

A Literature Review on Chinese Run-Ons

CHEN Xiao^{[a],*}

^[a]MA student, School of Foreign Languages, Zhejiang University of Finance & Economics, Hangzhou, China.

*Corresponding author.

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Abstract

Since the term, Chinese Run-on Sentence (CRS for short), comes up firstly in Lü's (1979, p.27) fundamental book *Issues on Chinese Grammatical Analyses*, many have cared deeply about it from multi-faceted aspects. However, early discussions proceed at a descriptive level without explicit elaboration of intricate facts within CRS, and some even stagnated, resulting from the complexity of CRS's unique features, subject reference and logical relations as well as early scholars' inclination to study CRS from Indo-European syntactic perspectives. Until Shen (2012), based on a very thought-provoking discussion of Chao's (1968) minor sentences, reemphasizes the primacy of CRS, much headway of the recent past has been made. Given that, in the present article, there would be an attempt to depict the great accomplishments of the past. In our view, the researches dealing with CRS can fall into four parts: working definition, sentence categories, prosodic nature and structural properties, the details of which can be encapsulated as follows.

Key words: Chinese run-on sentences; Juxtaposition; Referentiality; Structural recursion

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INTRODUCTION

Chinese run-on sentence, being ruled out in (written) English grammar, appears to be a kind of unique phenomenon in Mandarin Chinese. The term, Chinese Run-on Sentence (hereinafter referred to as CRS), is firstly thrust into the limelight by Lü (1979, p.27), who gives an original impetus for CRS's detailed researches over the ensuing decades. The definition of CRS has experienced several upgrades (Wu, Liang, 1992; Guo, 2004; Yuan, 2000; Sheng, 2016; Zhang, 2000; Gao, 1988; Shen, 2004; Zhang, 2015), among which linguists of recent past have been more oriented towards speaking highly of Shen's (e.g. 2012; 2017; 2019) version, the quintessence of which is that CRS consists of a host of clauses or phrasal expressions/minor sentences juxtaposed and characterized by an absence of connectives. Sentences (1-2) can be adduced as illustrative examples:

a. ① 走, ② 不早了, ③ 只有二十五分钟, ④ 叫他们把车子开出来, ⑤ 走吧。(曹禺《雷雨》)

	①	zou,	②	bu	zao	le,	③	zhiyou	ershiwu	fenzhong,
		go		not	early	ASP		only	twenty-five	minute
(1)	b.	④	jiao	tamen	ba	chezi	kai	chulai,	⑤	zou
		tell		them	BA	car	drive	out		come on
		ba.								
		BA								

c. 'Come on. We haven't got much time. Only twenty-five minutes before the train goes. Tell them to get the car out. Come on'. (From *Thunderstorm* by Cao Yu)

	a.	①	dongbei	de	yiyongjun	you	huodong-le,	②	nankou
		Manchuria	DE	guerrilla	again	on the march-ASP	Nankow		
		de	diren,	③	shangwang	le	liangqian,	④	qingdao
(2)	b.	DE	enemy	kill	ASP	two thousand			
		wo	jun	datui-le	denglu	de	diren,		
		our	troop	hold off-ASP	approaching	DE	enemy		
		⑤	Shijiazhuang	bei	zha.				
		Shihchiachuang	BEI	bomb					

c. 'The guerrillas in Manchuria were again on the march; about two thousand of the enemy were killed in Nankow; our troops in Qingdao held off attacks of the approaching enemy; Shihchiachuang was bombed'. (Translated by Ida Pruitt) (From *The Yellow Storm* by Lau Shaw (Shu, S. Y.)

With our focus mainly on example (1), this CRS contains five component clauses/ syntagms with no explicit correlatives, rendering a loose structure. As well as being unique, all component clauses in such diffuse construction are shown as having no full subject or predicate. Namely, the dominant ingredient of the CRS in (1) is incomplete subject-predicate construction, or namely, minor sentence¹ (Chao, 1968; Shen, 2012). Furthermore, notice that the subjects of some syntagms like ①, ④ and ⑤ are not clearly specified. It means that the ambiguity of subject reference is proved to be a ‘habitual frequenter’ in CRS. The same is true for example (2), so I won’t spill much ink here.

1. WORKING DEFINITION OF CRS

The launch of Lü’s illustrious work *Issues on Chinese Grammatical Analyses* (1979) marks the commence of CRS and its detailed studies by researchers and scholars. He (1979, p.27) defines it as a kind of sentence where component clauses follow one after another and in many places they can be connected or simply cut, which is newly recognized as the “*duan lian xing* (breakable but connected property)” by Shen (2019). At the same time, in Lü’s (1979, pp.27-28) deliberation, CRS is overwhelmingly frequent in spoken Chinese. Consider the sentences:

	①得啦, ②你老人家拿我两个大的吧, ③准保赔着本儿卖! ④您要什么样子的? ⑤这一对, ⑥一个骑黑虎的, ⑦一个骑黄虎的, ⑧就很不错! (老舍《四世同堂》)						
a.	①de-la,	②ni	laorenjia	na	wo	liang-ge	dade-ba,
	well-LA	you	Old Sir	take	my	two-CL	big one-BA
	③zhunbao	pei-zhe-bener	mai!	④nin	yao	shenme	
	guarantee	lose money	sell	you	want	which	
	yangzi	de?	⑤zhe	yi-dui,	⑥yi-ge	qi	hei
(3) b.	kind	DE	this	pair	one-CL	ride	black
	hu	de,	⑦yi-ge	qi	huang	hu	de,
	tiger	DE	one-CL	ride	yellow	tiger	DE
	⑧jiu	hen	bu	cuo!			
	JIU	very	not	bad			
c.	‘Well, Old Sir, take two of the big ones. I guarantee that I am selling at less than cost. Which kind do you like? This pair—one riding a black tiger and one on a yellow tiger—is not bad’. (Translated by Ida Pruitt) (From <i>The Yellow Storm</i> by Lau Shaw (Shu, S. Y.))						
a.	①一传说出去, ②咱们全家都没命! ③我早就说过, ④大哥你不要太宠着老三, ⑤你老不听! ⑥我看哪, ⑦咱们还是分居的好! (老舍《四世同堂》)						
	①yi	chuanshu-chuqu,	②zanmen quan	jia	dou		
	once	get out	we	whole	family	all	
	mei	ming!	③wo	zaojiu	shuo	guo,	④dage
	no	life	I	long ago	say	ASP	Old One(name)
	zhe tai ni laosan, chong buyao						
(4) b.	you	not	too	spoil	ASP	Old Three(name)	
	⑤ni	lao	bu	ting!	⑥wo	kan	na,
	you	always	not	listen	I	think	NA
	⑦zanmen haishi	fenju			de	hao!	
	we	had better	live separately	DE		good	
c.	‘Once this news got out our whole family would lose their lives. I said long ago that you spoiled Old Three but you would not listen to me. I think we had better live separately. Then, if Old Three gets into trouble—that would be fine’. (Translated by Ida Pruitt) (From <i>The Yellow Storm</i> by Lau Shaw (Shu, S. Y.))						

