

Study on Classification of Interrogative Words and Interrogative Pronouns

The Excavated and Transmitted Warring States Literature

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Abstract—In order to deepen the description and analysis of the Chinese interrogative words and their sentence patterns in the warring states period, We carry out the story on the basis of unearthed literature corpus of the warring states period, and literatures handed down from then as circumstantial evidence. We think interrogative words can be divided into three categories: interrogative pronouns, interrogative words and interrogative adverbs. Also, we try to resolve two issues: First, the paper introduces the basis of the three points of the unearthed and ancient Chinese interrogative words. Second, the paper reviews the research progress of the Chinese interrogative pronouns.

Keywords—Chinese language in the warring states period; interrogative words; interrogative pronouns; reviews

I. INTRODUCTION

For the past half century, a large number of unearthed documents have been discovered, providing precious documents for the study of interrogative words and its sentence structures in ancient times. To study the history of ancient Chinese, we should first decide what kind of corpus to use. Due to the old years and a lack of authentic and accurate written documents, it is awkward that the literature of the present academic world (also known as "post-time data") is untrustworthy, and the unearthed literature (also known as "simultaneous literature") is not fully appreciated and used^[1]. In order to eliminate the potential distortion of Chinese history which is almost totally based on the descended literatures, only by combining the excavated warring states literature and the literature of the warring states period, the study of ancient Chinese can draw a conclusion that is relatively objective and believable. Therefore, to study interrogative words and their sentence structures from a historical angle, we can start from the unearthed literature of the warring states, then dating back to that of the western Zhou dynasty, finally to the study of the

Chinese language of Yin Shang, and the question of oracle and its sentence structure and so on. The study of the language grammar of the unearthed language can make up for the limitations of the study of the written corpus. This research method is undoubtedly of great significance in grammar. The proportion of interrogative sentences in daily oral communication cannot be compared with that of declarative sentences, but the interrogative sentence has a special form in syntactic structure and occupies a unique position in thinking and communication. In the past twenty years, the question of question in the study of modern Chinese grammar has always been the focus of the academic circle, and new theories and new ideas emerge endlessly. At the same time, few scholars have studied the ancient Chinese interrogative words and their sentence patterns, and the results cannot be compared with that of recent Chinese, ancient Chinese or modern Chinese. Therefore, it is of great value to study the interrogative words and their research in the period of excavated warring states. In this paper, we will first summarize the basic problems of Chinese interrogative tones before the introduction to the basis of the three points of the unearthed and ancient Chinese interrogative words.

II. THE EXPRESSION FORM OF CHINESE INTERROGATIVE TONE

There are various ways to express doubt. But which method is the first to use? Views of scholars vary on which method is the most fundamental one. However, there are two essential ways to do it: lexical means (such as interrogative pronouns), and grammatical means (interrogative words, interrogative adverbs).

The first view is that intonation is the most basic means of forming a sentence, and other means are not necessary. For example, Lv Shuxiang thinks that the expression of Chinese tone is necessary, and the words are optional^[2]. However,

according to Huang Borong, there are four main factors that influence the classification of the tone or the usage of a sentence: 1. Intonation; 2. modal particle; 3. word order; 4: the attitude of the speaker. Among which the intonation plays a vital role^[3]. Zhang bin also believes that intonation, as a marker of the sentence, is the most basic and primary means necessary for any sentence to express any meaning, while other means (overlap, word, tone adverb, auxiliary verb, interrogative pronoun, interjection, etc.) are not necessarily used.^[4]

The second view is that the interrogative tone is only necessary and mandatory when there is no vocabulary or grammatical means in the paragraph. Xu Jie, for example, analyzed the spoken and Chinese questions in a number of countries, and finds out that to express your doubts in different languages, people tend to use the word means (interrogative pronouns), then use the grammatic means (to add words, overlap, displacement, and so on.) Finally, voice means such as intonation and stress are enabled^[5]. Fan Xiao and Zhang Yufeng also pointed out that there are forms to express your doubts like interrogative pronouns, inflections, intonation and syntactic forms^[6].

