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Résumé

Cet article met en évidence le fonctionnement de la construction en "double le" en chinois courant. (La forme "double le" est employée comme étiquette qui marque la co-occurrence du -le verbal-perfectif avec le prédicatif-inchoatif, ce qui produit une configuration syntactique de la forme : SN ... V-LE-SN-LE) . Les énoncés en "double le" expriment invariablement l'affirmation de l'accomplissement d'un événement attendu dans le contexte donné. Ils peuvent en plus être divisés en deux catégories selon le type du syntagme postverbal (\pm pluriel) . Avec des SN postverbaux singuliers, les énoncés en "double le" expriment, mis à part le sens invariant, qu'il suffit pour l'événement de n'avoir eu lieu qu'une fois. Avec des SN postverbaux pluriels, par contre, c'est le dépassement d'une attente concernant les modalités de l'événement qui s'ajoute au sens invariant.

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Hilary CHAPPELL

**RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF
"DOUBLE LE" IN CHINESE^(●)**

RESUME

Cet article met en évidence le fonctionnement de la construction en "double le" en chinois courant. (La forme "double le" est employée comme étiquette qui marque la co-occurrence du -le verbal-perfectif avec le prédicatif-inchoatif, ce qui produit une configuration syntactique de la forme : SN ... V-LE-SN-LE).

Les énoncés en "double le" expriment invariablement l'affirmation de l'accomplissement d'un événement attendu dans le contexte donné. Ils peuvent en plus être divisés en deux catégories selon le type du syntagme postverbal (\pm pluriel). Avec des SN postverbaux singuliers, les énoncés en "double le" expriment, mis à part le sens invariant, qu'il suffit pour l'événement de n'avoir eu lieu qu'une fois. Avec des SN postverbaux pluriels, par contre, c'est le dépassement d'une attente concernant les modalités de l'événement qui s'ajoute au sens invariant.

(●) I would like to thank Sandra Thompson for making available to me the (unpublished) 170 page transcription of a taped interview on women's liberation in China. This is labelled *Transcription 2* in the analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper looks at the use of double *le* in standard Chinese (Mandarin) in the aspectual marking of the predicate and its effects on sentential meaning[1]. "Double *le*" is used here as a label to denote sentences where the two homonymous but functionally different morphemes *le* in Chinese co-occur, namely, verbal, perfective *-le* (<*liǎo* 'finish') which marks the verb, acting as an (atonal) suffix and the modal particle, sentence-final *le* (<*lái* 'come', cf. Chao 1968:246) which marks the predicate as a whole with an inchoative function.

As double *le* can only be detected when an NP follows the main verb due to haplology of two consecutive *le*'s (q.v. Chao 1968:246-7: **le le* → *le*), the use of double *le* presupposes a configuration with a postverbal noun: *Verb - LE - Noun Phrase - LE* (cf. Rygaloff 1973: 110). This postverbal noun phrase may be realised as the singular or plural object of a transitive verb, a temporal noun phrase or a verb measure. Hence, the co-occurrence of the two *le*'s in Chinese is restricted to certain syntactic forms[2]:

NP₁(topic) [NP₂(subject)] - V - LE - NP₃ - LE

where NP₃ = $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{referential NP} \\ \text{temporal NP} \\ \text{verb measure} \end{array} \right\}$

- (1) *Zhè ge wèntí shàng ge xīngqī yǐjīng tāolùn-le liǎng tiān le.* (Zh.)
 this - CL. - question - last - CL. - week - already - discuss - LE -
 two - day - LE

"As for this problem, we've already discussed it for two days last week".

[1] This paper was first presented in Paris at the Journées d'Études de Langues Orientales; 6-7 June 1985, held in the Centre de Recherches Linguistiques d'Asie Orientale (CRLAO). I am indebted to my language consultant, Wáng Wèiguó (b. 1954, Changchun, N. China) for his assistance in this research, all errors remain, of course, my own. This work was carried out as part of a larger project on aspect in Chinese (see Chappell - in prep.) during a research stay at Cologne University in 1985-86. I thank the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for its financial support. I would also like to thank Sandra Thompson for her comments on an earlier version of this paper.

[2] Note that a subtype with non-referential generic object NPs is also treated in section 1. There is some disagreement amongst speakers as to the acceptability of this form. (See also Footnote 8 below). Referential NPs are typically marked by *numeral + classifier* or *demonstrative + classifier* in postverbal position in Chinese.

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Apart from Zheng (1980), which specifically deals with this construction, double *le* has only been given separate treatment from verbal *-le* and sentential *le* in a relatively small number of grammars of Chinese or monographs on aspect in Chinese, amongst others Lin (1981) and Kalousková (1964). It is also referred to briefly in Rygaloff (1973), Li & Thompson (1981), Marney (1977), Teng (1979) and Liu (1964). In this paper, we set out to show that the meaning of sentences containing double *le* is not equal to the combination of the temporal, aspectual and modal meanings of verbal *-le* and sentential *le*. Nor are the syntactic constraints pertaining to double *le* the same as those on the use of each morpheme *le* separately with respect to their individual syntactic behaviour.

The meaning of double *le* is shown to be semantically marked through its concomitant expression of the speaker's viewpoint in terms of an event fulfilling certain expectations in contrast to the use of either verbal *-le* or sentential *le* alone, which lack this particular feature of meaning[3].

We begin discussion of the double *le* construction where verbal *-le* and sentential *le* co-occur by examining sets of minimal pairs in a first attempt to separate out the meanings of sentences containing verbal *-le*, sentential *le* and double *le* respectively:

- (2) *Xiǎo Méi zài Fǎguó zhù -le shí nián (*míngtiān yào zǒu)*
 Xiao - Mei - at - France - live - LE - ten - year (tomorrow - want - go)
 "Xiao Mei lived in France for ten years (*and is intending to leave tomorrow)".
- (3) *Xiǎo Méi zài Fǎguó zhù shí nián le (míngtiān yào zǒu)*
 Xiao - Mei - at - France - live - ten - year - LE (tomorrow - want - go)
 "Xiao Mei has lived in France for ten years now (and is leaving tomorrow)".
- (4) *Xiǎo Méi zài Fǎguó' zhù -le shí nián le (?míngtiān yào zǒu)*
 Xiao - Mei - at - France - live - LE - ten - year - LE (?tomorrow - want - go)
 "Xiao Mei has been living in France for ten years so far (?and is leaving tomorrow)".

An example such as (2) would be likely to be found in narrative in the relating of past events that are understood to have no impact on the present moment of speaking. (To this extent, verbal

[3] Hereafter the labels "verbal *-le*" (or "perfective *-le*") and "sentence-final *le*" will be used as abbreviations for "sentences aspectually marked by verbal *-le* only" and "sentences aspectually marked by sentence-final *-le* only" respectively.

-*le* acts like a simple past or preterite tense found in many of the Indo-European languages, although it is not obligatory as an overt marker for this meaning). This accounts for why it is incompatible with the following clause *míngtiān yào zǒu* ("is intending to leave tomorrow"), given the disparate time references of each clause. Sentence (3) with the inchoative sentence-final *le* is interpreted as a state of affairs which still holds at the moment of speech, although the point of inception of this state of affairs is understood to be prior to the moment of speaking. Unlike the double *le* construction in (4), there is no strong implication that this state of affairs will continue. Such an implication is not part of its meaning, and clauses such as *míngtiān yào zǒu* are thus compatible with it.

