

Anti-preset Function of the Adverb “Bing”

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Abstract

Based on Presupposition from Negative Presupposition Theory, this paper believes that “Bing” activates and highlights the presupposition, then make contrast with the situations deviating from the presupposition in order to express an anti-preset information. On the basis of the predecessors, this paper takes the modal adverb “Bing” before negative words as the object, and discusses its anti-preset function, and puts forward the author’s own opinion.

Keywords

Adverb “Bing”; pragmatic presupposition; anti-preset.

1. Introduction

Function words are very important in modern Chinese. It is one of the important means of modern Chinese to express grammatical meaning. The study of function words has always been highly valued by the Chinese linguistics field and has achieved fruitful research results. As a kind of function words, adverbs are also a hot topic in recent years. There are several thematic studies, such as Peng Xiaochuan (1999), Ma Zhen (2001), Wang Minghua (2001), Tang Zijie (2007) and Yin Hongbo (2011), etc. Some papers have also discussed its grammatical significance, such as Wu Zhongwei (1999), Liu Danqing, Tang Zhengda (2001), Hu Yong (2009) and Qiu Feng (2012). These papers draw on the theories of semantics and pragmatics, and conduct a more in-depth study on the pragmatic background and semantic environment of “Bing”(并). However, the anti-presupposition function of the modality adverb “Bing”(并) is rarely studied, and it needs to be further clarified.

2. Review of Related Research

There are a large number of modal particles and modal adverbs in modern Chinese to express many subtle emotions, attitudes and tone changes. The modality adverb “Bing”(并) refers to the adverb used in front of the negative word in the traditional saying to “enhance the negative effect”, such as: “我并不知道他要来呀!” (I really don't know he is coming!) Lu Shuxiang (1999: 221) uses this kind of usage “Bing”(并) is interpreted as: “Strengthen the negative tone. Put it in front of 不、没 [有]、未、无、非’(no), etc. It is often used in sentences that indicate a transition, where there is a negation of a certain opinion, explaining the true situation.” Peng Xiaochuan (1999: 54) first introduced the concept of presupposition on the issue of “Bing”(并). He believes that presupposition is based on the actual linguistic structure and meaning, and infers the prerequisites of the discourse based on logical concepts, semantics, and context. He believes that the prerequisite for the appearance of the modal adverb “Bing”(并) is that a contextual presupposition is required, and the contextual presupposition is commonly known by both parties in the conversation. For example, when the sentence “I didn't tell Xiaohong about this”, the context presupposes “Some people think I have told Xiaohong about this.” Wang Minghua (2001: 22) analyzes the modal adverb “Bing”(并) from the perspective of logical reasoning. He regards the clause where “Bing”(并) is located as a judgment, that is, “not A”. This

judgment is based on the existence of A as a presupposition or logical premise. In this way, there is a process of reasoning in the segment containing the modality adverb “Bing”(并): A, (but) not A. The function of “Bing”(并) is to negate A, that is, to negate a certain preset or logical premise. Wen Suolin (2009: 16) believes that the use of “Bing”(并) in the discourse is to activate the presupposition provided by the background clause and use the negative main clauses attached to it to form the negation of this presupposition, increasing the speaker subjective emotions and attitudes.

Previous studies on the presupposition function of the modality adverb “Bing”(并) have yielded fruitful results, but there are few specific studies on its anti-presupposition function. Based on previous studies on rationality, this article explores the anti-presupposition function of the modality adverb “Bing”(并) and puts forward the author’s own opinions.

3. Theoretical Basis: Presupposition and Anti-presupposition

Presupposition, also called "premise", was proposed by the German philosopher and founder of modern logic, G. Frege. It refers to the assumptions made by the speaker when speaking, that is, the premise that must be met in order to ensure the suitability of the sentence or segment (G. Frege, 1960: 122).

Such as:

(1) Have you ever had a latte in that cafe?

This sentence has at least (1 a) "there is a cafe" and (1b) "that cafe sells latte" as the premise. If there is no coffee shop or that coffee shop does not have a latte, (1) there is a problem. Of course, sometimes it cannot be ruled out that the speaker knowingly not but deliberately asked this. For example, when the younger brother broke the plate and refused to admit it for fear of punishment, his mother deliberately said:

(2) Did you break the plate because your hand just slipped?

This sentence designed a trap, presupposing "You have broken the plate."