In addition, there are some opinions that are similar to the first one, but also worthy of attention. With Shi Yuzhi as his representative, he pointed out that there are four kinds of interrogative methods in Chinese: interrogative pronouns, interrogative words, positive and negative questions and choice questions. There is a rule in Chinese grammar: one sentence can only use one kind of interrogative means, that is, two different interrogation methods cannot be found in one sentence^[7].

In the unearthed literature of the warring states, interrogative pronoun, adverb, interrogative form, interrogative intonation (or only one of them, or a combination of two) are mainly used in interrogative tone.

III. CHINESE INTERROGATIVE WORDS ARE DIVIDED INTO INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS, INTERROGATIVE WORDS AND INTERROGATIVE ADVERBS.

In the era of the draft creations of grammar writing, interrogative pronouns are often difficult to distinguish from interrogative adverbs. Chen Chengze, in the book of *Chinese Grammar Creation*, refers to the demonstrative pronouns and interrogative pronouns that appear in the adverbial position as the demonstrative adverbs and interrogative adverbs^[8]. The scholars later are more or less influenced by it.

The scholars who have studied ancient Chinese grammar have raised a view that questions including interrogative pronouns and interrogative words. For example, Wang Li, in his book *ancient Chinese*, has pointed out that the sentence should have the interrogative words so as to raise questions. Sometimes you use interrogative pronouns, sometimes interrogative words, sometimes both. There are two types of interrogative words in the ancient literature: the first is interrogative pronoun, and the second is interrogative words. He has introduced the usage and grammatical meaning of common question pronouns (Shui, Shu, He, An, Wu, Yan, Hu,

Xi, and He), doubt modal particles (Hu, Zhu, Yu, Yu, Ye, Ye, Zai) one by one in ancient Chinese^[9].

So, is the question adverb omitted by scholars? In fact, Lu Shuxiang's "eight hundred words of modern Chinese" (revised edition), published in 1980, has first referred to the question adverb: Qi, Nan Dao, Nan Dao Shuo, Mo Fei, etc. What's more, he has done a grammatic analysis of these interrogative adverbs and summed the characteristics as: to strengthen the rhetorical question and to express the rhetorical question, whose means are equivalent to "don't". To function as an adverb, it can be put in the front of the subject or after^[10].

Wang Li has also used the name "interrogative adverb" for many times: First, in Unit four of Selection of Literary Works — Me to the County, the term "interrogative adverb" has been used when he comment on the grammatical nature of the word "He". The original texts are: "He, the interrogative adverb, simply means what it has." Second, in General Theory, (7): "If there are interrogative pronouns or interrogative adverbs, the word 'also' seems to carry the tone of doubt too." Third, also in chapter seven, the original texts are: "the word 'Ai' can also be used as interrogative sentence... because there are interrogative pronouns or interrogative adverbs in the sentence, the word seems only to help express interrogative tones."^[9] In addition, in Wang Li's *The History of Chinese Grammar*, chapter 23 *The development of Modal Particle*, he has also referred to the use of interrogative adverbs (also known as "cross-reference adverbs")^[11]. As for the adverbial adverb, this paper will not give any more information since it is discussed in detail by Wu Fuxiang, Wang Guosheng^[12] and Guo Xiliang^[13].

Wang Haifen divided the interrogative words into 15 categories and his book has solved many problems of studying ancient Chinese. For example, when asking people in ancient Chinese, what interrogative questions do we have and in how many ways can we ask, the same comes with the objects^[14].