Sentence (4) however, with double *le* implies that the subject, having already lived in France for ten years, will continue to live there, which causes it to be incompatible with the following clause for a different reason to (2). To some extent, double *le* functions like the English present continuous perfect "have been V-ing" which too carries the implication of the action proceeding into the future. With regard to this point, Kalousková (1964:71-2) states that double *le* has

"... une nuance significative spéciale - la période indiquée par A^t (l'adverbial de temps - HC) finit au moment présent et l'action /ou l'état/ peut continuer dans l'avenir".

That this feature of meaning is present is in fact *opinio communis* amongst a diverse group of linguists including Zheng (1980:103), Lin (1981:142), Marney (1977:28-29), Teng (1979:64), Rygaloff (1973:110-111) and Li & Thompson (1981:270). However, none state it as an invariant feature in contrast to the present analysis where it is postulated for the type of double *le* sentence with a plural postverbal NP[4].

[4] Zheng Huaide states that double *le* "*hán yǒu 'xiànzài wèi zhǐ' de yǐsī hái cháng yǒu 'jiāng yào jìxù-xiàqu' de yǐsī*" ("has the meaning of 'up to the present' and often, also has the meaning of 'is going to continue on'").

Li (1981:142) states that double *le* "indicates that the action is still in progress or is to be continued".

Marney (1977:28-29) translates double *le* sentences in the following way: *tā chī le zhōngguó fàn le* "he has eaten the Chinese food (so far - and other foods remain to be eaten)" as does similarly Rygaloff (1973:110): *wǒ hē-le liǎng-bēi jiǔ le* "j'ai déjà bu deux verres de vin" (= "j'en suis à deux verres ; et je compte continuer").

Li & Thompson (1981:270) discuss the category of sentences containing sentence-final *le* expressing "progress so far" which can also be marked by verbal *-le*. They claim however that the implication of "more poems to be memorized" for their example (112) (given slightly altered as (19) below) is not an invariant feature of double *le* sentences (1981:218, Footnote 5) in contradistinction to my analysis.

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Although double *le* and sentence *le* both relate an event to the moment of speaking (that is, have perfect interpretations, as part of their meaning), double *le* differs from sentence *le* in another significant way (as foreshadowed above) which will now be elaborated upon:

All double *le* sentences encode an affirmation of a (contextually) given assumption that a certain event has taken place. This is their "common denominator" (cf. Seiler 1986:11-14) - their shared invariant feature.

However, to explicate the function of "double *le*" in a precise way, we need to divide double *le* sentences into two main types: those with singular postverbal NPs which may be either referential or generic in nature and those with plural postverbal NPs, plurality being overtly expressed through the use of numerals (+ classifiers). The *specific* interpretation is thus tied to the kind of postverbal NP.

The case of the singular postverbal NP is the simpler to explain: Double *le* sentences of this type not only express the common feature of the affirmation of the occurrence of the event but also contain the overall implication of there being no immediate requirement for this event to happen again (informally: "once is enough for the time being"). Thus there is no "so far" implication for this type. This interpretation is clear in example (15) *Yéye hē le jǔ le* "Grandfather has had his drink of wine" (e.g. daily allowed glass - and shouldn't have any more to drink). This feature of meaning is not present in correlate sentences containing only sentence final *le*. The invariant meaning of this type of double *le* sentence can be given in terms of the following semantic representation and diagram of inferential possibilities, negative and neutral in nature[5]:

"Double *le*" with singular postverbal NPs:

Even E has happened once as expected (e.g. agent X has carried out a particular action; a state involving subject X has come about) and I (= speaker) think that

Inferential possibilities for speaker	
neutral	-ve
"nothing more needs to happen now (= at given time) with respect to event E"	"once is enough. Event E shouldn't take place again"

[5] This type of semantic representation is based on Wierzbicka's (e.g. 1980) use of a small number of semantic primitives (present in every natural language) to form a metalanguage to be applied in the explication of not only lexical items but also complex syntactic structures.

Secondly, double *le* sentences with a plural postverbal NP are used to express in addition to the basic meaning, the surpassing of expectations with respect to the given event. Sentence (4) above (with double *le*) differs further from sentence (3) (with only inchoative *le*) in that the period of time which has elapsed during the course of events is understood to have surpassed the norm in length. This is a function of the speaker's viewpoint and may be manifested according to the individual example with a plural postverbal NP as either an excessive amount (with object NPs), excessive length of time (with temporal NPs) or excessive number of times (with verb classifiers following the verb). Furthermore, the situation can be viewed positively by the speaker in terms of admiration or praise ("so much!", "so long!") or negatively, as criticism or complaint ("too much", "too long"). The event is also considered to be one that can recur in succession into the future. These features will be clearly seen in the following discussion of examples. The semantic representation for this type of double *le* sentence is given below with the inferential possibilities listed in the table:

"Double *le*" with plural postverbal NPs:

Event E has happened to such an extent (plural postverbal NP) that I (= speaker) say that this is more than anyone could have expected. I think event E will continue to happen.

Inferential possibilities for speaker		
Person	+ve	-ve
2, 3	"so much !" "so long !" etc. e.g. PRAISE ADMIRATION	"too much" "too long" etc. CRITICISM
1	SELF PRAISE	COMPLAINT

Before proceeding to the main analysis of data, we will discuss briefly these postulated semantic features (given in the semantic representations above), that is, the invariants of the two types of double *le* sentences:

The affirmation of an assumption that a certain event has already taken place, inhering in every double *le* sentence, means that the event in question must be one that is known to both speaker and hearer - the event is 'old' information, understood as 'given' in the particular context.

Consider the example with the V-O compound *shuìjiào* 'sleep (a sleep)'. It would be possible to construct a double *le* sentence with this predicate to confirm that a small child, for example, had taken its (daily) nap (and thus done what it's supposed to do) but anomalous if applied to the case of the Grimm's fairy tale character "Sleeping Beauty" (Dornröschen):

- (8) **Tā shuì-le jiào le*
 3sg - sleep-LE - sleep - LE
 "She's had her nap". (*for Sleeping Beauty)

Here the double *le* sentence type with a plural postverbal NP would be appropriate for use in describing Sleeping Beauty's 100 year sleep, since this type encodes, in addition to the basic meaning, the surpassing of expectations ("so many years already"):

- (9) *Tā yǐjīng shuì -le jiǔshí jiǔ nián le*
 3sg - already - sleep --LE - 90 + 9 - year - LE
 "She's already slept for 99 years (and will continue to sleep (for another year))".

Thus, given the context, if its semantic features are not compatible with these postulated invariants, then the double *le* sentence will be anomalous, that is, inappropriate for use.

It is hence equally difficult to find a suitable context for the following example (when considered in isolation):

- (10) *Wǒ de nǚ péngyou yǐjīng huáiyùn -le bā ge yuè le*
 I - L - woman - friend - already - pregnant - LE - 8 - CL. -
 month - LE
 "My girlfriend has been pregnant for 8 months already".

