

Unearthed and Handed-down Documents of Warring States

Retrospect and Prospect of Research on Interrogative Sentence

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Abstract—This article takes the unearthed Warring States literature as the basic corpus, and combines the handed down documents of the Warring States as a reference corpus to make a comprehensive review and in-depth analysis of the Chinese interrogative sentences in the Warring States. It points out that: First, the interrogative sentence includes the general interrogative sentences with doubts and that without doubts; second, the research of the handed down literature in the warring states has great and in-depth achievement; third, there are few research results on the literature of the unearthed Warring States, especially it is worth further research on whether the interrogative sentences have regional characteristics.

Keywords—*unearthed documents; handed-down documents; Chinese language in Warring States; interrogative sentences*

I. INTRODUCTION

Regarding the classification of sentence types, the earliest scholar should be Zhang Shizhao. He divided four categories in his book "The Chinese Language Code" for the first time [1], namely: declarative sentences, interrogative sentences, command sentences and exclamatory sentences. This view is generally accepted in the Chinese grammar community and is still used today.

A sentence in Chinese that expresses the interrogative tone is called an interrogative sentence. Interrogative sentences are composed of two aspects: "doubts" and "inquires". The doubts and inquiries are often closely combined. The speaker has doubts in his mind and needs to be answered. He will seek answers through inquiry, so the interrogative sentences generally have dual functions: Communicating doubts and asking questions. According to the structure of interrogative sentences, the academic circle generally divides the sentences into four types: 1. Declarative sentence. 2. Interrogative sentences. 3. Imperative sentences. 4. Exclamatory sentence. So, is the interrogative sentence used as a tone type or a sentence type in Chinese studies? The foreign language community usually divides into declarative sentences, interrogative sentences, and exclamatory sentences, which are considered as types of sentences [2]. In the Chinese community, declarative sentences, interrogative sentences, and exclamatory sentences are counted as tone type. Lu Jianming also used "sentence type" or "special sentence pattern" to

express declarative sentences, interrogative sentences, imperative sentences, active sentences, passive sentences, topic sentences and existential sentences [3].

Therefore, the interrogative sentence should be divided according to the tone and function of the sentence. Shao Jingmin called a sentence class according to the tone and function of the sentence, such as declarative sentences, interrogative sentences, imperative sentences, and exclamatory sentences [4]. Therefore, the sentences of Chinese are classified according to the tone of the sentence, and the result is "sentence class". In addition, the study using contemporary linguistic theories of modern Chinese interrogative sentences also includes Shao Jingmin's "Research on Modern Chinese Interrogative Sentences" [5] and Wu Yaqing's "Syntax and Semantics of Interrogative Words" [6]. Secondly, thematic and theoretical works and papers include: Song Guoming's "Syntax Theory Summary", which discusses the "question phrase shift" in detail [7], Xu Jie's "question category and question form" based on "principal standard", he reanalyzed various grammatical problems related to question categories and interrogative sentences [8]. Finally, thesis and the dissertation on the research on a certain era of Chinese or the books about special questions are: Zhou Wenhui's "Research on the Interrogative Sentences of Ancient Chinese" [9], Liu Kaihua's "Research on Interrogative Sentences of Middle Ancient Chinese", etc. [10].

II. THE CLASSIFICATION OF INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES

The following is a selection of some important points in the Chinese grammar community for the classification of interrogative sentences:

Li Jinxi's "New Chinese Language Law" inherits the view that traditional researchers use the auxiliary words as a guide to analyze sentence mood, and divides the interrogative sentences into three kinds: "explainable questions", "helping choice or seeking doubts sentences" and "undoubtedly resentful tone sentence"[11]. Lv Shuxiang pointed out that the inquiry sentence is a doubted and questionable sentence, and sentences of inquiry, rumor, and measure are all called interrogative sentences. He made a detailed analysis of the structure, characteristics, and functions of interrogative sentences, and considered that two basic types of sentences are