Hu and Jin (1989) are the first of many investigators to undertake a pioneeringly systematic research into CRS. Their paper (1989, p.54) holds that, in such fragmented sentence, the final intonation can appear in the wake of non-final component clauses and there is frequently quite a few or no explicit connectives, rendering the entire sentence loose in semantics. Meanwhile, Hu and Jin (1989, pp.48-52) also keenly realize that CRS tends to embrace

at least two independent syntagms that customarily do not adopt correlatives even though they are admitted in some relatively long CRSs. The same sentiment is voiced by Wang, Zhang, Lu, Cheng (1994), Zhang (2000), Jiang (2010), Wang and Zhao (2017c). What is crucial here is that the absence of correlative words is not a necessary-sufficient condition for CRS but “merely a concerned formal feature (Zhang, 2015, p.1)”. A common view is that, within CRS, the semantic relations among component clauses being not well spelt out and being comparatively loose is deeply rooted in scarce use of explicit linkage (Gao, 1988; Hu, Jin, 1989; Wu, Liang, 1992; Wang, Zhang, Lu, Cheng, 1994; Yuan, 2000; Zhang, 2000). Nevertheless, it may be baffling and even superfluous to add exact correlatives left out in CRS (Hu, Jin, 1989, pp.52 & 54; Zhang, 2000, p.275). The semantic

¹ According to Chao (1968, p.83), sentences can be classified into full and minor sentences. The former consists of two parts, a subject and a predicate, while the latter usually is not in the subject-predicate form and occurs more often in oral speech, like commands, vocatives, responses and exclamations. Moreover, Chao (1968, p.83) points out that, compared to the complete construction of a full sentence, most minor sentences are either verbal expressions or nominal expressions.

relation, as Hu and Jin (1989, p.53) expressly hold, seems to be no less loose even if receivers can fill the missing connectives with reluctance.

After Hu and Jin (1989), some brief and elegant introductions related to CRS have come into view over the ensuing decades, which can be encapsulated as: CRS, where two or more independent component clauses are joined together in no company of explicit conjunctives, needs to be clustered and interpreted with the aid of “parataxis” and hidden semantic relations among component clauses (e.g. Gao, 1988; Wu, Liang, 1992; Yuan, 2000; Zhang, 2000; Guo, 2004; Shen, 2004; Zhang, 2015; Sheng, 2016; Shen, 2019). Here the available review articles enable us to get to the bottom line that “parataxis” in practice can be deemed as not only a way of such running construction’s interpretation but also to some extent the natural begetting’s of its rare employment of correlative words. However, it should be clear that where “parataxis” comes unstuck is when it per se is a general concept that cannot serve as a satisfactory explanation towards CRS’s interpretation. Put differently, for the interpretation of CRS, there may be some more sophisticated alternatives that can work.

Instead of sketching CRS from Indo-European angle, Shen (2012; 2017; 2019) produces a series of landmark publications being of epochal significance. Followed by a focused analysis of *dui*-speech ‘dialogic’ grammar for the Chinese language (Shen, 2019), Shen (e.g. 2012), as a clear front-runner, firstly helps Chao’s (1968) ‘minor sentence’ leap back into the public consciousness and secondarily rates the ‘dependent syntagm’ given by Hu and Jin (1989) as the minor sentence. Given that, CRS is reconsidered as the juxtaposition of a host of full sentences (/clausal expressions) and minor sentence (/ phrasal expressions). To be exact, there is a Conjoin/Concatenate operation (cf. Shen, 2019) that combines two elements at a time in a dovetailed manner, resulting in flatness in structure of CRS.

Moreover, two characteristics, that is, juxtaposition and referentiality, of CRS come to light in Shen’s (2012; 2017; 2019) articles. The former, on the one hand, is designed for a fact that CRS is a string of minor sentences without obvious connectives being ‘sandwiched’ in between them (Shen, 2012; Shen, Xu, 2016; Shen, 2017; Shen, 2019). On the other hand, based on the detailed discussion of “noun and verb unified” (e.g. Shen, 2012; 2016), Shen’s (2012; 2017; 2019; Shen, Xu, 2016) insistence on the ‘referentiality’ is bound by his assertion that the topic/comment element in a topic-comment construction goes beyond certain grammatical categories. Ergo, regardless of what categories they are, all syntagms inside CRS are posited to be a candidate for the topic/comment and are featured with ‘referentiality’. In terms of the two characteristics, CRS can be further ameliorated as a kind of sentence that consists of a parade of referential expressions like phrasal (i.e., nominal/verbal) and clausal

expressions juxtaposed and is characterized by an absence of connectives.

In the same vein, among scholars who follow in Shen’s (e.g. 2012) footsteps, an updated definition of CRS enters into Chen and Duan’s (2020, p.75) journal. In their mature consideration of CRS’s prosodic expressions, a legion of minor sentences work together so as to make up a kind of utterance, namely, CRS, which is borne out to be interrelated in semantics and “breakable but connected” (in distinct phonetic environments) in phonetics.

Furthermore, bearing in mind the responsibility of linguists, Wang, Zhao et al. (Wang, Zhao, 2016; 2017a; 2017b; 2017c; 2020; Cui, 2017; Cui, Wang, 2019; Wang, Liu, 2021) are keenly aware of that the construction of CRS is marked by three spatial traits, chunkiness, discreteness and reversibility, among which the ‘chunkiness’ is in essence about the same with the ‘juxtaposition’ provided by Shen (e.g. 2012). All told, they share a firm belief that a stream of syntagms/minor sentences, in default of explicit associative words, are loosely strung together, or juxtaposed, giving rise to the ‘discreteness’ (e.g. Wang and Zhao, 2016). And with the mutual effect of ‘chunkiness’ and ‘discreteness’, the ‘reversibility’ of CRS comes in (Wang and Zhao, 2016, pp.18-19). The crucial point here is that there is no bright-line distinction between these three traits but an inclination to interact as mutual cause and effect (Wang and Zhao, 2016, p.18). Put another way, in practice, chunkiness, discreteness and reversibility turn out to be inseparably interconnected.