Given our extralinguistic knowledge about the normal length of pregnancy, an interpretation cannot be easily made for (10) in terms of 8 months 'surpassing expectations' in somehow being longer than usual (only possible perhaps if one thought the girlfriend in question wasn't that far into her pregnancy).

On the other hand, if we change the postverbal NP in (10) to *shí ge yuè* 'ten months' then this interpretation can be easily made, the baby being overdue.

- (11) *Wǒ de nǚ péngyou yǐjīng huáiyùn -le shí ge yuè le.*
 I - L - woman - friend - already - pregnant - LE - 10 - CL. -
 month - LE
 "My girlfriend has been pregnant for 10 months already !"

Finally, a brief look at some kinds of syntactic behaviour associated with double *le* sentences: Returning to our point that the meaning of double *le* sentences is not merely equal to the addition of the semantic features belonging to verbal *le* and to sentence-final *le*, this is confirmed by the following evidence:

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It is predictable from the usage of verbal *-le* that the latter is suppressed in the negated form of a double *-le* sentence, also that modal verbs cannot combine with it (cf. amongst others, Teng 1979:42; Rygaloff 1973:111-112; Li & Thompson 1981:430).

This is shown by (12) and (13) respectively:

- (12) *Wǒ yǐjīng liǎng tiān méi chàng (*-le) gē le*
 I - already - 2 - day - NEG. - sing - (*-LE) - song - LE
 (e.g. singer complaining about disappointed expectations:)
 "I haven't sung for already two days now".
- (13) *Beijing duì (*néng) tī -le liǎng chǎng le*
 Peking - team - (*can) - kick-LE - two - CL. - LE
 "The Peking team has played two games so far".

Negated events and events conditioned by modality cannot, of course, convey the notion of fulfilment of an expectation.

The presence of sentence-final *le* also determines that the resultant state of affairs (following on from event) is understood to be still "in force" at the given reference point in time (but not the further inference that the event may continue into the future, possible for one category of double *le* sentence shown by the contrast between (3) and (4) above). The 'perfect' reading for both double *le* and sentence-final *le* accounts for the unacceptability of (14):

- (14) *Tā àirén lái (-le) sān tiān le, (*zuótiān yòu zǒu -le)*
 3sg - spouse - come - (-LE) - three - day - LE (*yesterday - again - leave-LE)
 "Her husband has been here for three days now (*and he left yesterday)".

However, none of these facts predict that the acceptability of double *le* with temporal and aspectual adverbs is at variance with that for sentence-final *le* used alone. Let us briefly consider the aspectual adverb *yǐjīng* 'already' and the temporal adverb *jīu* 'then':

Whereas *yǐjīng* 'already' is obligatory with certain types of sentences with sentence-final *le*, this is not the case for double *le* where it is optionally present.

Specifically the structure

V + O NP + LE
 [+transitive
 +monosyllabic]

requires the obligatory co-occurrence of *yǐjīng*, otherwise it can-

not stand alone (cf. examples (18), (21ii), (22ii), (40) below)[6].

Secondly, with respect to the use of the temporal adverb *jiu* 'then', we find that apart from double *le* sentences referring to future and past events (as for example, in pluperfect contexts, q.v. section I.5 below), it is not syntactically required.

Rygaloff (1973:117) also points out that the adverb *hai* 'still' is not compatible with *-le ... le* although it is with sentence-final *le* used alone.

Hence co-occurrence restrictions with adverbs are different for double *le* sentences as opposed to those only marked by sentence-final *le* or verbal *-le*.

The 'semantics prior' approach advocated by, amongst others, Wierzbicka (1980), and Dixon (1984), and similarly by Seiler (1986) and Li & Thompson (1981) within functionalist frameworks, is used in this analysis. In brief, the standpoint is taken that syntactic constructions and their associated syntactic behaviour need to be explicated in terms of their underlying semantics or pragmatic function.

This we set out to do by investigating co-occurrence restric-

[6] The obligatory co-occurrence of the adverb *yǐjǐng* 'already' will be indicated for all the examples with sentence-final *le* (and the relevant structure) by an asterisk placed outside of parentheses: *(x).

The unacceptability of this type of sentence when *yǐjǐng* is not present can be grammatically resolved in the following three ways (without resorting to the use of *yǐjǐng*):

- (i) upon placing the structure into the context of a complex sentence, e.g., the co-ordinate structure given in (3);
- (ii) when the verb is complex, e.g., bisyllabic and resultative verbs do not require the presence of *yǐjǐng* when occurring with sentence-final *le* as in (16) below;
- (iii) when both morphemes *le* are present: Monosyllabic verbs marked by double *le* are exemplified by (17), (21i), (22i), (50) and (51) in the text.

All the double *le* examples were checked with the language consultant for compatibility with *yǐjǐng* and found *not* to structurally require it. When *yǐjǐng* does co-occur, it serves to reinforce the meaning of "affirmation of occurrence of an expected event" since the adverb itself implies completion/perfectivity of an event.

For this reason, notably the V-O activity verb compounds, such as *hē-jǐu* 'drink (alcohol)' and *chī-fàn* 'eat (food)' cannot occur with *yǐjǐng* and sentence-final *le* (cf. examples (26)-(28) below) due to their non-perfective habitual meaning.

Finally intransitive and stative verbs marked by sentence-final *le* can occur optionally with *yǐjǐng* q.v. *sǐ* 'die' in (38); *pǎo* 'run' in (42); *máng* 'busy' in (47), *zǒu* 'walk' in (43); *zhù* 'live' in (3) and *jiéhūn* 'marry' in (30).

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tions with different verb types (transitive, stative etc.) and verb classes (modal, resultative etc.) as well as their co-occurrence with temporal categories. Using this method, we can discover the syntactic constraints pertaining to double *le* and thereby explicate its semantically marked nature in contrast to the two other sentence types containing *le*.

In the final section, the actual usage of double *le* in spontaneous conversation is examined with the aid of three transcriptions. The results of this discourse analysis are then matched with those for the syntactic and semantic analysis.

I. SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC ANALYSIS

1. Double le with transitive verbs

(i) Transitive verbs with plural objects

Some of the semantic features particular to the double *le* construction become apparent in the following examples with transitive verbs and plural referential object NPs:

- (15) *Tāmen liǎ fānyì -le wǔ piān le* (Zh.)
 they - two - translate - LE - five - CL. - piece - LE
 "The two of them have translated five pieces so far".

The implication of (15) is that the subjects have already translated more articles than expected, an implication which is not present in the correlate example, containing only a sentence-final *le*, given in (16).

- (16) *Tāmen liǎ fānyì wǔ piān le*
 they - two - translate - 5 - CL. - piece - LE
 "The two of them have translated five pieces now".

Sentence (16) merely denotes the inception of a new state of affairs, holding at the moment of speaking and is neutral with respect to this feature of meaning encoded by double *le*: the surpassing of expectations. Similarly, in example (17), the learning of 15 lessons is understood to be an impressive achievement on the part of the subject:

- (17) *Cóng nián chū dào xiànzài, wǒ yǐjīng xué -le shíwǔ kè le !*
 from - year - begin - to - now - I - already - study - LE - 15 -
 lessons - LE
 "From the beginning of the year up until now, I've already learnt fifteen lessons !".