Pragmatics defines presupposition as: if and only if whenever the utterance P is accepted in the conversation, the speaker of P will conceive Q and believe that the recipient also conceives Q, Q is the pragmatic presupposition of P (Schwarz DS, 1977). For example, as long as the sentence (3a) (P) is accepted, both the speaker and the receiver will assume that (3b) (Q), (3b) is the pragmatic presupposition of (3a).

(3a) 我们之间并没有什么分歧。(There are no differences between us.)

(3b) 有人认为我们之间有分歧。(Some people think that we have differences.)

There is a pragmatic presupposition in the sentences that use the adverb “Bing”(并). For example, the presupposition of (3a) is (3b). Therefore, we can infer (3b) from the sentence (3a) "Some people think we have differences". And (3c) "There is no disagreement between us" there is no such presupposition, and it is impossible to infer from the sentence that some people think that we have disagreements. It can be seen that “Bing”(并) triggers a preset. We believe that the “Bing”(并) sentence presupposes a situation (denoted as Q), and the content of the presupposition is generally determined by the context; while “Bing”(并) is used to express "the actual situation (the meaning of the sentence, denoted as P) and it is opposite to the presupposition ", which means "anti-presupposition". That is to say, in the sentence of “Bing”(并), the meaning of P and the presupposition of Q are opposite: $P = \text{non-Q}$ ($P = \neg Q$). This meaning of presupposition and anti-presupposition is realized through “Bing”(并). (3a) presupposes that "some people think we have differences" (Q), while reality (P) is "there are no differences between us", which is contrary to the presupposition, so “Bing”(并) is used.

Conversely, if you don't need to express the meaning of "anti-presupposition", you don't need to use "Bing"(并). Try to compare:

(4a) 他才没有周末出差。(He did not travel on weekends.)

(4b) 他周末并没有休息。(He did not rest on weekends.)

Under normal circumstances, "you should rest on weekends, not on business trips", so (4a) does not have the meaning of "anti-default", so "Bing"(并) cannot be used. (4b) contrary to presupposition, it expresses the meaning of "anti-presupposition", so "Bing"(并) is used. Below, we will examine and re-analyze the meaning and usage of "Bing"(并) studied by previous researchers from the perspective of "anti-presupposition".

4. Anti-presupposition Investigation of the Meaning of "Bing"(并)

4.1. "Bing"(并) That Indicates the Degree

"Modern Chinese Function Word Dictionary" Zhang Bin (2001: 221-223) subdivided the degree of "Bing"(并) into two categories: deep and light, such as (5a) and (5b). Why can "Bing"(并) mean the two opposite meanings of "deepness" and "lightness" at the same time? According to the presupposition theory, we believe that "deepness" and "lightness" are not the meaning of "Bing"(并) itself, they are derived from specific sentence patterns or sentences, such as:

(5a) 牛奶并不比豆浆难喝。(Milk is no worse than soy milk.)

(5b) 牛奶比豆浆更好喝。(Milk is better than soy milk.)

(5c) 牛奶并不难喝。(Milk is not bad to drink.)

(5a) presupposes the meaning of "some people think that milk has worse taste than soy milk". The reality is that "milk is better than soy milk", contrary to the preset. The meaning of "deepness" is brought by the meaning of the sentence: milk has better taste than soy milk, and soy milk is already delicious, so the whole sentence has the meaning of "deepness". And (5b) this sentence does not have an anti-predetermined meaning. "Geng"(更) is a progressive marker word, which means that the degree is advanced, that is, "the degree is deep." The presupposition of (5c) is "Some people think milk is not bad to drink", but the reality is contrary to the presupposition, that is, milk is delicious, so "milk is not bad to drink". Existing research believes that the "Bing"(并) here "means light degree and is accompanied by unsatisfactory colors" (Lu Jianming, 1980: 68). In fact, the meaning of "light degree, not satisfactory" here is also brought by the meaning of the sentence. The presupposition of this type of sentence is generally a bad situation, and according to common sense, the reality should be equally bad. So as long as the reality is barely passable, it is the opposite of the presupposition. In communication, if you use a very bad thing to explain that another thing is good, the other thing is often not particularly good, and the meaning of "light degree" and "not satisfied" is also arising from this. And when one thing that is already good shows that another thing is good, the other thing is often good. Another example:

(6)A: 我太惨了, 六级考了三次都没过考了。(I was so miserable. I failed the CET-6 exam three times.)

