead to provide a classification framework, i.e., three major use types, that can cover almost any *yě* in any context. The three use types of *yě* are briefly introduced in the following subsections.

1.1.1 Use type I: the additive use

This usage of *yě* is often characterized as expressing a certain “similarity” or as “adding more information” (Ma 1982, Biq 1989, Lu 1999,). Additive *yě* is frequently used in a sentence followed by another sentence which shares some identical constituents, as is illustrated by (7) (= (1)) and (8):

- (7) *Nǐ qù Běijīng, tā YE qù Běijīng.*³
 you go Beijing, he YE go Beijing.
 ‘You will go to Beijing and he will also go to Beijing.’

³ I shall use capitals for stressed syllables whenever necessary.

- (8) *Tā qù Běijīng, yě qù NANJING.*
 he go Beijing also go Nanjing
 ‘He will go to Beijing and also to Nanjing.’

As shown in both (7) and (8), there are identical constituents between the preceding sentence and the host sentence of *yě*. The non-identical (or “added”) constituents denoting the new information are the subject of the host sentence in (7) and the object in (8). Along with this, the placement of primary stress in (7) and (8) is also different, i.e., the additive particle itself carries the accent in (7) and in (8) it is the added constituent which is marked by accent. Two observations can be made on the basis of (7) and (8): firstly, in order to interpret the additive particle, apart from the host sentence, the preceding sentence should also be taken into consideration. Secondly, the placement of the primary accent seems to be influenced by the position of the added constituent in the sentence. I will explore these two observations in more detail in Chapter 2.

Furthermore, the host sentence of additive *yě* does not necessarily possess an identical constituent to the preceding clause, as is illustrated in (9) and (10).

- (9) *Tiān liàng le, lù yě hǎo-zǒu le.*
 day bright SFP road YE easy-for-walking SFP
 ‘Day breaks and it is also getting easier to walk on the road.’

- (10) *Gèzi zhǎng-gāo le, rén yě biàn-pàng le.*
 Height grow-tall SFP person YE change-fat SFP
 ‘He is getting taller and is also gaining more weight.’

Although there is no shared constituent between the two adjacent sentences in (9) and (10), both sentences are claimed to have some “similarity in depth” (Shen 1983). In this context the function of *yě* is more like a conjunctive adverb expressing ‘likewise’ or ‘furthermore’. Note that in sentences such as (9) and (10), we can insert another *yě* in the preceding sentence. This “*yě...yě...*” pattern is illustrated by (11):

- (11) *Fàn yě chī-le, jiǔ yě hē-le.*
 meal YE eat-PERF, wine YE drink-PERF
 ‘Food was eaten and wine was drunk.’
 (Hou 1998:618)

We subsume the use of *yě* in (9)-(11) into the additive use type in the sense that the host sentences are assumed to still include or add a new proposition

into the ongoing discourse. However, the difference between (7)-(8) and (9)-(11) puts forward a question that needs to be addressed: if shared lexical constituents between the host sentence and its immediately preceding sentence is not a necessary condition, then what is the licensing condition of the additive *yě*? This question will also be answered in chapter 2.

1.1.2 Use type II: the parametric use

The term “parametric” *yě* is borrowed from Biq (1984, 1988) and Hole (2014) and covers all the contexts where a phrase in the left periphery such as a *wh*-phrase or a disjunctive phrase expressing universal semantics or a *no matter* meaning, or sentences involving *even* or *even if* constructions. In these contexts, the use of *yě* is compulsory in that the absence of it will lead to ungrammaticality. In this research, I will provide evidence to argue for some common licensing conditions of *yě* in all the different contexts under this parametric label. Some examples of this use are shown here as (12= (2)), (13) and (14= (5)):

- (12) *Shéi yě shuǐfú-bu-liǎo tā.*
 who YE not.be.able.to.persuade him
 ‘Nobody can persuade him.’
- (13) *Tā lián yí-jù-Héland-huà yě bú huì.⁴*
 he even one-CL-Dutch-language YE not can
 ‘He doesn’t even know one Dutch sentence.’
- (14) *Jíshǐ guówáng lái, wǒ yě bú qù.*
 even.if king come I YE not go
 ‘Even if the king comes, I won’t go.’

In addition to the example in (12) with a *wh*-phrase expressing *no matter*, the preceding constituent can also be a question-like disjunction in the sense it forms an alternative question like in (15):⁵

⁴ Note that the tone sandhi forms are explicitly marked. For instance, when the negation word precedes a first, second, or third tone, it is pronounced as *bù*. When it precedes a fourth tone, it is pronounced as *bú*. So are the tone sandhi forms of *yī* ‘one’.