As the subject is identical with the speaker in this example, the overall semantic effect is one of either self-praise or of the speaker wanting to be complimented on having learnt so much.

When only sentence-final *le* is present, such implications are no longer to be found: Compare (17) with (18) below:

- (18) *Wǒ *(yǐjīng) xué shíwǔ kè le*
 I - already - study - 15 - lesson - LE
 "I've already learnt fifteen lessons !".

Example (18) does not contain the "so much !" implication and would be appropriate for a context where the subject, "I", still has more lessons to learn. This is not to say that (17) could not be used in a similar context to (18) but rather to point out once more that the implications of use, particularly in terms of speaker's viewpoint, are different. This can be seen clearly in the contrast between examples (19) and (20) which follow. Both could be used in a context where the subject is only half way through a task:

- (19) *Táng shī sān bǎi shǒu, wǒ bèi -chūlái-le yībànr le*
 Tang - poem - 300 - CL. - I - learn - out - LE - one:half - LE
 "So far I've learnt half of the '300 poems of the Tang Dynasty' off by heart !" (semantically marked: "so many poems already").
- (20) *Táng shī sān bǎi shǒu, wǒ bèi -chūlái yībànr le*
 Tang - poem - 300 - CL. - I - learn - out - one:half - LE
 "I've now learnt half of the '300 poems of the Tang Dynasty' off by heart". (semantically neutral: "I still have 150 to go").

Up to now, we have only looked at sentences where the speaker's viewpoint is positive. Let us now consider some examples with a negative speaker's viewpoint. Here the implication of "too many" or "too much" is present, lending such double *le* sentences the overtones of criticism:

- (21) (i) *Zhèi lèi shū tā yǐjīng mǎi-le wǔ liù běn le (jīntiān yòu mǎi-le yì běn) (Zh.)*
 (today - again - buy - LE - 1 - CL.)
 "S/he's already bought five or six of this kind of book, (and today s/he bought another one)".
- (22) (i) *Nǐ qǐng -le bā ge péngyou le. Hái yào qǐng duōshǎo ? (DeF.)*
 You - invite - LE - 8 - CL. - friend - LE - still - want - invite - how:many
 "You've invited *eight* friends so far. How many more are you going to invite ?"

In (21)(i), criticism of the subject is implied for having bought too many of the one kind of book and similarly in (22)(i), the

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speaker's viewpoint that eight guests already suffices, if not being too many, is clearly expressed.

Again, the correlate sentence of (21)(i), containing only sentence-final *le*, expresses neutrally that at the given point of time, the subject had bought five or six of this kind of book, appropriate in the context, for example, of library requisitioning:

- (21) (ii) *Tā *(yǐjīng) mǎi wǔ liù běn le*
 3sg - already - buy - five - six - CL. - LE
 "S/he's already bought five or six volumes (of this kind of book) now".

The correlate of (22)(i) could be the neutral answer to how many guests have been invited so far to a wedding:

- (22) (ii) *Nǐ *(yǐjīng) qǐng bā ge péngyou le*
 you - already - invite - 8 - CL. - friend - LE
 "You've already invited eight friends (up to now)".

From the examples discussed so far it is clear that the double *le* construction is semantically marked in contrast to the corresponding sentences containing only sentence-final *le*, neutral in implication with respect to this feature[7].

(ii) Transitive verbs with generic and singular objects

(a) Generic NPs

With singular referential and non-referential object NPs, a subset of double *le* sentences is formed with a meaning slightly different from that of sentences with modified plural postverbal nouns, for speakers who accept this type[8]. Here, as outlined in

[7] This is corroborated by the extra-linguistic factor that my language consultant, although finding all the double *le* examples given grammatical, consistently 'improved their style' by either adding the adverb *yǐjīng* 'already' or by deleting the first *le* (verbal *-le*) to form semantically neutral sentences with only sentence-final *le* present. He gave the explanation that for sentences out of context, two *le*'s were "superfluous".

[8] It should be pointed out that this subtype was not found stylistically acceptable by my language consultant, Wáng Wèiguó. Two native speakers at CRLAO in Paris, Xu Dan and Fu Jingji, although finding this sentence type seemingly bizarre out of context, were, however, able to find suitable contexts for use. I thank them for their comments and examples.

Note also that is deemed an acceptable form in several textbooks for Chinese: cf. Lin (1981:142); Liu (1964:76); DeFrancis (1963) and Chao (1968). Seven of this type were found in the three transcriptions, analyzed in section II.

the introduction, there is not a dichotomization into favourable and unfavourable events with respect to inferential possibilities, but rather one of neutral or negative viewpoints concerning the invariant specific to this sentence type of "once is expected and enough".

Let us first consider the *atelic* V-O compounds which denote activities such as *kàn-shū* lit. 'read-book' - "read", *chī-fàn* lit. 'eat-food' - "eat" or *hē-jǐu* lit. 'drink-alcohol' - "drink" which all contain non-referential unmodified object nouns.

Here, the O NP is both generic and cognate. Although verbal *-le* cannot co-occur with non-referential objects as the sole aspect marker to form independent sentences (q.v. Chappell (in prep.) and Marney 1977:29-30), in combination with sentence-final *le* this is possible. Double *le* used in these circumstances, besides consistently confirming an expectation in all the examples tested, expresses that the action or activity has been carried out once as required: Note also that the "so far" interpretation of the double *le* sentences with plural postverbal NPs is absent.

(23) *Wǒ mèimei kàn le shū le*

1sg - younger sister - read - LE - book - LE

"Our (younger) sister has done the reading".

(Context: "She has done the required reading for an exam or read a prescribed book")

(24) *Xiǎo dìdi chī-le fàn le*

little - younger brother - eat - LE - food - LE

"(Our) little brother has had his meal".

(Context: "Parents checking with elder children that the baby has been fed while they were out")

(25) *Yéye hē le jǐu le*

grandfather - drink - LE - alcohol - LE

"Grandfather has had his drink of wine".

(Context: "Granddaughter informing mother that he's had his daily allowed glass")

For this type of double *le* sentence there is a marked contrast with the meaning of the correlate sentences modified purely by sentence final *le*: The latter can encode a change in habit as the specific manifestation of the general meaning of inchoative *le* (inception of a new state of affairs) whereas the features of meaning which the double *le* sentences in (23) to (25) have in common, are as stated, the fulfilment of an expectation that a particular event will take place, moreover one that the subject is *supposed* to do.