To wrap up, we can condense CRS’s different versions of definition we’ve introduced into simple statements. Mandarin sentences, different from the Indo-European language family, “usually take a chronicle style (Lian, 1993, p.67)”, and then CRS is always treated as “a mirror of some typical features of Chinese (Wu, Liang, 1992:316)”. Since correlatives are not absolute, CRS is a composition of a cluster of juxtaposed phrasal and clausal expressions that share a peculiarity of ‘referentiality’ (e.g. Shen, 2012). The co-occurrence of phrasal syntagms and clausal syntagms, the loose structure, and “the pretty blurry line between main and subordinate component clauses as well as between subjects and predicates (Lian, 1992, p.4; Kong, 1997, p.283)” are all results of the absence of explicit markings and structural representations of such diffuse sentence. Last but not least, “parataxis” (e.g. Zhang, 2000; Guo, 2004; Shen, 2012) and the “on-line inference” (Shen, 2012, pp.412-413; Wang and Liu, 2021, p.5) can lead to various interpretations of this running sentence, such as subject-predicate relations, coordination and subordination.

What’s more, something to also note is that all the properties of CRS are closely interwoven, forming a cycle of reciprocal causation. To be specific, firstly, in Shen’s (2012) notes, a host of clauses or phrasal expressions/minor sentences are juxtaposed/conjoined within CRS

by virtue of pause (/a relatively shorter pause (Hu, Jin, 1989)/ a special semi-pause prosody (Wang and Li, 2014)) and intonation. Shen (2019, p.46) refers to this kind of property as the “*yun zhi xing* (prosodic decisiveness)” that in turn showcases the “*duan lian xing* (breakable but connected property)” (Shen, 2019, pp.34-35), giving its sentence builders unusual flexibility in structuring linguistic units, such as nominal phrases, verbal phrases and adjective phrases (Shen, 2019, p.37). Then, due to such flexibility, CRS allows extensive use of no-subject (pro-drop) or multiple subjects, as well as the prevalence of switch-subject/reference across syntagms. So, that is where the “complexity of subject reference” (Wu, Liang, 1992, p.350; Wang, Zhao, 2017c, p.176; 2017b, p.38; Sheng, 2016) comes in. And from this, together with the uncommon use of tangible correlatives, the “discreteness” (e.g. Wang and Zhao, 2016) generates.

Secondarily, the dominance of unclearly marked syntactic relations and the co-occurrence of full sentences and minor sentences (/phrasal expressions) jointly reflect CRS’s “juxtaposition” (e.g. Shen, 2012) and “chunkiness” (e.g. Wang, Zhao, 2016). And this property in turn, for one thing, often joins hands with CRS’s “referentiality” (e.g. Shen, 2012), bringing about another property, “*lian jie xing* (chainedness) (see section 1.4 below)” (Shen, 2019, p.44), and, for another thing, interacts with the “discreteness” and “reversibility” (e.g. Wang, Zhao, 2016), leading to the ambiguity of logical relations and relatively loose relations in semantics (Gao, 1988; Wu, Liang, 1992; Hu and Jin, 1989; Yuan, 2000; Zhang, 2000; Wang, et al, 1994).

Last but not least, the “vagueness of logical relations”, coupled with a synergy of aforesaid “discreteness”, “juxtaposition/chunkiness” and “complexity”, further results in the parataxis-oriented CRS (Gao, 1988; Wu and Liang, 1992; Yuan, 2000; Zhang, 2000; Guo, 2004; Shen, 2004; Zhang, 2015; Sheng, 2016; Shen, 2019). In brief, as an example par excellence of parataxis-oriented/spatiality-oriented (e.g. Wang and Zhao, 2016; Wang and Liu, 2021) Chinese, CRS is formed by mutual effects among all the defining properties above.

2. SENTENCE CATEGORIES OF CRS

Currently, there are two strands of earlier work with regard to CRS’s syntactic category: (i) researches by authorities like Hu, Jin (1989), Wu, Liang (1992) and Wang Zhao (2017c); and (ii) researches by Yuan (2000), Chen (1986) et al. More specifically, the former recognizes CRS as a special subcategory of Chinese complex sentences but the latter speak out against it.

In literature, the first line of research efforts seems to be overwhelming in linguistics. Careful considerations of several scholars share the seats at the table when mentioning CRS’s syntactic category. For instance, in Hu’s

(1984, p.36) clear-cut distinction between the ‘complex sentence with form markers’ and ‘complex sentence without form marker/ paratactic sentence’, CRS is invited to be put in the general category of Chinese complex sentences and be a member of the ‘complex sentence without form marker/ paratactic sentence’. Later, a slightly different picture is presented by Hu and Jin (1989), who hold that the ‘complex sentence without form marker’ had better distance itself from the ‘paratactic sentence’. Nonetheless, CRS is still looked upon as a subcategory of the ‘complex sentence without form marker’ and as belonging to the family of Chinese complex sentences. Wu and Liang’s (1992) highly influential book and Xu’s (2002) journal are alive with sympathetic insight into Hu and Jin (1989). Xu further spills the beans on details. Notwithstanding the frequent absence of connectives, the inner relations among component clauses in CRS turn out to be tantamount to those in the complex sentence. Hence, CRS proves itself to be virtually a subtype of complex sentences.

A point that must be made clear is that aforesaid scholars fail to speak volume for the question: what is the criterion for this categorization? Namely, what is the rationality behind this categorization? Fueled by this, Wang and Zhao (2017c, p.178), given a review of the traditional categorization of Chinese complex sentences, head for a deeper research on CRS’s spatiality and end up with an ultimateness that CRS is up to the mustard of complex sentences. Therefore, it is proved well-suited to deem CRS as a special subtype of Chinese complex sentences.

Moreover, Feng (2017) also stands by the view of complex sentence. His reasoning runs as follows. Owing to interactions between sentential intonation and the Government-based Nucleus Stress Rule (G-NSR) in Chinese, it is assumed that the coordinate verb phrases are prone to be ruled out in CRS, while the subordinate construction is lucky to survive. Put another way, as a rule, the subordinate construction is allowed in CRS, which, however, bans the appearance of coordinate constructions (Feng, 2017, p.9). Therefore, in the words of Feng (2017), CRS has no alternative but to be a member of complex sentences, in which component clauses are joined by means of subordination.

However, the first train of thought draws fire from the second train, who breaks from prevailing orthodoxy and pays scrupulous attention to other sentence categories of CRS. Among a synergy of several early works, Yuan (2000), for instance, speaks for the view of ‘hyper-sentence’ in his denial of the ‘complex sentence’. But Yuan’s (2000) claim is nevertheless quite low on details. In addition, as a cardinal variety of the ‘multi-subject-predicate sentence’ in Chen’s (1986) publication, the ‘complex multi-subject-predicate sentence’ and CRS are fundamentally the same. Analogously, when the ‘multi

complex sentence' and 'multi-level sentence' given by Hu (2011) and Fan (1988) leave out conjunctives, both of them embody CRS's characteristics. In other words, with the disappearance of logical connectives and dominant cohesive ties, no appreciable difference between these two kinds of sentence constructions and CRS can be detected. Other than that, Gao (1988, p.4) also provides another category, that is, 'long sentence'. In short, opposed to Hu, Jin (1989), Wang, Zhao (2016) et al, this line of early work has been very adamant about the view of additional sentence category of CRS.