⁵ Note that not every native speaker agrees that *yě* is good here in (15). But there is a clear contrast in the judgement when the modal *yào* is used and when it is absent in the sentence.

- (15) *Búlùn báitiān wǎnshang, tā yě*
 no.matter day-time evening he YE
yào diǎn-zhe yóudēng.
 will ignite-DUR oil-lamp
 ‘No matter whether it is during the day or in the evening, he always
 wants to keep the oil lamp burning.’
 (Hole 2004: 219, cf. Alleton 1972: 65)

Note that a conjunction word expressing *no matter*, for instance *búlùn* in (15), can optionally occur before the *wh*-phrase or disjunctive construction in all *no-matter* contexts.⁶

Apart from the *even* phrase introduced by *lián* ‘even’ as in (13), the preceding constituent expressing *even* can also be a stressed verbal element with an unstressed copy of the verb following *yě*, as in (16), or a minimizer phrase in the form of *yī*-CL + N ‘one-classifier N’ or *yìdiǎn* + N ‘a little N’ as shown in (17) (cf. (13)).

- (16) *Lǎo Sòng DONG yě bú dòng.*
 Old Song move YE not move
 ‘Old Song doesn’t even move.’
 (Hole 2004: 40, cf. Alleton 1972: 80)
- (17) *Tā YI-JU-Hélán-huà yě bú huì.*
 he one-CL-Dutch-language YE not can
 ‘He doesn’t even know one Dutch sentence.’

According to Hou (1998: 618), sentences like (16) and (17) can be paraphrased by a sentence introduced by a concessive conditional marker, e.g., *jíshǐ* ‘even if’ or the word *lián* ‘even’. It is therefore justified to subsume the use of *yě* in the above two patterns into the parametric use. On the surface, we can already find one obvious difference between the parametric use type and the additive use type: a preceding clause for the host sentence of the parametric *yě* is not necessary. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the parametric use

⁶ Note that not every native speaker agrees that *yě* is good here in (15). However, most speakers consulted, including some that do not like *yě* in sentences like this, agree that there is a clear contrast in acceptability between sentences with modal *yào* and sentences without it. I will return to this observation in Chapter 4.

in detail and provide an account for why we should treat this use differently from the additive one.

1.1.3 Use type III: the modal use

Yě can also be used as a modal particle and convey a certain attitude of the speaker. As is shown in (18) (= (6)), the use of *yě* can make the tone of a claim milder and make straightforward criticism less harsh.

- (18) *Nǐ yě tài xiǎokàn rén le,*
 you YE too belittle person SFP
tā kě shì kēbān chūshēn.
 he in.fact is professional.training background
 ‘You’d rather not look down on him [lit. you look down on him too much]. After all, he. has received professional training.’
 (Hou 1998: 620)

However, the generalization mentioned above does not pertain to all occurrences in various contexts of the modal use of *yě*. For instance, the following context where *yě* occurs has nothing to do with criticizing a person:

- (19) *Nà-jiàn shì yě jiù suàn-le,*
 that-CL thing YE then let.it.pass
nǐ búbì zǒng guà zài-xīn-shàng.
 you no.need always hang at-heart-on
 ‘Let’s just let that thing pass. You don’t need to always put it in mind.’
 (Hou 1998: 620)

As shown in (19), there are more contexts where the modal use of *yě* can occur. In addition, the semantic contribution of *yě* as a modal particle to the sentence seems of lesser importance in comparison to the other two use types. For instance, leaving *yě* out in (18) and (19) will not affect the grammaticality or meaning of the sentence. However, its pragmatic contribution is relatively more important. Despite the fact that it can occur in various contexts, the modal use of *yě* is invariably relevant to the speaker’s attitude or belief and adds a pragmatic contribution to the host sentence. I will explore the function of the modal use of *yě* in chapter 5.

By presenting a comprehensive overview of the aforementioned use types, I aim to add to the body of literature regarding the particle *yě*. The syntax and semantics of these three use types of Mandarin *yě* constitute the main focus and determine the structure of this dissertation. Moreover, the observation of certain recurring difficulties concerning the usage of *yě* that I

encountered while teaching Mandarin as a foreign language, motivated me to address a range of questions from the perspective of teaching Mandarin as a foreign language.