Wang Haifen's classification is scientific and groundbreaking. However, the corpus he used is limited to descended documents, and there is only one type of unearthed documents in warring states period concerned *The Bamboo Slips of Qin Dynasty*. As a result, the study of interrogative words is not comprehensive. Though the included question sentence pattern is broad and delicate in thought, the interrogative words and sentence patterns of the warring states period were not fully reflected. This can be exemplified by the case of a romantic inquiry, the verb "Ru Tai". According to Wang Haifen's research, he only saw one sentence of "S · Ru Tai" structure in *The Book of History · Tang Shi*, which was used as a verb^[15]. However, in the unearthed documents from Chu dynasty in warring states period (only in documents like *The Book of History*), the sentence structure of "S · Ru Tai" has been used for five times, with no example been found in unearthed documents from the warring states period corpus. So we get a clearer picture of this compound question: "Ru Tai", as a characteristic interrogative pronoun, is from ancient history, and only a few examples can be found in documents like *The Book of History* that imitate the old a lot, then disappeared after the warring states period. And from ancient

books, it can be seen that "Ru Tai" has been replaced by "Nai he" in the Han dynasty^[16].

Interrogative words are an important part of the system. Modal particle is a system, which also includes some subsystems, such as modal particles in the end of the sentence, in the sentence, and so on. At the end of the sentence, these words can be divided into statements, interrogative words and exclamations. However, these subsystems did not exist in the first place, but gradually developed and matured.

We believe that in the unearthed literature of Shang dynasty, there only exists the interrogative words "suppression" and "holding"; in the unearthed literature in western Zhou dynasty, only the exclamatory words "ah" exists; in the excavated spring and autumn annals, there is an exclamation of "ah" and "already". When the Chinese language evolves to the warring states period, several characteristics emerge: 1. the number is increasing rapidly 2. The categories are rich 3. There are two new interrogative words "Hu" and "Yu". In the unearthed literature of the warring states, there are interrogative words, exclamatory words, and statements. We can see 12 interrogative words: "Yu", "Ye", "Yi", "Yi", "Hu", "Zai", "Yan", "Er", "Yi", "Xi", and "Eryi", most of which are frequently used.

To sum up, there are three types of interrogative words: interrogative pronouns, interrogative words and interrogative adverbs. So, what are these interrogative words in the warring states period? The following is a brief discussion of the research of interrogative pronouns.

IV. THE RESEARCH PROGRESS OF INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS IN UNEARTHED ANCIENT WARRING STATES DOCUMENTS

According to Zhang Bin, the pronoun can be divided into personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns and interrogative pronouns. The main function of interrogative pronouns is to express doubt, which can form various kinds of special questions. Interrogative pronouns are usually used to inquire, and in interrogative sentences, interrogative pronouns refer to unsolved and unknown objects. According to the research of Peng Weiming, interrogative pronouns appeared in Chinese language of the unearthed warring states period does not function to express doubts^[16]. Some reference objects of the interrogative pronoun are corresponding to the reference objects of personal pronouns and demonstrative pronouns. So, what are the interrogative pronouns of unearthed ancient warring states? The following part is to summarize scholars' views into the unearthed and descended documents:

A. *An Overview of Interrogative Pronouns in the Warring States Period.*

Liu Chunping pointed out that the unearthed warring states documents mainly included the warring states Chinese bronze inscriptions, the warring states bamboo slips, the warring states silk books and the warring states books in the bamboo slip and silk books of Han dynasty^[17]. The innovation and deficiency of Liu's research are summarized as follows:

First, the era of the selected warring states corpus is clear. However, the corpus is still insufficient to reflect the language situation of the warring states, but only reflects the use of the interrogative pronoun of the unearthed literatures in the warring states period. The excavated documents used by Liu Chunping include: Qin Zu Chu Wen, warring states period silk book in Changsha Zidanku, seven batches of bamboo slips of the warring states period (silk book of Chu in Chang Tai Gate, Jiu Dian, Bao Shan, Angtian Lake, Guo Dian and the tomb silk book of Yi, the warring states Chu bamboo slips book stored in Shanghai museum, and two warring states books in the Han dynasty: Sun Zi Warcraft in silk book of Han dynasty from Yin Que mountain, and *The Book of War States Strategists* in silk book from Mawangdui Han Tombs^[17]. Liu Chunping published a paper in 2011 on the selection of documents in the warring states period, adding two types: first, Jin Wen of warring states period, (documents collected in *A Selection of Jin Wen from Yin Dynasty and Zhou Dynasty*); Second, some silk books of Chu Dynasty (*Bamboo Books of Chu Dynasty Stored in Shanghai Museum (5-6)*). For a limited unearthed warring states period corpus, especially no involvements of unearthed documents in Qin dynasty, Jin dynasty, Chu dynasty, Qi dynasty, Lu dynasty and Yan dynasty, Liu Chunping has made some conclusions like: There are few interrogative pronouns in unearthed documents, which are unscientific.

Second, the classification of interrogative pronouns is scientific. According to the statistics of Liu Chunping, there are six single voice interrogative pronouns ("Shu", "He", "Xi", "Hu", "He", "An"), there are eight polyphony interrogative pronouns in the unearthed corpus ("Ru He", "He Ru", "Ru Zhi He", "Ruo He", "He Ruo", "Nai He", "Ji He", "Xi Ru")^[17]. Subsequently, in the paper published in 2011, it is found that there are seven single voice interrogative pronouns in the unearthed warring states documents. ("Shui", "Shu", "He", "Xi", "Hu", "He", "An"). There are seven polyphonic interrogative pronouns in the unearthed literature of the warring states ("Ru He", "He Ru", "Ruo He", "He Ruo", "Nai He", "Ji He", "Xi Ru")^[17]. Liu Chunping's statistical analysis has subtle differences in different times.

According to our statistics, in the present unearthed warring states literature, there are 8 single voice interrogative pronouns. ("Shui", "Shu", "He", "He", "Xi", "An", "Hu", "Ji")^[18], there are nine compound interrogative pronouns ("He Ru", "He Ruo", "Xi Ru", "Ru He", "Ru Zhi He", "Ru Tai", "Ji He", "Nai He")^[16]. Because of the possible gap between the number of excavated warring states documents used by Liu Chunping and us, Liu Chunping might still need new materials to examine and correct her conclusions about the number, frequency, inquiry function, syntactic function, temporality and regionalism of interrogative pronouns in the warring states period.

Weiming Peng and Yujin Zhang have carried out systematic research on the unearthed and descended documents of the warring states period in six aspects: the definition, frequency, inquiring function, non-interrogative function, syntactic function and discrimination of compound tone interrogative pronoun^[16]. We draw the following conclusions:

First, evolving to the warring states period, the interrogative pronouns have an obvious tendency to becoming compound words. The inquiry function mainly focuses on the inquiry character, method, reason and number. Second, the forms of polyphony interrogative pronoun expressions are diversified, and the same function of a question has many forms. Third, part of the complex question pronouns have non-interrogative functions, including those abstract indication like “He Ru”, “Ji He”, “Nai He”, “Ru Zhi He”, and those exclamatory words like “Nai He”, “Ruo Zhi He”, “He Ru”, “Ru Zhi He”, “Ruo He”, and “Ji He”. Interrogative pronouns with non-interrogative functions are caused by the transfer of the sentence from interrogative ones to the presentation or the lamentation ones. Fourth, Chu literatures retained the old character interrogative pronoun “Ru Tai”, but with low frequency.

B. An Overview of the Descended Interrogative Pronouns in the Warring States Period

The following is an introduction to a monograph paper or dissertation that is related to the study of interrogative pronouns in the warring states period. In *The Development and Evolution of ancient Chinese interrogative Pronouns*, Bei Luobei and Wu Fuxiang have studied the development and evolution of interrogative pronouns based on the common descended documents from Western Zhou dynasty to Eastern Han dynasty, pointing out that the ancient Chinese interrogative pronoun is mainly manifested in two aspects: first is the frequency of the change of word item, function and development of the words and the alternations of lexicon; the second is the change of system structure. And they think that with the old question pronouns disappearing gradually in the actual language, the interrogative pronoun system has been adjusted and simplified considerably. The development and evolution of the interrogative pronouns of the ancient Chinese in the past are systematically described and summarized from a macroscopic perspective^[19].