specific questions and yes or no questions, while positive and negative questions and choices questions are derived from yes or no questions [12]. Shao Jingmin called it a "derivative system"[4]. According to the conversion relationship between interrogative sentences and declarative sentences, Zhu Dexi proposed three kinds of questions: "Yes or No questions, Special questions, and Choice questions". These three kinds of questions are regarded as sentences that are converted from declarative sentences. As a choice question, repeated question has a special type, it juxtaposed affirmative form of the predicate with the negative form as the selected item. He separates the rhetorical question from the above three types and argues that the rhetorical question is a formal interrogative sentence, but only in the affirmative or negative form of interrogative sentences [13]. Shao Jingmin called this "conversion system"[4]. Wang Li believes that modern interrogative modal words and ancient interrogative modal words cannot be simply corresponded [14]. He believes that the ancient interrogative sentences can be divided into four types: one, purely doubts (Hu, a modal word), and the use of positive and negative juxtaposition in modern Chinese. In the place where "Hu" is used in ancient times, "ma" and "ne"(both modal words) can be used in modern Chinese, when there is no interrogative pronoun or interrogative adverbs, we use "ma" and when there are interrogative pronouns or interrogative adverbs (including anti-adverbs), we use "ne". Second, purely defamatory (Zai, a modal word), the word "ne" is used in modern Chinese. Third, asking for confirmation (yu, ye, both modal words), the word "ma" is used in modern Chinese. Some "ye" words also mean purely doubt or defamatory. When there are interrogative pronouns or interrogative adverbs in the sentence, the "ne" is used in modern Chinese rather than "ma". Fourth, asking for choice (Hu, yu, ye), "ne" is used in modern Chinese. As can be seen from the above, the use of modern interrogative modal words and ancient interrogative modal words is intricate. Modern interrogative modal words are not from ancient interrogative modal words. Zhou Wenhui analyzes interrogative sentences from the perspective of linguistic use, and divides interrogative sentences into three kinds: the questioning sentence of the true suspicious question, the measurement sentence between the doubts, and the anti-sentence sentence without questioning [9]. Further, he divides the interrogative sentences of the ancient Chinese into two kinds according to linguistic use: one, the inquiry sentence. The second is the non-inquiry sentence (including the question and measure). The classification principle is analyzed from the two aspects of structure and pragmatics and the interrogative sentences are divided into four kinds: 1. choice question (the sentence can be divided into two parts with two options based on the structure). 2. Positive and negative questions (positive and negative sentences are parallel or repeatedly asked). 3. Yes or no question (in the form of auxiliary words or ascending tone to express doubts, or a helper word). 4. Specific question (to express doubts with question word, or called question word sentence).

Shao Jingmin has summarized the six classification systems of interrogative sentences. He introduced the six classification systems of Chinese interrogative sentences, and emphasized the research on "selection system theory", researches on interrogative modal words, question points and

answers, and the question degree and question function, as well as the study of the characteristics of the four types of interrogative sentences [4]. He was a master of theoretical research. He introduced the principle and methodology with historical hierarchy. It was worthwhile to study the concept and method of the Chinese interrogative sentences in the unearthed Warring States. From the perspective of form or structure, interrogative sentences can be divided into four kinds: yes or no questions, choice questions, positive and negative questions, and specific questions.

In short, the classification of interrogative sentences in Chinese grammar research is increasingly diversified and refined. This is a very good atmosphere, which also reflects the deepening and scientific development of Chinese grammar.

III. THE STRUCTURE TYPE OF THE INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES

Based on the actual situation of unearthed and handed down Chinese of Warring States, interrogative sentences can be divided into two kinds: one is questionable questions (that is, "general interrogative sentence"), which is divided into four parts: 1. specific questions, 2, yes or no questions, 3, choice questions, 4, positive and negative questions. The second is undoubted questions, only rhetorical question. The following is a brief overview of the research on these questions:

A. Specific Questions

Specific question refers to the question that is mainly questioned by the question words. The respondent needs to answer the question by the question words. According to our research, there are 500 questions in the Unearthed Warring States literature. The interrogative pronouns used to ask questions are "shu", "he", "he", "xi", "hu", "xi ru", "he ru", "he ruo" "ji he" "ru he" "ru ...he" and "ru zhi he", in addition, "yu" can also be used at the end of the special question, but it is rare.