Viewed from above, while the view of complex sentence is much-loved by linguists, the agreement with it is far from unanimous. At the same time, the studies pertinent to CRS's sentence category are adequate, but still have not been conclusive.

Under our analysis, on the one hand, if the former train of thought is tenable, a baffling question has been forthcoming: other than subordinating relations, there also exist coordinating relations within CRS, so why does the coordination fall on deaf ears; why does CRS fail to fall under the compound sentence? Put differently, confronted with coordinating relations in CRS, can the view of complex sentence still hold water? It is argued here that the move to consider CRS as a special subcategory of the compound or complex sentence seems to be poorly thought out. That is to say, if we suppose that CRS can be deemed as a special kind of the compound/complex sentence without coordinating conjunction/connector

(e.g. *and/but/or/so/nor/for*) (asyndetically²)/ subordinating conjunction (e.g. *when/while/after /if /since*) deliberately, two questions would ensue. Specifically:

Firstly, according to Shen (e.g. 2012), Hu, Jin (1989) and Zhang (2000), the presence and even the addition of correlatives (i.e., coordinators/subordinators) in CRS are proved superfluous in view of the juxtaposition of syntagms. It means that there is absolutely no need to add conjunctives in CRS. Hence, due to juxtaposition (e.g. Shen, 2012), the paucity of conjunctives (coordinators/subordinators) in CRS is a foregone conclusion, not a result of "deliberate" omission by sentence builders.

Secondarily, in the words of Shen (2012, p.413), there is a strong indication given by examples (5-6) (example 5 for subordination and 6 for coordination) that spoken Chinese conventionally favors the employment of a juxtaposed body of syntagms/ component clauses in CRS so as to express the coordination/subordination that is usually conveyed in compound/complex sentences. Furthermore, according to the present analysis, based upon the "iconicity of distance/cohesion" (e.g. Haiman, 1983, 1984, 1985; Haspelmath, 2008) and the "aboutness condition" (e.g. Chao, 1968; Chafe, 1976; Li, Thompson, 1981; Pan, Hu, 2008; Hu, Pan, 2009), a shift from the conventional coordinate/subordinate structure (via conjunctions) to a topic-comment construction (via "concatenation prosody (CPR)" would occur (cf. Chen, to appear).

	a.	① 西厢房住的这位叫李立, ② 他的职业是体育教员。(胡明扬, 劲松, 1989, p.43)						
		① <i>xixiangfang</i>	<i>zhu</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>zhe-wei</i>	<i>jiao</i>	<i>Li Li,</i>	② <i>tade</i>
(5)	b.	West Wing	live	DE	this-CL	call	Li Li (name)	his
		<i>zhiye</i>	<i>shi</i>	<i>tiyu</i>	<i>jiaoyuan.</i>			
		profession	SHI	sport	instructor			
	c.	'The man living in the West Wing is called Li Li whose profession is a sport instructor'.(From <i>Hu Jin</i> , 1989, p.43)						
	a.	① 车夫急着上雨布, ② 铺户忙着收幌子, ③ 小贩们慌手忙脚的收拾摊子, ④ 行路的加紧往前奔。(老舍《骆驼祥子》)						
		① <i>chefu</i>	<i>ji</i>	<i>zhe</i>	<i>shang</i>	<i>yubu,</i>	② <i>puhu</i>	<i>mang</i>
		rickshaw men	haste to	ASP	put up	rain hood	shopkeeper	busy
		<i>zhe</i>	<i>shou huangzi,</i>		③ <i>xiaofan men</i>		<i>shoumangjiaoluande</i>	
(6)	b.	ASP	take down	sign	peddler	MEN	hastily	
		<i>shoushi</i>	<i>tanzi,</i>	④ <i>xinglude</i>	<i>jiajin</i>	<i>wangqian</i>	<i>ben.</i>	
		pack up	stall	passerby	hastily	forward	rush	
	c.	'Rickshaw men struggled to put up their rain hoods, shopkeepers hurriedly took down their signs, peddlers hastily packed up their stalls, and people out on the street ran for cover'. (Translated by Howard Goldblatt)						
		(From <i>Rickshaw Boy</i> by Lau Shaw)						

Lastly, there is a plain fact that both the view of compound/asyndetic sentence and that of complex sentence cannot sort of touch all relations in CRS. One cannot turn a deaf ear to the subordination when belauding the view of compound/asyndetic sentence, and the same is true vice versa. So, the only viable solution seems to categorize CRS into the 'compound-complex sentence/composite sentence' where the composite clauses are joined by means of a synergy of both coordination and subordination.

So, from what we have discussed, considering CRS as a member of the compound (/asyndetic)/complex sentence

turns out to hardly scratch the surface of the problem and be debatable.

On the other hand, if the latter viewpoints backed by Yuan (2000) et al. are well established, here a question raised is that: besides the complex sentence, what sentence category on earth does CRS belong to? It certainly is food for thought.²

In a nutshell, there is a controversy swirling around the

² Asyndeton/asyndetism means that one or several coordinators are deliberately omitted from a series of related clauses (Liu, 1998, p.45).

sentence category of CRS. The baffling problems we have experienced can be essentialized as follows: what are the criteria for CRS's syntactic categorization? What sentence category does CRS belong to on earth? In the meantime, other than aforesaid downsides, early work appears to be largely descriptive and few attempts to provide the criteria for CRS's categorization are made. Put another way, most of the bottom lines such as the view of complex sentence and hyper-sentence are not spelled out and thin on details.

3. PROSODIC NATURE OF CRS

When CRS's phonetic features firstly comes into view in the early days, it is thought that there being one intonation, coupled with a shorter pause, follows a non-final component clause inside CRS, and is analogous to the intonation in the wake of a full sentence (Hu, 1984, p.38). In Hu's (1984, p.38) shrewd cognizance, until the entire CRS comes to an end, the relatively long pause appears.