B: 你并没我惨, 我四级还没过呢。(You are not as miserable as I am. I haven't passed Level 4 yet.)

(7)A: 彭于晏很帅, 但他并没有你老公帅呢。(Peng Yuyan is handsome, but he is not as handsome as your husband.)

In (6), B just used to say a very bad situation to explain that A's situation is not too bad. (7) Zhong Jia describes "your husband is handsome" by describing Peng Yuyan's handsome. By

comparing with different objects (presets), the meaning is conveyed more accurately. "Bing"(并)in these two sentences has the pragmatic function of "anti-presupposition", and the degree is not the inherent meaning of "Bing"(并), but is brought about by the meaning of the sentence.

4.2. "Bing"(并)That Indicates the Time

"Modern Chinese Function Word Dictionary" Zhang Bin (2001: 221-226) subdivided the "Bing"(并) that represents time into four categories. One type of table event happened very early, such as (8); the first type of table situation remains unchanged, such as (9); the first type of table event has passed, such as (10); the first type of table action occurs again, such as (11):
(8) 并非在唐朝才有的科举考试。(The imperial examinations were not unique in the Tang Dynasty.)

(9) 他并无休息还在坚持工作。(He does not take a break and keeps on working.)

(10) 从前, 我并没有过过好日子。(Before, I didn't have a good life.)

(11) 他并非只要考一次笔试。(He does not only have to take a written test.)

We believe that the meaning of "time" here is actually derived from the meaning of the sentence, not inherent in "Bing"(并). "Bing"(并) here still expresses the meaning of "anti-presupposition". (8) The presupposition is: the imperial examination only available in the Tang Dynasty. The fact is that "the Tang Dynasty had imperial examinations before", contrary to the assumption. After removing the "Bing"(并), the original sentence becomes "the imperial examination not only in the Tang Dynasty". This sentence still means "things happened very early", but there is no "anti-presupposition". Similarly, (9) presupposes that "(because of illness or too late) he should be resting now". The reality is that "he is still working without a break", contrary to the preset. Similarly, the "Bing"(并) is removed, and (9) becomes "he is still working without a break". This sentence still has the meaning of "unchanging", but it has no anti-presupposition. The same is true for (10), so I won't repeat it here. (11) It is more special. If you remove the "Bing"(并), the meaning of "reoccurrence" does not exist, but "reoccurrence" is not expressed by "Bing"(并), but is brought about by the presupposition of the whole sentence. Try to compare the following (11) a, b and c:

(11a) 他并非要考一次笔试, 还有一次面试。(He does not have to take a written test, there is also an interview.)

(11b) 他并非要考一次笔试, 还有一次(笔试)。(He does not have to take a written test, there is another (written test).)

(11c) 他不是只要考一次笔试。(He does not only need to take a written test.)

(11a) is not that the action of "exam" "reoccurs", it is the same as (11b), but expresses a kind of "anti-presupposition". The presupposition of the sentence is that he only needs to take a written test once, but what he does is contrary to the "presupposition". (11c) expresses the action "occurs again", but does not use "Bing"(并). Of course, the whole sentence does not have the meaning of "anti-presupposition". It can be seen that the meaning of "time" does not come from "Bing"(并), but from sentence meaning. The function of "Bing"(并) is still to express the meaning of "anti-presupposition".

4.3. "Bing"(并)That Indicates the Scope

"Modern Chinese Function Word Dictionary" Zhang Bin (2001: 221-226) divides the "Bing"(并)of the scope into two categories. The scope of a type of table is expanded, such as (12); the scope of a type of table is limited, such as (13):

(12) 并非读完书就行了，要写一篇读书笔记。（It is not enough to finish reading the book, but to write a reading note.）

(13) 小李开始出外打工时，并不过十三四岁。（When Xiao Li started to work outside, he was only 13 or 14 years old.）

We believe that the meaning of "range" is also derived from sentence meaning, not the inherent meaning of "Bing"(并). (12) and (13) remove the "Bing"(并) to get: it is not necessary to finish reading the book, but to write an experience. When Xiao Li started to study abroad, he was only thirteen or fourteen. These two sentences still have the meaning of "expanded scope" and "limited scope". It can be seen that the meaning of "range" is not the inherent meaning of "Bing"(并). "Bing"(并) still means "anti-presupposition" here. (12) preset "After reading the book, it should be okay", but the fact is "After reading the book, I have to write a reading note". This is contrary to the preset, so "Bing"(并) is used. (13) The presupposition is that "people who go out to work are generally older than 13 or 4 years old", while Xiao Li "starts to go out to work only when they are 13 or 4 years old". Contrary to the presupposition, it is also highlighted by "Bing"(并) to anti preset information.