Compare examples (26) to (28) below (with sentence-final *le* only), with the double *le* correlates in (23) to (25) above[9]:

- (26) *Wǒ mèimei kàn shū le*
I - younger sister - read - book - LE
"My younger sister reads books now".
(Possible context: she never used to read before).
- (27) *Xiǎo dìdi chī fàn le*
little brother - eat - food - LE
"Our little brother eats food now".
(Possible context: a baby who's gone onto solids)
- (28) *Yéye hē jiǔ le*
grandfather - drink - wine - LE
"Grandfather drinks now".
(Possible context: he never used to drink alcohol before)

Other separable verb compounds composed of *verb* + *non-cognate object* such as *jiéhūn* lit. 'tie-marriage' - "marry" can also be modified by double *le* to express the same general meaning of the event having taken place (once), again serving as a confirmation that a certain expectation has been fulfilled. Hence, example (29) could be used in the context of a ball held in Beijing for young 'unmarrieds' where one young person wants to act as matchmaker and introduce two people to one another but another remarks that the subject, Xiao Li, is already married[10]:

- (29) *Xiǎo Lǐ jié-le hūn le*
Xiao Li - tie - LE - marriage - LE
"Xiao Li is married".

The implication of (29) is that the subject being already married has fulfilled the given expectation of this kind of ball (He doesn't need to do it again). The "once is enough" implication present in sentences with singular objects shows how closely related in meaning they are to those with plural objects and a "too

[9] Examples (26) to (28) may, of course, have non "change-of-habit" readings but the O-NP is still understood as indefinite in nature, e.g. (17) in another context could mean "Our little brother has dined (i.e. eaten his meal)".

[10] For the examples with double *le* (8), (23) to (25), (29), (33), (35) & (36), the language consultant preferred the use of *V-guo ... le* for the context of an activity/action that the subject was supposed to have carried out. Most of the contexts for such sentences were provided by the students at C.R.L.A.O.

much" implication[11]. The counterpart to (29) with sentential *le* has a purely stative meaning:

- (30) *Tā jié-hūn le*
 3sg - marry - LE
 "He's married now".

Again, it serves as a neutral statement of fact.

Verb compounds which are not compatible with the semantic features of the subject carrying out an action once, nor with the speaker expecting this event to occur are, it follows, excluded: For example, consider the V-O compound *fā-fēng* lit. 'emit-madness' - "go mad" or "have a nervous breakdown" in (31):

- (31) *??Tā fā -le fēng le*
 3sg - emit - LE - madness - LE
 ("S/he has gone mad").

Normally it would be very difficult to find a context for (31) since it does not represent an action (consciously carried out by the subject) let alone one that under normal circumstances the speaker might expect to have occurred. Speakers rejected this sentence across the board when presented in isolation. This sentence was however originally found in the transcription of a taped conversation where precisely this context surrounded it: i.e. of the speaker expecting the subject to undergo this event in the given circumstances. Double *le* is used here with an exaggerated dramatic effect:

The taped interview deals with a comparison of American and Chinese lifestyles with respect to the status of women in both societies. The interviewer is of the opinion that the young woman in the USA is under much greater pressure than her Chinese counterpart to succeed in matters of love and says (Transcription 2:81):

- (32) *Zài qīngchǎng ba, shīwàng le, zhèige yìxiàzi xiǎng-bu -guòlai*
 at - love-life - RP - disappoint - LE - this - CL. - all:at:once -
le, jiù fā -le fēng le.
 think - not - come:over - LE - then - emit - LE - madness - LE
 "(She) gets disappointed in her love-life, and all at once she can't cope with it and has a nervous breakdown".

[11] We find here an interesting parallel to the two possible interpretations for another construction with sentence-final *le* marking adjectives which is described by Chao (1968:798): "With adjectives, this inchoative *le* may imply an excessive degree, as in *Tāng shān le*. 'The soup is too salty', although in a context in which the soup was at first found to be not salty enough, then *Tāng shān le* will mean 'The soup is salty (enough) now'".

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The O NP of these V-O compounds is unmodified in each case and cannot be interpreted as an individualized or 'real' object.

(b) Referential NPs

However, even when the O NP is singular and referential, that is, not part of a V-O compound (and thus treated as a separate entity, as opposed to a kind of incorporated object), the use of double *le* proves to be equally semantically marked and to carry the "once is enough" meaning as well. This can be seen from the comparison of examples (33) and (34) below which show a further way in which double *le* differs from sentence final *le*: whether the event is understood to be completed or not:

- (33) *Duōmínggē yǐjīng chàng-le zhèi shǒu gē le*
 Domingo - already - sing - LE - this - CL. - song - LE
 "Domingo has already sung this song (and once is enough)".
- (34) *Duōmínggē yǐjīng chàng zhèi shǒu gē le*
 Domingo - already - sing - this - CL. - song - LE
 "Domingo is already singing this song now".

With double *le* in (33), the sentence expresses that the subject has already sung the particular song once. It could be used, for example, as an answer to an opera director's instruction: *Ràng tā chàng zhèi shǒu gē* "Have him sing this song". The implication is that Domingo needn't or shouldn't sing this song again - "once is enough (He should sing a different song)".

With sentence-final *le* as in (34), one appropriate context would be where two people are listening to an opera and one explains to the other that Placido Domingo's best song is a certain one from *La Traviata*. The speaker replies with (34) to point out that the opera star has already started singing this very song. As pointed out above, sentence-final *le* encodes the inception of a new state of affairs 'currently' in effect. With a singular object such as *zhèi shǒu gē* "this song", the ingressive interpretation of (34) "has already started to sing" is possible, not the case, however, for double *le* which contains a perfective verbal *-le* indicating that the subject has finished carrying out the singing of the particular song at the moment of speaking.

In conclusion, the interpretation of "once is expected and enough" for double *le* sentences with singular object NPs is invariably present, regardless of whether the object NP is referential or generic, as the final comparison of sentences (35) and (36) show:

- (35) (Context: I borrow a record for a friend and take it to her place but she doesn't want to listen to it, saying):
 Wǒ yǐjīng tīng -le nèi ge chàngpiān le
 I - already - listen - LE - this - CL. - record - LE
 "I've already heard that record". (once is enough, it's not new to me anymore).
- (36) Yéye kàn -le bàozhǐ le
 grandfather - read - LE - newspaper - LE
 "Grandfather has read the newspaper".
 (lit. 'has done newspaper reading' where *bàozhǐ* "newspaper" is nonreferential).
 (Context: you don't need to offer him the newspaper as he's already gone through it once)

Thus, for double *le* sentences with singular object NPs both non-referential and referential, the overall interpretation is identical: one of fulfilment of an expectation by means of a single event. The event is thus not understood as being one that will continue on into the future.

2. Double *le* with intransitive verbs

The use of double *le* is not only found with transitive verbs and their co-occurring objects but also with intransitive verbs such as *pǎo* "run", *qù* "go" and stative verbs such as *máng* "busy". Stative and intransitive verbs need, however, to combine with either a postverbal temporal NP or a verb classifier (denoting the number of times an action is performed) to fulfil the syntactic conditions for forming a double *le* sentence. In combination with double *le*, a temporal NP will indicate the period of time which has elapsed since the event took place, up to the moment of speaking. Example (37) would serve as the appropriate answer in the situation where a person, by chance, looks up an old acquaintance and a stranger answers the door :

- (37) *Tā sǐ -le shí nián le*
 3sg - die - LE - ten - year - LE
 "S/he died ten years ago".

The counterpart sentence with sentence-final *le* would, on the other hand, be quite inappropriate, being too neutral and emotionless for this situation:

- (38) *Tā sǐ shí nián le*
 3sg - die - 10 - year - LE
 "S/he's been dead for 10 years".