In the Chinese of Pre-Qin period, Wang Li thought that the modal word "hu" is rarely used in specific questions (when using interrogative pronouns) [14]. We further analyze the reasons: Since the interrogative pronouns are used in the sentence to raise the point of doubt, it is still possible to understand the question without "hu". After the Qin and Han dynasties, the word "hu" used in specific questions gradually increases. In these specific questions, the "hu" was translated into "ne".

Zhou Yihui believes that the specific interrogative words of ancient Chinese are "shui", "shu", "chou", "he", "hu", "xi", "he", "hai", "he", "he", "he", "yan", "wu" "wu" and so on. The question query sentences asked by the question words must be answered by question words in terms of the content, such as character, situation, reason, thing, measure, place, and time. The article also pointed out that the specific questions have a great change from pre-Qin period to the two Han dynasties. That is to say, the question words commonly used in the pre-Qin period, while the words "shu", "Hu", "xi", "he", "yan", "wu", "Wu" gradually disappeared to the Han Dynasty. Regrettably, the paper did not study the reasons why the pre-

Qin dialects gradually disappeared from the Han Dynasty [9]. We believe that there are two reasons [15]:

- The replacement of the times results in the replacement of common words, which will inevitably lead to the phenomenon that some interrogative words are not commonly used in the Han Dynasty.
- In every era, there are a large number of newly generated and popular interrogative pronouns. If the original interrogative pronouns cannot continue to expand in function, they will often die in people's spoken language.

B. *Yes or No Questions*

The first major category of questions (yes or no questions) is to ask about right or wrong of an event. One of its characteristics is that it can be answered with "yes" or "no". In yes or no questions, when there is no lexical or grammatical means, the tone will express interrogative meaning. There are no interrogative words in yes or no questions and often with interrogative modal words at the end of the sentence. In modern Chinese, in addition to "ma", "ba" and other modal words expressing doubts, we can also use the rise intonation to form questions.

Wang Li believes that in the sentence "Can you know the etiquette system of the next ten generations?" ("The Analects of Confucius"), it is that tone rather than "ye" that conveys the question [14]. Therefore, the reason why the sentence "Can you know the etiquette system of the next ten generations?" is regarded as a question is that it is accompanied by a tone of question. We believe that the question sentences can usually be divided into non-questionable mark sentences and questionable mark sentences based on whether the question mark is followed. The question mark usually has "zhu"(the combination of zhi and hu), "hu", "yu" and so on. Wang Li pointed out: (1) The questioner asked all the questions that were in doubt, and asked the respondent to give a positive or negative reply. The word "hu" was often used and it should be translated into "ma". (2) The interrogative modal word "yu" is used for yes or no questions, and the tone of "yu" is not strong [14]. Zhou Wenhui also suggested that the yes or no questions in ancient Chinese language can be divided into question with interrogative modal words and that without interrogative modal words [9]. At the end of the sentence, the former can accept interrogative words such as "hu", "ye" and "yu", and these modal words convey questionable information. The question without the interrogative modal words may be used in ancient Chinese to express doubts in rising tone. Answers to yes or no questions can be "ran" in affirmative sentences or "fei ye", "fou" and "bu ye" in negative sentences.

However, according to our investigation, in the answers of yes or no questions in unearthed literature of the Warring States, "Ran" and "fou" are not used.

C. *Choice Questions*

The choice questions are to select two or more questions to form a question for the answer to choose. In modern Chinese,

it is commonly connected in the form of "(yes)... or" to form before and after clauses.

The choices used in the choice questions of unearthed Warring States literature may be marked with selection marks. Choice questions in the unearthed Chu books can be asked by the interrogative pronouns "shu", "he" and "xi" with selective semantics. In addition, "yi" and "yi yi" should be regarded as conjunctions, and also used in choice questions, which is equivalent to "hai shi". The use of conjunctions is consistent with the literature of unearthed Warring States. In addition, the word "yi" has two part-of-speech: First, it is used as a modal word at the end of a sentence in Qin dynasty, which is equivalent to "ye". Second, "yi" expresses the "yi" with the meaning of conjunction in Qin dynasty. According to our statistics, the conjunction "qie" is generally used at the beginning of the latter clause, indicating that the relationship between the two is choice relationship, which can be translated as "hai shi". "Yu" can also be used at the end of a specific question, but this use is rare. Feng Chuntian divided the choice questions in the unearthed "Song of the Tigers" into two kinds: (1) general compound sentence choice questions. In the general compound choice questions of Qin book, the relational word "qie" is used at the beginning of the latter clause, and the modal word is not used at the end of the sentence. If used, generally only "ye". (2) Tightening choice questions. That is, a condensed sentence composed of a positive form and a negative form [16]. Gao Yiyong analyzes the sentences should be divided into three kinds: 1) "X (...) not (X)" questions. (2) "X and Y" questions. (3) "...X..." question [17].