1.2 Questions raised by L2 learners' errors

Many scholars point out that data of second language acquisition from adults may reveal more about the nature of languages and provide more evidence for testing hypotheses which might not be available in native speaker data (Cook 1981; Felix 1988). The current research does not focus on students' errors, nor does it have the intention to give pedagogic suggestions. Nonetheless, as a language teacher, looking into non-native students' errors is always helpful to spot questions that native speakers tend to overlook. The additive use and parametric use of *yě* is in fact a grammar point which Mandarin learners usually encounter during the first phase of learning Mandarin. Yet the erroneous usage of this particle remains prevalent among students of different levels. Understanding the reasoning leading to these errors requires both knowledge of language acquisition, and a thorough inquiry of the syntactic and semantic/pragmatic characteristics of *yě*.

One frequent mistake regarding additive *yě* concerns the order or the positioning of the particle in a sentence. Consider (20) and (21):⁷

(20)**Yě rénmen duì wǒ hěn shīwàng.*
 YE people towards me very disappointed
 'Also, people are disappointed with me.'

(21)**Wǒ kěyǐ yě qù nàlǐ.*
 I can also go there
 'I can also go there.'

The mistakes of (20) and (21) lie in the incorrect positioning of *yě* in the sentence. *Yě* cannot occur at the start of the sentence as in (20) and after the root modal expressing possibility as in (21). Note that in English (as is shown in the English translation), the additive particle can indeed occur in the positions where the Mandarin counterpart cannot be.

⁷ Data of students' errors are from The HSK Dynamic Composition Corpus. Created by Beijing Language and Culture University, the corpus is composed of 11,569 compositions written by learners of Chinese as a foreign language when they participated in the HSK. Learners' errors are tagged at character, word, and sentence levels.

In fact, the additive particle can occur at the start of a sentence in many European languages and functions somewhat like a conjunction. Consider the German and English sentences below (König 1991: 65):

- (22) *Ich habe keine Zeit Ebenso/auch*
 I have none time likewise/also
fehlt es mir an Geld.
 lack it me at money
 ‘I haven’t got the time. Also, I lack the funds.’

- (23) *Also, many people fail to see that immediate action is required.*

The German sentence in (22) demonstrates that the additive particle *auch* ‘also’ can interchange with a conjunction word, i.e. *ebenso* ‘likewise’. The Mandarin additive particle *yě* can have a similar function. However, it has to follow a strict positional restriction: *yě* cannot occur at the start of a sentence.

Now return to (21), in which *yě* is in the wrong position after the modal *kěyǐ* ‘can’. This type of mistake is indeed predictable considering the fact that modals and auxiliary verbs often occur before the additive particle in some languages. For instance, consider the following Dutch example:

- (24) *Ik kan ook Chinees spreken.*
 I can also Chinese speak
 ‘I can also speak Chinese (besides English)’

To provide an account for the ungrammaticality of (20) and (21), we need to determine the syntactic position of *yě* in the syntactic structure and also its position relative to other adverbs or modals. In Chapter 3, we are going to explore a detailed survey of the syntactic position of *yě* with the aid of the existing hierarchy of modals proposed by Butler (2003) and the hierarchy of adverbs proposed by Cinque (1999). Since this research adopts a polysemic treatment of *yě* in different contexts, I will also demonstrate that parametric *yě* in fact has a different syntactic position than additive *yě*.

Another type of error made by students concerns the absence of *yě*. It can be illustrated by the following:

- (25) *Wǒ lián yí-jù huà *(yě) shuō-bu-chūlái.*
 I even one-Cl speech YE not.able.to.say
 ‘I could not even say a word.’

(26) *Jíshǐ xuéxí zài lèi, wǒ *(yě) yào*
 even.if study more tired I YE will
chōu-chū shíjiān gēn tā liáotiān.
 spare time with him chat
 ‘Even if studying makes me more tired, I will still spare time to chat with him.’

(27) *Wúlùn xuéxí duō máng,*
 no.matter study how busy
*wǒ *(yě) yào qù yùndòng.*
 I YE will go sport
 ‘No matter how busy I am with my studying, I still keep doing sports.’

(25)-(27) demonstrate three contexts where the use of *yě* is mandatory, i.e., an *even* context in (25), an *even if* context in (26) and a *no matter* context in (27). The parametric use of *yě* in these contexts is quite different from the additive use. For instance, the absence of the parametric *yě* in the sentences above will result in ungrammaticality, but not so in the host sentences with an additive *yě*. In order to understand this discrepancy, we need to understand why the use of *yě* is mandatory in these contexts. And whether there is any common element among the three contexts that can license the use of the parametric *yě*.