Later, one well-known early study that is often cited is Hu and Jin's journal, *First Probing into CRS* (1989), into which an update of Hu's (1984) statement enters. Hu and Jin (1989) dig a little deeper to get to the bottom of two-fold possibilities of the final intonation inside CRS. To be specific, the final intonation might appear not only in the wake of a complete sentence but also at the end of a non-final component clause (Hu and Jin, 1989, p.44). At the same, observationally a shorter stop always comes next a non-final clause/syntagm in CRS (Hu, Jin, 1989, p.44). The results provided here suggest that the ratio of stops in the middle of CRS and at the end of the sentence is 0.25-0.75:1, whereas the average ratio is 0.48:1 (Hu and Jin, 1989, p.47). So, quite evidently, in CRS, the stop 'sandwiched' in between component clauses is shorter than, and even half of, that at the end of the sentence. And the 'breakable but connected property'³ gets increasingly salient as soon as Hu and Jin's (1989) summings-up are clearly spelt out. For one thing, the final intonation that comes after a component clause conveys a kind of information that a sentence is about to end (Hu and Jin, 1989, p.44), being an embodiment of the 'breakable property'. For another thing, the pause 'sandwiched' in between component clauses is borne out to be shorter than that at the end of the whole sentence. Usually, the next component clause has already slouched in close behind before the shorter pause reaches a sufficient length to become the stop in the wake of a full sentence, engendering the 'connected property' of CRS (Hu and Jin, 1989, p.44).

Moreover, Hu and Jin (1989, p.44) help the crazy fog

over the relationship holding between the final intonation in the middle of CRS and the independence of one syntagm be lifted. Their landmark paper productively throws new light on the fact that the final intonation provided in the middle of CRS is not necessarily indicative of one syntagm being an independent sentence, since the final intonation is merely a necessary condition for the independence of one syntagm, which requires a final intonation, nay enough long pause in the wake of the sentence (Hu and Jin, 1989, p.44).

After Hu and Jin (1989), however, the probing into CRS's phonetic features had been bogging down for quite some time. And the complexity of CRS's unique characteristics, subject reference and logical relations makes its woes worse.

It is when the opinions of such luminaries as Hu, Jin (1989) are endorsed wholeheartedly by Shen (2012) that the research on CRS's phonetic features sees the light of day again. Shen (2012, p.411; 2019) further adds the following:

Why does a Chinese discourse is often made up of a series of CRS as defined by Lü (1979, p.27)? The main reason is the prevalence of 'minor sentences' (Chao, 1968) in Mandarin Chinese, which do not necessarily make a full sentence. It means that it can be combined into a full sentence or performs as an independent unit. Besides the pause and final intonation, CRS is a string of component clauses that get devoid of obvious logical connectives or dominant cohesive ties.

(Shen, 2012, p.411)

[...] The pause and intonation take priority over other criteria when defining a sentence or an utterance.

(Shen, 2019, p.35)

Then, in complete accord with Hu and Jin (1989), Wang and Li (2014) also voice their concern about CRS's particular prosody. With zeal and genius, they firstly single out two cardinal types of the prosodic boundary in terms of perceptual strength: (i) the lengthening or the duration in the final syllable; and (ii) the falling pitch or pause in the final syllable. The former describes the vowel in the final syllable of the component clause having a drawling procrastination, while the latter depicts, with a long silent pause, the vowel in the vowel in the final syllable of a component clause having a downward contraction (Wang and Li, 2014, p.22). In practice, given by Fang's (1992) work, for 'the lengthening or the duration in the final syllable' there is a 'semi-pause', and for 'the falling pitch or pause in the final syllable', a 'pan-pause'.

Secondarily, Wang and Li (2014) focus on ascertaining the correspondence between the two types of prosodic boundaries and linguistic units. In their deliberations, an intonation phrase would perform as the minimum unit, clause, in (spoken) Chinese discourse, provided that 'the lengthening or the duration in the final syllable' corresponds to this intonation phrase (Wang and Li, 2014, p.24). Such phrase is also tantamount to the 'dependent syntagm' given by Hu and Jin (1989). On the contrary, 'the

³ Notice that the 'breakable but connected property' here is somewhat distinct from Shen's (2019) nomenclature. The former version has its focus mainly on the phonetic features of CRS. Shen's (2019) term, however, is reserved for CRS's structural properties.

falling pitch or pause in the final syllable' is able to serve as a prosodic boundary/feature of the 'sentence group' or some larger units (Wang and Li, 2014, p.34). Notice that the 'sentence group' in Wang and Li's (2014) notes is commensurate with the entire CRS.

Therefore, an idea that immediately comes to mind is that, within CRS, 'the lengthening or the duration in the final syllable' can surface as the prosodic boundary of the non-final syntagm/component clause, while 'the falling pitch or pause in the final syllable' is reserved for the prosodic boundary of the whole CRS. The results of Wang and Li's (2014) studies, roughly analogous to Hu and Jin's (1989) summings-up, provide support for the existence of prosodic strength differences between the non-final component clauses and the whole CRS.

In the meantime, Wang and Li (2014, p.26) vividly conceive that the distinction between 'the lengthening or the duration in the final syllable' and 'the falling pitch or pause in the final syllable' would not bring about the vanishing of traditional opposition among sentence moods, encompassing declaratives, interrogatives and imperatives. Too much emphasis of Wang and Li (2014, p.26) is placed on a dichotomy of each central sentence mood: (i) 'sentence-ending intonation'; and (ii) 'non-sentence-ending intonation'. Given that, the co-occurrence of 'the lengthening or the duration in the final syllable' and the 'non-sentence-ending intonation' (of declarative mood) is warmly welcomed in the non-final component clause within CRS, but fails to be a necessary-sufficient condition for the independence of syntagms. An amelioration of Hu and Jin's (1989, p.44) characterization provided here is that only when 'the falling pitch or pause in the final syllable' and the 'sentence-ending intonation' converge, can the independence of dependent syntagms be afforded. The 'lengthening or the duration in the final syllable', however, together with the 'non-sentence-ending intonation', tends to be nail-biting when contributing to the independence of syntagms inside CRS. It means that the dependent syntagm in CRS appears to be marked by 'the lengthening or the duration in the final syllable' and the 'non-sentence-ending intonation'.

Other than that, Chen and Duan (2020) also occupy an important place. Roughly consistent with Hu, Jin's (1989) and Wang, Li's (2014) ultimateness, Chen and Duan (2020) make utmost to undertake a detailed comparison between the storytelling discourses and the news broadcasts, giving more reliable evidences of how phonetic features of CRS paint themselves as somewhat off-beat. Their essay lifts the veil of the syllable durations in CRS as well as the 'breakable but connected property' in prosody. To be proper, for one thing, if there are pauses at the prosodic boundary of CRS, those between minor sentences/component clauses are longer, while those between the bigger segment units are shorter, which engenders the 'breakable' sense (Chen and Duan, 2020, p.83). For another thing, the sound length characteristic of

the 'pre-tightening' and 'post-stretching' on the boundary of CRS showcases the 'connected' feeling of CRS (Chen and Duan, 2020, p.83).

In summary, previous studies have suggested that CRS is characterized by a particular prosody which consists of several phonetic features, the most prominent of which is the making of a shorter pause following a non-final component clause than that in the wake of a complete sentence.