4.4. "Bing"(并)That Indicates the Tone

The "Bing"(并) + negation structure" is usually rebuttal. But sometimes the addition of the modality adverb "Bing"(并) indicates that the rebuttal is weaker or even more objectively stated (Wang Yueli, 2017: 28):

(14) 他俩之间并没有真正的信任。（There is no real trust between them.）

(15) 一加一并不等于二。（One plus one does not equal two.）

We believe that the meaning of the tone here is also brought by the meaning of the sentence, the meaning of "Bing"(并) is still the meaning of "anti-presupposition", and the tone of rebuttal color is brought by "anti-presupposition". The presupposition of (14) is "someone thinks that there is real trust between them", but the fact is that "there is no real trust between them". Contrary to the presupposition, "Bing"(并) is used. The addition of "Bing"(并) in this sentence makes the sentence rebuttal stronger. (15) The presupposition is "one plus one equals two", and the reality is that "one plus one is not equal to two. For example, "one person plus one person is not equal to two people, but equal to one family". On the contrary. It can be seen that the rebuttal meaning of this (15) is very weak, and it can even be said that there is no rebuttal meaning, but the emphasis is on objective statements, and the tone is relatively calm. In fact, many "Hai"(还)sentences express a certain tone, as to what to express, the tone is related to the meaning of the specific sentence, such as (6) "You are not as miserable as me" expresses an unsatisfactory tone; (7) "Peng Yuyan is handsome, but he is not as handsome as your husband" expresses a sigh, etc.

4.5. "Bing"(并)That Indicates Addition

Tang Min (2009: 52) believes that the "Bing"(并) in the following sentence means "addition":

(16) 我并非只有一个哥哥。（I am not only one brother.）

(17) A: 你只买了吃的？（Did you only buy food?）

B: 我并非只买了吃的，还有喝的。（I did not only buy food, but also drink

In fact, the "Bing"(并) here still expresses the pragmatic function of "anti-presupposition". (16) The first question may be: "Do you only have one brother?" The other party's presupposition is: You should have no other brothers and sisters. When the respondent said "I have not only one brother", the reality is that "I" have other brothers and sisters besides the brother.

“Bing”(并) is used here to highlight the anti-preset information. Another example is (17). When B answers "I didn't just buy food", because of the use of “Bing”(并), the listener will have a presupposition: "Some people think B only bought food." In fact, B also bought "drinks", forming a kind of anti-presupposition. At the same time, the “Bing”(并)in the above two examples both means add.

5. Conclusion

Through the above investigation, it can be known that there are certain presuppositions in the word “Bing”(并). This presupposition is generally determined by the context. The whole sentence expresses the meaning of "anti-presupposition" through “Bing”(并). The seemingly complicated meanings of “Bing”(并)are often caused by the sentence meaning of “Bing”(并) instead of “Bing”(并). Through the presupposition theory, we restore the “Bing”(并) that seems to be very complicated and has many meanings into a simple “Bing”(并) with only one sense item, that is, “Bing”(并) is used to express the pragmatic function of “anti-presupposition”. At the same time, we are also more aware of why some sentence patterns/constructions containing “Bing”(并) can have some or some meanings. Hu Fu and Wen Lian (1982:86) pointed out that the functions of function words also have syntactic, semantic and pragmatic differences. Due to the lack of morphological changes in the strict sense, “Chinese function words have to take on more arduous grammatical tasks and play a more important grammatical role” (Lu Jianming & Ma Zhen, 2003). Although the research in this article is limited to the case of “Bing”(并), we can observe that researchers often mistakenly attribute the sentence pattern and the meaning of the sentence to the function word itself, causing the function word to bear a lot of meaning that does not belong to it. In order to study function words better and teach them in second language teaching, we need to continue to explore suitable theories based on previous studies, investigate function words, and "reduce the burden" of function words, as used in this article. We believe that with the deepening of research and the application of theories of more disciplines to Chinese studies, our understanding of function words will gradually deepen, so as to solve the problem of the authenticity and separation of the meaning of function words better and serve for function word teaching.

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