Liu Chunping's dissertation in 2006 was a comprehensive systematic summary of the literature of the warring states period, through quantitative and qualitative analysis, the comparison between history and the temporary, she has studied the number, frequency, inquiry function, syntactic function, temporality and regionality of interrogative pronouns in the warring states period, thus has a comprehensive understanding of interrogative pronouns in the warring states period^[17]. Her paper consists of five parts. The first part is the introduction, which mainly introduces the language materials of the study of the grammar of the warring states period, the present situation and significance of the interrogative pronouns in the warring states period, and also explains the research methods. The second part studies the number, frequency and classification of interrogative pronoun in the warring states period. The third part studies the inquiry function of interrogative pronoun in the warring states period. The fourth part studies the syntactic function of interrogative pronoun in the warring states period. In the fifth part, the author studies the time and region of interrogative pronouns in the warring states period. Liu Chunping's innovation on the research of the pronouns of the literature of the warring states period is

summarized as follows: Firstly, it is a great innovation to focus on the linguistic materials of the warring states period, especially on the combination of the literature of both the descended and unearthed documents in warring states period, which has an accurate statistic numbers, a huge amount of information. Second, there is a clear time of selected warring states corpus, including descended and unearthed documents. Among these descended documents are 9 descended documents: *The Commentary of Zuo*, *The Analects of Confucius*, *The Analects of Mo-tse*, *The Works of Mencius*, *The Works of Xuncius*, *The Works of Chuang Tzu*, *Han Feizi*, *Strategies of the Warring States*, *Mister Lv's Spring and Autumn Annals*, *The Songs of Chu*. Third, the classification of question pronouns is scientific. The syllables are divided into single tone and compound tone interrogative pronoun. There are 10 single tone interrogative pronouns (“Shui”, “Shu”, “He”, “Xi”, “Hu”, “He”, “He”, “Wu”, “An”, “Yan”) and 12 compound interrogative pronouns (“Ru He”, “He Ru”, “Ru Zhi He”, “Ruo He”, “He Ruo”, “RuoZhi He”, “Nai He”, “Ji He”, “Xi Ru”, “Xi Ruo”, “He Ruo”, “Hu Ru”). Generally speaking, Liu Wen's study of the interrogative pronouns of the warring states period is systematic and comprehensive, and her methods and conclusions are worth learning from.

V. CONCLUSION

At present, there are still many limitations on the study of the interrogative pronouns of the Qin dynasty. First of all, the work on the history of grammar is only to summarize the inquiry function of the interrogative pronouns accessorially, but does not make a full description of the grammatic function of the interrogative questions especially the pronouns for the compound questions. For the first time, Weiming Peng proposed that a number of interrogative pronouns with non-interrogative functions have appeared in the warring states period^[16]. Secondly, the scholars who study the history of vocabulary have noticed the trend of the words evolving to polysyllabic words in ancient Chinese. However, scholars have exerted a lot of effort on the semantic description of the common words, while the research on the pronoun of the compound question is still insufficient. Third, although some scholars have made great efforts in the description of the pronoun, the referring range of the corpus is still limited to several common ancient books. It does not combine the comprehensive description of the excavated literature, the description of syntactic distribution nor the discrimination between interrogative pronouns.

To sum up, the situation of the study about the interrogative pronouns in the literature of the warring states period is: There are many studies on the literature of biography, but there is still very rare research corpus combining with the unearthed literature. Secondly, there are still few researches that can combine with contemporary linguistics, especially pragmatics and semantics to study Chinese interrogative words and sentence patterns. Therefore, it is very necessary to study the monosyllabic and polysyllabic interrogative pronouns of unearthed and descended documents of the warring states period.

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