Regarding the relational words of the choice questions in the literature of Warring States, Wang Li pointed out: (1) The word "hu" in choice questions should be translated into "ne". (2) In the choice questions or the sentences with interrogative pronouns, the interrogative tone of the word "yu" is much stronger than that used for yes or no questions. (3) "shu" is used for choice questions while "shui" is not used for choice questions [14]. Zhou Wenhui believes that the ancient Chinese language is connected with the words "yi", "qi", "wu" and "jiang", and most of them have the modal words "hu", "ye" and "yu" at the end of the two-part sentences. It is different from modern Chinese without modal words (or only "ne" at the end of the sentence) [9].

D. *Positive and Negative Questions*

Positive and negative questions are asked by both sides. The two positive and negative options of parallel verbs, auxiliary verbs or adjectives are required. The respondents are asked to choose between positive and negative options. In modern Chinese, the format is mainly "V not" to express doubts, not modal words at the end of the sentences. Modern Chinese has the "V not VNP", "VNP not V" and "V not V" equations. Positive and negative questions are used as a means of questioning to express doubts.

According to our statistics, there are yes or no questions, specific questions and choice questions in unearthed literature of Warring States with only 3 positive and negative questions. Some scholars believe that there is no positive and negative question in Chu books, but we think it remains to be discussed.

There are also positive and negative questions in the Qin literature. According to our statistics, there are 48 cases. The conjunction "qie" used in the positive and negative questions is commonly used at the beginning of the latter clause, indicating the choice relationship between the two questions, which can be translated as "hai shi". In addition, there are three formats in which the positive and negative stacks represent doubts in Qin Book. Zhou Wenhui believes that the positive and negative questions of ancient Chinese are often "XP-neg", with negative words instead of negative parts, and the predicate part is not repeated [9].

However, the common unearthed books in Qin Dynasty are in the "XP-neg-X" style. You can't answer positive and negative questions with "ran" and "fou". We must use the affirmative or negative form of the auxiliary or verbs to answer the question.

E. Rhetorical Question

The role of rhetorical questions is mainly not to express doubts, but to question interrogative sentences with the rhetorical methods to express the negation of the original intention. It expresses negative meanings by affirmative form, and expresses affirmative meaning by negative form. It uses questions to express opinions and does not require an answer. The respondent can also answer the speaker's rhetorical question and even disagree with the questioner. In the rhetorical question, it mainly relies on the interrogative adverb (also known as the rumor adverb) "qi" and "yan" to express the rhetoric tone, rather than the modal words at the end of the sentences.

There were 157 cases of rhetorical questions in the unearthed Warring States literature. The rhetorical questions generally have words or fixed phrases that express rumors, such as "an", "qi...ye (zai or hu)", "bu yi... hu", "he...+V+zai". The rhetorical questions can be added with the interrogative pronouns "he", "an", "shui" or the interrogative adverb "qi".

The rhetorical questions of the handed down literature of Warring States can use the measure adverbs "wu nai", "shu ji", "dai", etc. These rhetorical questions are often more moderate. We can also use the adverbs "qi", "Ning" and "du", and tone is strong.

IV. CONCLUSION

Regarding the regional issues of interrogative sentences, no specific research or papers have been seen yet. Based on the corpus of the pre-Qin books and the discussion of the characteristics of interrogative pronouns from the perspective of geotypic typology, some papers have been seen, but the depth of research is obviously insufficient. Therefore, regarding the regional problem direction of the interrogative sentence pattern, we will pay attention to the investigation of the geography characteristics of the interrogative words and their sentence patterns in the unearthed Warring States literature, and make in-depth analysis from micro-description.

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