4. STRUCTURAL PROPERTIES OF CRS

Delving into CRS's structural properties will inevitably involve the issue of recursion. As an underlying generative mechanism, recursion puts a huge emphasis on the capacity to generate a potentially infinite number of possible sentences (e.g. Chomsky, 2002[1957]; Elson, Pickett, 1965; Burt, 1971; Fowler, 1971; Carnie, 2006; Perfors, Tenenbaum, Gibson, Regier, 2010), and is able to "account partially for the infinite nature of human language (Carnie, 2006, p.78)".

Initially, within the context of Generative Grammar (GG), recursive devices are deemed as useful formal mechanisms, which, albeit finite in themselves, allow infinite structures to be generated. In literature, in the writings on modern generative grammar, the recursion firstly appears in Chomsky's thesis, *Morphophonemics of Modern Hebrew*, in 1951[2011]. As one of the most active scholars and the brightest minds in the field of Generative Grammar, Chomsky has published a wealth of landmark works by which the 'recursion/recursive device' gets descanted at length. To take one example, "if a grammar has no recursive steps [...] it will be prohibitively complex [...] If it does have recursive devices, it will produce infinitely many sentences (Chomsky, 1956, p.116; 1957[2002, p.24])". This claim hints broadly for Chomsky's association of the productivity of language, the simplicity of grammar and recursive devices. Later, he also seeks to identify the recursion as the requirements of simplicity, economy, compactness, etc. In addition, besides the recursive devices, Chomsky (1957[2002]) also puts forward other related terms, such as recursive process, recursive aspect and recursive tense system.

Meanwhile, the recursion has been largely seen as a fundamental, possibly innate, part of the language faculty (Chomsky, 1957[2002]). For this, Chomsky argues a lot that a generative grammar "must be a system of rules that can iterate to generate an indefinitely large number of structures (1965, pp.15-16)" and "mirrors the behavior of the speaker who [...] can produce or understand an indefinite number of new sentences (1956, p.15)". Also, he mentions the following:

An essential property of language is that it provides the means for expressing indefinitely many thoughts and for reacting appropriately in an indefinite range of new situations.

(Chomsky, 1965, p.6)

As the quotes above revealed, the main focus of Chomsky (1956; 1957[2002]; 1965) falls on a baffling question: why can speakers project a sheer number of sentences with pretty limited devices? Many linguists have answered that such capacity comes down to the recursion in some way.

Gradually, with the booming of Generative Grammar as well as the advent of Innateness Hypothesis in the 1960s-1970s, the recursion begins to acquire cognitive connotations. In follow-up decades, Hauser, Chomsky and Fitch (2002) further pursue the cognizance that the core mechanism underling recursion is the only part of language that is specific to humans, ushering in a new era of the research on recursion. What it means is that the recursion is hypothesized as a genetically-embedded computational procedure that is a central component of the human language faculty. Since then, under the guidance of Hauser et al.'s (2002) influential journal, a lot of scholars orient themselves towards the biolinguistic research on recursion.

For instance, there are two terms, formal recursion and structural recursion, in Jackendoff's (2011) essay, *What is the human language faculty? Two views*. In his uncanny discernment, if the rules can apply to their own output for an unbounded number of times and thereby can produce an unlimited number of expressions from a finite set of primitives (Jackendoff, 2011, p.591), we can refer to such a set of rules as 'formally recursive'. On the other hand, in terms of the repertoire of structures, we name a domain of representation 'structurally recursive' if it has constituent structure, and if constituents can be embedded in others to an unlimited depth (Jackendoff, 2011, p.592). Allowing for Chomsky's (1965; 1968[2006]; 1975; 1981[1993b]) points, both of them can come under the inventory of speaker's 'knowledge of their language', namely, 'universal grammar (UG)'. Then, after the issue of language acquisition is sharpened by Hauser et al. (2002), the 'structural recursion' fits into the 'narrow language faculty (FLN)', and is substantially different from the simple 'unlimited concatenation', which "has no constituent structure and no embedding (Jackendoff, 2011, p.592)", as laid out in (7) (from Jackendoff, 2011, p.592).

	Recursive structure		Unlimited concatenation
	[A B]		[A B]
(7) a.	[[A B] C]	b.	[A B C]
	[[[A B] C]		[A B C D]

What is crucial here is that the 'unlimited concatenation' displayed in (5b) is central to Shen's (2019) *dui-speech* 'dialogic' grammar for the Chinese language, challenging the universalness of 'structural recursion' (as shown in 5a) and 'non-verb distinction'. Put another way, recent work of Shen (e.g. 2016; 2019) suggests that, analogous to Pirahã (Everett, Berlin et al., 2005), a language spoken in the Amazon basin,

Chinese in fact also does not contain any recursion in its phrase structure whatsoever. Specifically, Shen voices his concern about 'concatenation/juxtaposition' in his inventive book, *Beyond Subject and Predicate—Dui-speech Grammar and Dui-speech Format* (2019), where Chinese is outlined as concatenation/juxtaposition-oriented. It means that 'concatenation/juxtaposition' is viewed as the quintessence of Chinese grammar. In this sense, all kinds of expressions, large or small, parallel or non-parallel, are rated as the components of a dialogue or *dui-speech*, and are generated by juxtaposition, namely, "referential pair" (Shen, 2019). In the meantime, all sorts of structural relations, such as subject-predicate, attributive-noun, verb-compliment, are derived from a pair of referential terms in juxtaposition (Shen, 2019, pp.183-184). In brief, according to Shen (2019), the 'concatenation/juxtaposition' that does not exist in Indo-European languages is deemed as the structural backbone, and is the source of all kinds of grammatical relationships (Shen, 2019, pp.183-184). What deserves to be mentioned here is that, in Shen's (2019, p.185) central viewpoints, the hierarchical structure is presumed to be derived from the juxtaposed/concatenate structure.

Thus far, aforesaid two contrasting grammatical views can be boiled down to the following statements. These days, notwithstanding having been under attack for decades, the view of all human languages manifesting recursion remains to be overwhelming. Moreover, an incontestable difference between the 'recursion' and 'concatenation/juxtaposition' is that the former "builds structure by increasing embedding depth (Karlsson, 2010, p.2)" while the latter yields flat output structures on the same depth level.

Given that, as the example par excellence of *dui-speech* 'dialogic' grammar, CRS also instantiates a flat structure, where the component clauses are combined at a time in a dovetailed manner by a Conjoin/Concatenate operation. Therefore, CRS, as "a mirror of Chinese sentences (Wu and Liang, 1992, p.316)", is also presumed as concatenation/juxtaposition-oriented.