Double *le* in (37) implies however that time has passed too quickly since this event (for a speaker connected with the person)

or emphasizes that the addressee has arrived much too late. - How is it, that after all this time, the addressee still hasn't heard about it ?[12]

It is clearly apparent from (37) above and (39) which follows, that the identical semantic implications hold for double *le* with intransitive verbs and a temporal NP as for the former with transitive verbs. These have the specific modality of the period of time being longer than the speaker would have expected:

- (39) *Xiǎo Zhāng qù-le bànnián le* (Zh.)
 Xiao Zhang - go - LE - half:year - LE
 "Xiao Zhang has been away for half a year now".

The use of double *le* implies two features of meaning here:

1. Xiao Zhang is still away
2. From the point of view of the speaker, the period of his absence has been too long (why doesn't he come back ?).

The correlate with only sentence-final *le*:

- (40) *Xiǎo Zhāng *(yǐjīng) qù bànnián le*
 Xiao Zhang - already - go - half:year - LE
 "He's been away for half a year already"
 is a neutral statement of fact.

Secondly, the speaker's viewpoint expressed concomitantly with double *le* of the subject's action leading to results which exceed expectations is realised in the particular case of intransitive verbs with verb classifiers through the implication of "too many times" (negatively) or "so many times" (positively). (Note that verb classifiers function in Chinese to indicate the number of times an action is repeated).

- (41) *Wèi Lǎo Lǐ de shì, wǒ yǐjīng pǎo-le sān tàng le*
 for - Lao Li - L - matter - I - already - run - LE - 3 - time - LE
 "On account of Lao Li's business, I've already run around three times now".

Example (41) implies strongly that three times is already enough. Again, if we compare (41) with its correlate modified only by sentence-final *le* given in (42), the marked versus neutral dichotomy is once more apparent:

[12] Note that there is no correlate *independent* sentence only modified by verbal *-le* **Tā sǐ -le shí nián*. If this can be interpreted at all, it would mean "He died ten years ago" with the implication: "and now he's come back to life". This meaning is, however, grammatically rendered by *-guo*, if re-incarnation is to be expressed: *Tā sǐ-guo shí nián*. The reason for the unacceptability of *sǐ* 'die' in this sentence lies with its non-durative nature.

- (42) *Wǒ (yǐjīng) pǎo sān tàng le*
 I - already - run - 3 - time - LE
 "I've already run around three times so far".

Example (42) could be used in a context where the subject is hoping to have the chance to do another errand for Lao Li, if not as a simple statement of fact. Note that when the speaker's viewpoint is negative and the speaker is identical to the subject as in (41), the overall effect is not one of self-criticism as we might expect - by analogy to the case of the positive speaker's viewpoint (2nd, 3rd p. "praise" v.s. 1st p. "self-praise") but rather one of complaint or criticism of others. This is the same overall semantic effect as when the subject is 2nd or 3rd person (the speaker's viewpoint being negative) as in (43) below:

- (43) *Tāmen yǐjīng zǒu-le chàbùduō shí lǐ lù le.*
 they - already - go - LE - almost - ten - li - road - LE
Hái yào zǒu duō yuǎn ? (DeF.)
 still - want - go - how - far
 "They've already walked ten (Chinese) miles. How much farther do they want to go ?".

Example (43) serves as a complaint, perhaps from someone waiting for these people to return, again carrying the strong implication that the subject has already walked far enough.

3. Double *le* with stative verbs

Double *le* also occurs with some stative verbs that can have an active reading such as *máng* "be busy (doing something)" but not with non-action verbs depicting either transitory spontaneous feelings such as *gāoxìng* "be happy, delighted" or those depicting inherent physical features such as *gāo* "tall". Compare (44) with both (45) and (46) which are both ungrammatical:

- (44) *Xiǎo Dōng yǐjīng máng-le liǎng ge zhōngtóu le*
 Xiao Dong - already - busy - LE - two - CL. - hour - LE
 "Xiao Dong has been busy for two hours already".
- (45) **Zhāng Tóngxué gāoxìng-le liǎng ge zhōngtóu le*
 Zhang Tongxue - happy - LE - two - CL. - hour - LE
 ("Classmate Zhang has been happy for two hours now").
- (46) **Mèimei yòu gāo -le sān cùn le*
 younger sister - again - tall - LE - three - inch - LE
 ("Our younger sister has grown another three inches taller").

Examples (45) and (46) form grammatical sentences however with either verbal *-le* alone (past event descriptive sentences) or with sentence-final *le* alone (inception of a new state of affairs).

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Example (44) is interpreted to mean that the subject is extremely tired as a result of working for two hours at something (it being implied that two hours is a long time), perhaps with the further implication that the addressee should help him.

The same paradigm can be set up for stative verbs as for transitive (cf. examples (2), (3) and (4)) and intransitive ones with regard to their differing implicative structures when combined with double *le* (cf. (44)); sentence-final *le* (47) and verbal *-le* (48) respectively:

(47) *Tā yǐjīng máng liǎng ge zhōngtōu le, hái zài máng ne*
3sg - already - busy - two - CL. - hour - LE - still - DUR - busy - RP
"He's already been busy for two hours and is still at it"

(48) *Xiǎo hái'r bìng, tā wèi zhèi ge shìqǐng máng -le liǎng ge zhōngtōu*
little - child - sick - 3sg - for - this - CL. - matter - busy -
LE - two - CL. - hour
"As her little child was sick, she was busy for two hours".

A final example is presented below with a postverbal quantity NP, which serves as an expression of anxiety on behalf of the overweight subject as one specific interpretation of the "too much" implication:

(49) *Wǒ péngyou yǐjīng pàng-le shí bàng le*
I - friend - already - fat - LE - ten - pound - LE
"My friend has already put on ten pounds (and he's still gaining weight)".

4. Restrictions on verb classes

Restrictions on verb classes co-occurring with double *le* are semantically determined rather than syntactically, a point which is already partly clear from the fact that some stative verbs with active readings may occur with it, shown in section 3 above. In fact, with animate subjects only verbs of intentional or controlled action are permitted with double *le*, proof of which is also to be found amongst syntactically transitive verbs which due to their lexical meaning (as non-control verbs) cannot co-occur with double *le*[13]: One such verb class is the formally transitive *verba sentiendi*. Compare the grammaticality of these with that of their controlled action counterparts in (50) and (51) below:

[13] There is however an exception to this rule. The verb *yǒu* "have, there is", can be used in double *le* sentences as the main verb see examples (66) and (68) below, whereas other stative verbs such as *shì* "be" and *xiàng* "resemble" follow the rule as predicted. The type of verb is however unrestricted with inanimate subjects cf. examples (64), (65) & (67).

