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*Xiandai Hanyu Huayu Qingtai Yanjiu [Discourse Modality of Mandarin Chinese]*, by Xu Jingning. Beijing: Kunlun Press, PRC. 2008. 387 pp. Paperback, Renminbi 40.00.

Xu's book, based on her dissertation at Peking University, is a systematic study of issues related to mood and modality in Mandarin Chinese. While the title may suggest a special focus, the content is much broader and more comprehensive than most work hitherto undertaken. As the author takes subjectivity and intersubjectivity as central factors in approaching modality in Chinese and frequently uses (written) corpus data as evidence, the result is a highly useful and refreshing piece of work.

Chapter 1 provides background information on the theoretical foundations of this study, with a focus on subjectivity and intersubjectivity. F. R. Palmer's modality model and the notion of discourse modality à la Senko Maynard play a central role. A special section on the varieties of corpus data used for this study--mostly written data--delineates the scope of the investigation. Chapter 2 is an overview of previous research on Chinese modality. This chapter is quite useful for anyone who follows the Chinese linguistics literature, for there has been much confusion about mood and modality in Chinese due to diverse approaches and the associated terminologies involved.

Following this, chapter 3 illustrates the author's expansive view of the modality system of Mandarin Chinese. Most notable is the integration of mood and modality, with mood, or the so-called functional system of speech acts and sentential types (i.e., statement, interrogative, imperative, and exclamation), subsumed under a larger discourse modality model. The broadness of this system is manifested in the inclusion of not only this functional type but also three other types of lexical-grammatical elements: sentence-final particles, modal verbs, and modal adverbs. The following four chapters discuss the four components of the Mandarin modality system, respectively.

Chapter 4 proposes that the main difference in discourse modality among the utterance types is realized in statements and imperatives. These are the two major speech act moods to which all sentential forms (e.g., interrogatives and exclamations) can be seen to align.

Chapter 5 deals with sentence-final particles. This is the main chapter of the book, where the author gives an in-depth treatment of each of the main particles (*a*, *ma*, *ba*, *ne*, etc.). The most innovative aspect of this chapter is that the author takes an interpersonal approach to describe the functions of these particles and tries to unify the diverse functions of each with a prototypical meaning or function. For particle *a*, for example, the author proposes that its prototypical function is to convey a piece of information with certainty and simultaneously solicit addressee response, while that of particle *ne* is said to draw the addressee's attention to a certain aspect of the shared knowledge. With each core function identified, variation in different discourse co-texts and contexts is discussed and shown to fall under the same core functions.

Chapters 6 and 7 deal with modal verbs and modal adverbs, respectively. These chapters do not go as deeply as the particle chapter into the use of individual items, yet both are still very useful in that they provide a clear taxonomy for the relevant categories, serving as a guide to the possible forms and their contrastive attributes in Mandarin

Chinese. As with the particle chapter, the author strives to provide a comparative perspective by bringing in English and Japanese data where possible.

In summary, the book argues that the system of Mandarin modality comprises four sub-categories: sentence types corresponding to speech act moods; sentence-final particles conveying the speaker's attitudes toward the state of affairs expressed in the utterance and toward the interlocutor; modal verbs expressing epistemic and deontic modalities; and, finally, modal adverbs marking evaluative stances.

Whether or not one agrees with the author's treatment of all of these components of Mandarin modality, there is no question that this book lays a solid foundation for future research in Mandarin modality and pragmatics in general.

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