Under the new circumstances, different from early work (e.g. Hu, Jin, 1989; Wu, Liang, 1992; Sheng, 2016; Wang, Zhao, 2016), Shen (2012; 2017; 2019; Shen, Xu, 2016) firstly puts forward two characteristics of CRS, namely, juxtaposition and referentiality. As mentioned previously, being one of the most assiduously pursued by Shen (2012; 2016; 2017; 2019), in Chinese nouns are a super-noun category to which verbs are a subcategory and, other than juxtaposition, all types of expressions are featured with referentiality, which in turn induces a fact that "there is no limit on the grammatical category of expressions when moving them to different positions (Shen, 2019, p.155)". So, a shift from the sequence of [A B] to [B A] will not be ruled out within CRS. Meanwhile, a host of component clauses in CRS make up a monologue flow/dialogue like examples (8-9), and each of them is able to perform as both topic and comment (Shen, 2012).

	a.	①老王又生病了, ②请假又走不动, ③子女儿上班忙, ④请个保姆工资低, ⑤先借点呢犟脾气一个! (沈家焯, 2012, p.411)					
		①laowang	you	shengbing	le,	②qingjia	you
		Lao Wang(name)	again	in sick	ASP	take the day off	but
		zou-bu-dong,		③erzi	nüer	shangban	mang,
		cannot go to the doctor		son	daughter	work	busy
(8)	b.	④qing	ge	baomu	gongzi	di,	⑤xian
		hire	CL	caregiver	salary	low	in advance
		jie-dian	ne	jiang	piqi	yi-ge!	
		borrow some	NE	headstrong	temper	one-CL	
	c.	'Lao Wang is unwell again, but he cannot go to the doctor even if he takes the day off. Because his children are busy with their work, and he, with a low salary, is unable to pay for a caregiver. More terribly, he is so headstrong that he refuses to the idea of borrowing some money from others'. (From Shen, 2012, p.411)					
	a.	①老王呢, ②生病也该请个假, ③走不动的话子女儿呢? ④上班忙就请个保姆嘛, ⑤工资低就先借点。⑥(真是)犟脾气一个! (沈家焯, 2012, p.411)					
		①laowan	ne,	②shengbing	ye	gai	qing-ge-jia,
		Lao Wang(name)	NE	in sick	also	should take the day off-CL	
		③zoubudong		de-hua	erzi	nüer	ne?
		cannot go to the doctor		if	son	daughter	NE
(9)	b.	④shangban	mang	jiu	qing	ge	baomu
		work	busy	can	hire	CL	caregiver
		me,	⑤gongzi di		jiu	xian	jie-dian.
		ME	salary	low	can	in advance	borrow some
		⑥jiang	piqi	yi-ge!			
		headstrong	temper	one-CL			
	c.	'Lao Wang should also take the day off if he is unwell. If he cannot go to the doctor, where are his children? If they are busy with their work, he can hire a caregiver. If he is unable to afford, he can borrow some money from others for the burning issue. What a headstrong and stubborn guy!'. (From Shen, 2012, p.411)					

As Shen (2012; 2019) puts it, a series of topic-comment/elicitor-response structures make up CRS in examples (8-9), where the preceding component clause acts as the topic/elicitor of the current clause which in turn performs as the topic/elicitor of its subsequent clause. Put another way, the preceding component clause, as an elicitor, elicits the following component clause as its response. Something also to note is that the initial-clause in (8), “老王又生病了 (*Lao Wang is unwell again*)”, can be a comment if there is a topic constituent like “老张不在老王呢 (*Lao Zhang is not here, and where is Lao Wang*)” in front of it. In a spirit similar to the initial element, the sentence builder is also free to place a comment such as “犟脾气一个也得改改么 (*he is so headstrong that he needs some change*)” at the final position of the sentence (8), so as to form a new topic-comment

structure, namely, “先借点呢犟脾气一个! 犟脾气一个也得改改么 (*He is so headstrong that he refuses to the advice for borrowing some money; he needs some change of his disposition*)”. And the situations for the syntagms ① and ⑥ in (9) are the same as example (8). Briefly speaking, the discoveries in (8-9) hints for one of the prominent viewpoints of Shen (2012; 2019) that CRS is an instantiation of topic-comment/elicitor-response construction.

Furthermore, a special type of sentence structure in CRS termed as ‘chain-topic structure’ (Dong, 2012), where the repetitive part serves as not only the comment in the preceding (/current) component clause but also the topic in the current (/following) clause, has become a tropical subject. Let’s afford some concrete examples (10-11). In Shen’s (2019, p.44) quite remarkable insight, this type of sentence/CRS can go by the name of ‘*lian jie xing* (chainedness)’.

	a.	①夫民劳则思, ②思则善心生; ③逸则淫, ④淫则忘善, ⑤忘善则恶心生。(《国语·鲁语下》)						
		① fumin	lao	ze	si,	② si	ze	shanxin
		people	work hard	will	thrifty	thrifty	will	benevolence
		sheng;	③yi	ze	yin,	④yin		ze
		have	comfort	will	live a fast life	live a fast life		will
(10)	b.	wang	shan,		⑤ wang	shan	ze	exin
		forget	benevolence		forget	benevolence	will	evilness
		sheng.						
		have						
	c.	'The truth is if people work hard, they will be thrifty. If they are thrifty, they will be benevolent. If they seek comfort, they will live a fast life. If they live a fast life, they will be malevolent. If they are malevolent, they will be evil'. (Translated by Wang Hong & Zhao Zhang) (From <i>The Discourses of the State of Lu</i> in the book <i>The Discourses of the States</i>)						
	a.	①国君不可以轻, ②轻则失亲; ③失亲, ④患必至。(左氏《左传》)						
		① guojun	bukeyi	qing,	②qing	ze	shi	
		sovereign	should not	lightly	lightly	will	lose	
(11)	b.	qin;	③ shi	qin,	④huan	bi	zhi.	
		friend	lose	friend	disaster	must	strike	
	c.	'The word and act of a sovereign should not be so lightly, or he will lose many friends. The losing of friends will invite disasters'. (Translated by Luo Zhiye) (From <i>Zuo's Commentary</i> by Qiuming, Left Historiographer.)						