In addition, the following mistakes raise more questions about the use of *yě* in these contexts, especially in the *no-matter* contexts. Consider (28) and (29):

(28) *Wǒ zhēnde xué-le hěn-duō dōngxi:*
 I really learn-PERF very-many thing
wénhuà-shang-de, xuéshù-shang-de, yányǔ-shang-de,
 culture-on-ATTR academic-on-ATTR language-on-ATTR
*shénme dōu / *yě yǒu.*
 what DOU YE have
 ‘I really learned a lot, for instance, on culture, academics, language and so on. Everything is included.’

(29) *Zhè yì diǎn shéi dōu / *yě hěn qīngchu.*
 this one point who DOU YE very clear
 ‘Everyone is clear about this point.’

As I mentioned earlier on, instead of *yě*, another particle *dōu* ‘all’ can be used alternatively in *no matter* or *even* contexts. However, this interchangeability is not confirmed by (28) and (29) as only *dōu* can be used there. The restriction of the interchangeability between parametric *yě* and *dōu* in (28) and (29)

suggests that the two particles are not completely the same in terms of distribution. Certain aspects of *yě* block its use in contexts like (28) and (29). In Chapter 4, starting from the observation made in (28) and (29), I will identify the specific semantic element of parametric *yě* which might also be the element that distinguishes *yě* from *dōu*.

To put it in a nutshell, I will attempt to answer the following major questions in this dissertation:

- 1) What justification is there for the claim that there is more than one *yě*? What is the defining semantic (or pragmatic) property of each use type of *yě*? What are the licensing conditions of each use type of *yě*?
- 2) Provided that the interpretation or the meaning of each use of *yě* differs, do they also differ in syntactic positions, especially their position relative to modals and other adverbs?
- 3) How does *yě* as a focus particle interact with its relevant constituents in a sentence and the information encapsulated within the context/background?

1.3 Organization of the dissertation

To a large extent the organization of chapters follows the axis of the classifications of *yě*. As I mentioned, Chapters 2, 4, and 5 are designed respectively for the discussion of the three different use types of *yě* mentioned earlier (additive, parametric and modal). Chapter 3 addresses the syntactic survey of the positions of the different use types of *yě*.

In Chapter 2, I discuss the additive *yě* and argue for the anaphoric nature of additive *yě*. After examining the characteristics of the antecedent sentence that additive *yě* requires, I propose that similarity in argumentative orientation in the discourse is the main element to license the use of the additive *yě*. The relation between the additive particle and the added/focus constituent is discussed too. Finally, the difference and similarity between stressed *yě* and unstressed *yě* is discussed.

In Chapter 3, I present syntactic evidence to argue that we need to postulate two different positions, one for additive *yě* and one for parametric *yě*. I first provide evidence to show that Mandarin additive *yě* is in the IP zone in the syntactic structure. It is located higher than the inner subject and lower than the outer subject. In addition, a survey on relative ordering between additive *yě* and adverbs and modals based on the syntactic hierarchy of modals proposed by Butler (2003) and hierarchy of adverbs proposed by Cinque (1999), will help determine a more accurate position of additive *yě* in the hierarchy. By the same token, a survey of the position of *yě* relative to modals

and adverbs in *no-matter* and *even* contexts will show that parametric *yě* in these contexts sits higher in the structure than epistemic necessity modals. Therefore, we conclude that there are in fact two syntactic positions for *yě*, one is in the IP domain, and the other is higher, in the CP.

In light of the proposal made in Chapter 3 that there are two positions for *yě*, it would be good to establish that there are also two different interpretations corresponding to the two positions. Therefore, the main task of Chapter 4 is to present evidence to argue that parametric *yě* has a different interpretation from the additive *yě*, i.e., parametric *yě* is scalar in nature and requires a scalar interpretation of its preceding foci. Following the syntactic difference discussed in Chapter 3, we can establish the existence of two different *yě*s, the lower one in IP and the higher one in CP.

Chapter 5 examines three different contexts where the modal use of *yě* is applied. I argue that the modal use of *yě* in all these contexts invariably indicates a concessive relation between the propositions expressed by the host sentence and the proposition in the background. Due to its function in marking a concessive relation, the host sentence pragmatically obtains a polite, indirect, tactful or less absolute reading. I propose that the modal use of *yě* is closely linked to parametric *yě*.

Chapter 6 presents the conclusions and introduces two relevant discussions, one is on the use of *dōu*, and the other concerns the historical development of the use of *yě*.