- (50) *Gùkèmen yǐjīng wén (*wén-dào)-le hěn duō míngguì de xiāng-shuǐ le*
 customers - already - sniff (smell) - LE - very - many - expensive -
 perfume - LE
 "The customers have already tried out (=sniffed) lots of
 expensive perfumes". (*accidentally smell)
- (51) *Hángjiāmen cháng (*cháng-dào) -le xǔduō Fǎguó hóngjiǔ le*
 expert:PL - taste - (accidentally:taste) - LE - many - France -
 red:wine - LE
 "The experts have been tasting many French red wines".
 (*accidentally taste)

As a result of this constraint, verbs which are syntactically transitive such as *zhīdao* "know" and modal verbs such as *huì* "can" are also incompatible with double *le* for the same semantic reasons, since they too do not have an active meaning:

- (52) **Wǒ jiějie zhīdao-le zhèi jiàn shìqíng le*
 I - elder sister - know - LE - this - CL. - matter - LE
 ("My elder sister has known this matter").
- (53) **Tā bàba huì-le Èwén le*
 3sg - father - can - LE - Russian - LE
 ("His/her father can speak Russian").

Finally, double *le* does not occur with resultative verb compounds:

- (54) ? *Wǒ xiě-wán -le èrshí fēng xìn le*
 I - write:finish - LE - 20 - CL. - letter - LE
- (55) ? *Xiǎo māo zhuàng-pò -le zhǐ mén le*
 little - cat - bump:break - LE - paper - door - LE

The reason for this incompatibility lies in the completive nature of resultative verb compounds which conflicts with the perfect or "current relevance" interpretation of double *le*. As explicated above, double *le* and sentence-final *le* sentences share the common feature of indicating the situation at the moment of speaking with respect to some action or event, that is, they have what is commonly termed a "perfect" reading. Double *le* with plural postverbal NPs as in (54) indicates over and above this, the extent to which a controlled action has been carried out or how many times it has been repeated, seen also from the examples cited above. Furthermore, the use of this type of double *le* implies that the action may be continued into the future. These three aspects of meaning cause its incompatibility with the resultative compound verbs which indicate, unmarked for aspect, completive events that have no interpretation of continuation into the future or effect on the present.

RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF "DOUBLE LE" IN CHINESE5. Time categories and double le

Without any overt reference to time, a double *le* sentence is understood as referring to the present time, as explained in section 4 above. According to Reichenbach's scheme (q.v. 1947:288), point of speech (S) and point of reference (R) coincide, while the point of event (E) has an inception point in the past which continues on until at least the point of speech.



A double *le* sentence may, however, by means of the adverbial of time, *jiù* 'then', be displaced into the future or the past:

- (56) *Dào 1990 nián, nèi ge gōngsī *(jiù) jiàn -le sān zuò dà*
 arrive - 1990 - year - that - CL. - company - then - build - LE -
lóu le
 3 - CL. - big - building - LE
 "By 1990, that company will have built three apartment
 blocks"

This sentence has the following Reichenbachian structure :



where the reference time is "by the year 1990" and no longer identical to the time of speech. Compare (56) with (57) which has a reference time in the past:

- (57) *Qùnián zhèi ge shíhòu, wǒ *(jiù) yǐjīng xué -le yī nián*
 last:year - this - CL. - time - I - then - already - study - LE
Zhōngwén le.
 one - year - Chinese - LE
 "By this time last year, I'd already studied one year of
 Chinese".

Teng (1979:65) also claims that although double *le* does not often occur in past contexts, its time reference being "now", "when it does occur with a past time phrase, the immediacy adverb *jiù* is obligatory and the meaning is 'had already been so by that time'". Sentences such as (57) with a past time context have this Reichenbachian structure:



Hence, provided reference time is post-event time, the double *le* sentence will be well-formed with respect to its temporal interpretation, regardless of the actual speech time. Specifically,

double *le* can be used in contexts where the future perfect or the pluperfect would be used in English but in both these cases, the temporal adverb *jiù* has to be used in order to allow the essential interpretation of the event having "current relevance" for the point of reference (R).

Finally, double *le* cannot be used for habitual expressions unlike sentence-final *le* sentences:

- (58) *Wǒ zhǔrén xiànzài měitiān hē (*le) sān bēi kāfēi le*
 I - boss - now - every:day - drink - (*LE) - 3 - CL. - coffee - LE
 "My boss drinks three cups of coffee every day now".
 (Implied context: for health reasons, he's cut down on coffee drinking to three cups)

The use of sentence-final *le* signals invariably the inception of a new state of affairs, here specifically, a change of habit. Contrasting to this, double *le* denotes a finite event or a finite number of events in series. The given action may be repeated or carried out over a certain period of time but it is expected to have an end, even if at some point in the future.

II. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The transcriptions of three "spontaneous conversations" carried out in an unrehearsed and informal interview form were analysed for examples of double *le* sentences, retrospectively to the semantic and syntactic analysis presented above.

The task was to see if the contexts and the use of these examples showed them to contain the identical invariant semantic features postulated for the elicited sentences discussed above. The 13 examples collected from the three transcriptions are listed in turn below and briefly commented upon. The pertinent semantic implication for each example is given in brackets.

Transcription 1: Kubler & Ho (1984). *Varieties of Spoken Standard Chinese II.*: A Speaker from Taipei.

Four conversations between speakers of Taiwan Mandarin, who talk about their personal history, work and work-related matters.

Within 54 minutes of taped conversation, five examples were found, four of which were uttered by the same speaker and one by the interviewer (in a separate conversation from that with the former).

I. Chou Shu-yen (woman), 28 yrs old, b. in southern Taiwan.

1. *Context*: The interviewee is talking about the construction of a luxurious apartment building in Taipei:

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- (59) ... *Zuìjìn zài diànshì guǎnggào hěn dà*
 recently - on - T.V. - advertise - very - big
 ... *guāngshì nèi ge guǎnggào jiù zuò -le liǎngqiān duō wàn le*
 just - that - CL. - advertising - then - make - LE - 2,000 - more -
 10,000 - LE) (1984:100)
 "they've done a lot of advertising on T.V. lately (...)
 Just in terms of this advertising, they've done more than
 twenty million dollars worth so far".
 [emphasizing "SO MUCH !"]

2. *Context*: Selling of units in apartment block:

- (60) *Shǔyú wǒmen de yǒu liǎng bǎi hù zuǒyòu nà, mài ... yǐjīng*
 belonging - we - L - there:be - two - 100 - CL. - about - well:then -
mài -le liù-qī qīshí hù zuǒyòu le
 sell - ... already - sell - LE - six-seven - seventy - CL. - about - LE
 "Those (apartments) belonging to us, number approximately 200
 units. Well then, sold are ... we've already sold about 60 or
 70 units so far". (1984:101)
 [emphasizing "SO MANY units !" - more than the speaker thinks
 that the interviewer would have expected to hear]

3. *Context*: Interviewer asks Chou Shu-yen how long she has worked:

- (61) *Wǒ gōngzuò -le ... ei ... wǔ-liù nián le*
 I - work - LE - ... (hesitation) - 5-6 - year - LE (1984:101)
 "I've worked for five or six years so far".
 [emphasizing "SO MANY" years already, again more than she
 thinks the interviewer expected to hear]

4. *Context*: Interviewer asks about Chou's marital status:

- (62) *Wǒ jiéhūn ... wǒ yǐjīng ... ei ... jiéhūn-le liǎng nián*
 I - marry - ... I - already (hesitation) - marry - LE - two - year -
bàn le
 half - LE (1984:103)
 "Yes (I'm married). I've been married for more than two and
 a half years now".
 [emphasizing "SO LONG"]

II. George T.C. Ho, 26 yrs old, b. Taipei

5. *Context*: Wants to ask 63 year old interviewee about changes in
 Taiwan in last 20-30 years:

- (63) ... *nǐ zài Táiwan ... yǐjīng ... shēnghuó-le zhème jiǔ le,*
 ... you - at - Taiwan ... already ... live - LE - so - long - LE -
duì bu duì
 right - NEG. - right (1984:134)
 "You've already lived in Taiwan for such a long time, right ?"
 [emphasizing "SO LONG"]

Summation: All examples carry the implication of the event "exceeding expectations" and, apart from (63), all have explicitly plural postverbal NPs.