At the same time, speakers are allowed to rewrite this kind of CRS as follows (if A, B, C and D are four syntagms in CRS):

- (12) a. A, B; B, C; C, D → A, B, C, D (Shen, 2019, p.45)
- a. ①人有祸, ②则心畏恐; ③心畏恐, ④则行端直; ⑤行端直, ⑥则思虑熟; ⑦思虑熟, ⑧则得事理。(《韩非子·解老》)
- b. 人有祸, 则心畏恐, 则行端直, 则思虑熟, 则得事理。
- | | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|------------------|---------------------|----------|-------------------|
| ①ren | you | huo, | ②ze | xin | weikong; |
| man | encounter | misery | will | in mind | be afraid |
| ③xin | weikong, | ④ze | xingduan | zhi; | ⑤xingduan |
| in mind | be afraid | will | motive of conduct | straight | motive of conduct |
| zhi, | ⑥ze | silü | shu; | | ⑦silü |
| straight | will | thinking process | careful | | thinking process |
| shu, | ⑧ze | de | shili. | | |
| careful | will | attain | principle of affair | | |
- d. 'Man encountered by misery feels afraid in mind. If he feels afraid in mind, his motives of conduct will become straight. If his motives of conduct are straight, his thinking processes will become careful. If his thinking processes are careful, he will attain principles of affairs'. (Translated by Liao, W. K.) (From *Commentaries on Lao Zi's Teachings* in the book *Han Fei Zi*)

On the basis of (12-14), Shen (2019, p.45) motivates a novel generalization: one big source of the rewriting in (12a) and (13a-b) is borne out to be CRS's juxtaposition and referentiality, which give speakers an extensively flexible way to structure component clauses with the eventual result that they can be moved to different

positions without any shift in meaning. Notice that here one obvious class, namely, 'serial verb construction', of cases generated by the operation in (12) is alluded to by Shen (2019, p.45). An illustrative example featured with a reduced form of the chain-topic CRS is given in (14).

- a. ①星垂平野, ②平野阔; ③月涌大江, ④大江流。(杜甫《旅夜书怀》)
- b. 星垂平野阔, 月涌大江流。
- | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|-------------|---------|-----------|------|-------|
| ①xing | chui | pingye, | ②pingye | kuo; | ③yue | yong |
| star | hang low | plain | plain | boundless | moon | surge |
| dajiang, | ④dajiang | liu. | | | | |
| river | river | on the flow | | | | |
- d. 'The boundless plain fringed with stars hanging low, the moon surges with the river on the flow'. (Translated by Xu Yuanchong) (From *Mooring a Night* by Du Fu)

To sum up, it is Shen (e.g. 2012; 2017; 2019) who contributes to bringing the study of CRS into a new era. He (2019) ventures to work out the *dui*-speech 'dialogic' grammar for the Chinese language in a systematic and consistent way. The essential Conjoin/Concatenate operation in such grammar that results in flatness in structure seems to depict a diametrically opposite picture with the overwhelming Merge operation centered on by generative grammarians. At the same time, three cases of juxtaposition/concatenation within the *dui*-speech grammar framework can be encapsulated:

(i) the juxtaposition of a handful of phrases with no pause involved, such as "[老驥/伏枥] (*an aged steed confined to the stable*)", "[大/小] (*big and small*)"; (ii) the juxtaposition of full sentences and minor sentences with the presence of 'lengthening or the duration in the final syllable/semi-pause prosody (Wang and Li, 2014)', resulting in the generation of CRS; and (iii) concomitant with 'the falling pitch or pause in the final syllable', the juxtaposition of independent clauses that are frequently separated by periods, giving birth to the 'choppy sentence (cf. example (15) below)' (Shen, 2017, p.3; 2019, p.35).

- a. ①狗会叫。②邮递员可能胆小。③狗主可能不在。④邮递员会跑。(沈家煊, 2012, p.412)
- | | | | | | | |
|--------|-----------|------------|------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| ①gou | hui | jiao. | ②youdiyuan | keneng | danxiao. | ③gou-zhu |
| dog | can | bark | postman | maybe | timid | dog owner |
| keneng | buzai. | ④youdiyuan | hui | taopao. | | |
| maybe | not there | postman | will | run away | | |
- c. 'Maybe the postman is timid, and maybe the dog owner is not there. If the dog barks, the postman will run away'. (From Shen, 2012, p.412)

In the light of this fundamental property, juxtaposition/concatenation (Jackendoff, 2011), each syntagm/component clause in CRS is claimed to be a candidate for the topic/comment; each syntagm, with the Cojoin/Concatenate operation, can be juxtaposed in a dovetailed manner; and all syntagms are borne out to be the immediate constituents of CRS. Put differently, Shen's (e.g. 2019) viewpoints are indeed amenable to lifting the veil of how CRS is generated and what structure CRS instantiates. Nevertheless, if the categorial/semantic selection between

syntactic constituents is not taken into consideration, with a pop-up support for the flatness of CRS, several headaches will pop up too. For instance, which syntagm should be topic/comment? Which syntagm can be juxtaposed and which cannot? Meanwhile, in Shen's (2012; 2019) appealing analysis, the representation of CRS turns out to be totally free from syntactic constraints. But is it really the case as Shen (e.g. 2019) depicted? So, we might as well attempt to analyze the structure of CRS to see if Shen's view of flatness apropos of CRS can hold water.

CONCLUSION

Since Lü (1979, p.27) brings CRS to the forefront in his influential work *Issues on Chinese Grammatical Analyses*, the subsequent couple of decades have seen a host of discussion of it from multi-faceted aspects ensuing. In view of that, an attempt to undertake a systematic review of CRS from four-fold aspects has been made in the present paper. To recapitulate briefly, the main points are as follows. First, in central papers such as Shen (2012; 2017; 2019) and Wang, Zhao et al. (e.g. 2016), CRS, with an absence of connectives, could consist of a host of juxtaposed phrasal and clausal expressions that are featured with ‘referentiality’. Secondly, all the properties of CRS turn out to be closely intertwined, forming a cycle of reciprocal causation. Thirdly, there is a lack of attention to details in most early work apropos of CRS’s sentence category. Also, a big question-mark still hangs over what sentence category CRS belongs to, being waiting to see breakthroughs. Fourthly, some empirical researches (e.g. Hu, Jin, 1989; Wang, Li, 2014; Chen, Duan, 2020) on CCS’s phonetic features have jogged along somehow. All told, CRS is characterized by a special semi-pause prosody that is a shorter pause following the non-final component clause/syntagm than that at the end of a complete sentence. Nevertheless, the role of such phonetic features in the generation of CRS is temporarily forgotten by the linguists of the recent past. This issue, together with the prosody-syntax interface of CRS, has been often glimpsed, and usually remains obscure. Lastly, in the light of Shen’s (2019) landmark work, CRS, as the example par excellence of *dui*-speech grammar, is generated by a Conjoin/Concatenate operation in a dovetailed manner and showcases a flatness in structure, challenging the universalness of structural recursion. In the meantime, due to the ‘noun and verb unified’ (e.g. Shen, 2016), topic-comment structures come to the fore within CRS and the topic/comment constituent is not bound by lexical categories. However, according to the present analysis, some related issues seem to pop up if the categorial/semantic selection between syntactic constituents is not taken into consideration.

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