Transcription 2: Women's Liberation in China (unpublished)

Discussion between a recent émigrée to the USA and an interviewer (who has lived for a considerable time in the USA) on the position of women in Chinese society as compared with the American. Both are speakers of standard Chinese and are originally from Beijing (Peking).

Six examples of double *le* were found within a conversation lasting approximately 60 minutes. All were uttered by the (male) interviewer.

1. *Context:* The interviewer is talking about the diachronic change in meaning of the word *tàitai* "lady, Mrs.":

- (64) *Kěshi guò -le chàbuduō yī -bǎi duō nián ne hái shì*
 but - pass - LE - almost - one - 100 - more - year - RP - or
bú dào yī -bǎi nián, hūrán jiàn-zhe 'tàitai' ya, jiù
 NEG. - reach - one - 100 - year - suddenly - see - PROG - taitai - RP
biànchéng -le lìngwài yī -ge yìsi le (p. 21)
 then - change - LE - another - one - CL. - meaning - LE
 "But after about a bit more than 100 years had passed, or not even 100 years, (we) suddenly see that *tàitai* has changed to another meaning".
 [affirming occurrence of an event that was foreshadowed in preceding discourse]

2. *Context:*

Emigrée:

- Nán-nǚ fēnxiào, wénhuà dà gémìng yǐhòu jiù quánbù dōu*
 boy-girl separate:school - culture - big - revolution - after -
shì nán-nǚ héxiào
 then - whole - all - be - boy-girl - co-educational:school
 "After the Cultural Revolution, girls' and boys' school all became co-educational schools".

Interviewer:

- (65) *Nà, Shīdà Nǚfùzhōng yě jiùbiànchéng -le shénme Shīdà*
 well:then - Shida Nüfuzhong - also - then - change - LE - what -
Fùzhōng le ?
 Shida Fuzhong - LE (p. 58)
 "So the Affiliated Girls' Middle School of Peking Normal University then became the Affiliated Middle School or something?"
 [an expected change in terms of preceding information given by interviewee]

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3. See example (32) above

4. *Context*: Interviewer asks if the old way of thinking in China still persists regarding the necessity of bearing a male child. (This forms part of a more general discussion on restrictions on family size).

- (66) *Nàmo, yǒu méi yǒu rén shuō shì, āiyā wǒ xiànzài yǐjīng*
 well:then - there;be - NEG. - there:be - people - say - be - (sigh)
yǒu -le sān ge hái'zi le, sān ge dōu shì nǚ de
 I - now - already - have - LE - three - CL. - child - LE - three - CL. -
 all - be - girl - DE (p. 127)
 "Well then, are there people who say (sighing), I've already
 got three children, but all are girls".
 [a negative "TOO MANY" implication]

5. *Context*: Interviewer mentions mass meeting of women in California where he claims a slogan was shouted about not having to wear bras.

- (67) *Hǎoxiàng bǎ zhèi ge nǚzhào biànchéng -le yì zhǒng zhèi ge*
 seem - BA - this - CL. - bra - become - LE - one - kind - this - CL. -
fùnǚ yùndòng de biāozhì le shìde
 women - movement - L - symbol - LE - similar (p. 150-151)
 "It seemed that the bra has become a kind of symbol of the
 women's movement".
 [affirmation of speaker's expectation that something like
 this would happen in the circumstances he initially des-
 cribes]

6. *Context*: Interviewee points out that the ideal situation has not been achieved yet (regarding the position of women in China), as it's only 20 years since the changes began.

- (68) *Èrshǐ duō nián zhèi yǐjīng yǒu le hǎoxiàng shì jīběnxìng*
 20 - more - year - this - already - have - LE - seem - be - basic -
de gǎibiàn le
 L - change - LE (p. 173)
 "In the last twenty years or so, the basic changes have al-
 ready occurred, it seems".
 [affirmation that the kind of changes one would expect to
 occur, have]

Summation: Only (66) contains a numerically modified postverbal NP in this group of examples, and thus expresses a result which is more than expected. The remaining five all express the fulfilment of an expectation with regard to the given (singular) event.

Transcription 3: Liang et al. (1982) Varieties of Spoken Standard Chinese I.: A Speaker from Tianjin.

An unrehearsed conversation on the topic of *xiàngshēng* "comic dialogue".

Two examples of double *le* with a generic postverbal NP were found within 50 minutes of conversation: These came, however, from interwoven sample passages of *xiàngshēng* performed by a native speaker of standard Chinese from Beijing: Hou Baolin. Since *xiàngshēng* requires a spontaneous verbal performance, the 2 examples are included in this study.

1. *Context*: Discussing the speech style of the Beijing dialect used on stage:

- (69) *Wǒmen shuō de Běijīnghuà bu shì yìbān*
 we - speak - L - Beijing:dialect - NEG. - be - normal -
Běijīnghuà ... Shì jīngguó -le tílián le
 Beijing:dialect ... be - pass:through - LE - refinement - LE
 (1982:30)

"The Beijing dialect we speak, isn't the normal Beijing dialect ... It's undergone refinement".

2. (same context):

- (70) *Jīngguó -le yìshù jiāgōng le*
 pass:through - LE - art - processing - LE (1982:31)
 "Its undergone artistic polishing".

[In both cases, we have an affirmation of what is considered necessary and expected for *xiàngshēng* performers, whose artistry lies in their clever use of words and language].

CONCLUSION

These 13 examples of double *le* from spontaneous speech - six with plural and seven with singular or non-referential postverbal NPs - confirm the predictions about its usage given in the preceding syntactic and semantic analysis.

All sentences contained an affirmation of the basic assumption that a particular event had taken place. For double *le* sentences where the postverbal noun is singular (and either referential or generic), we find that this type expresses the speaker's view that the given event need not take place again ("once is expected or enough").

Secondly, for double *le* sentences with plural postverbal nouns, the implication is present that an event has taken place to an extent which is more than expected or assumed to be likely in the given context. This sentence type carries either a negative

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or positive speaker's viewpoint - such as criticism or praise of the subject, where the subject is in 2nd or 3rd person. For 1st person subjects, where the speaker is identical to the subject, the interpretation is either one of self-praise or complaining (about the situation or someone else).

These features were held responsible for the semantically marked nature of double *le* sentences as opposed to correlate sentences with only sentence-final *le* or only perfective *le*.

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