

## The Adjectival Intensifier *hěn* in Mandarin Chinese \*

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**Abstract:** Huang (2006) argues that *hěn* ‘very’, the Mandarin adjective intensifier, is an obligatory type-lifter that transforms simple adjectives to complex adjectives for predicate-hood, as is required by the Property Theory (Chierchia, 1984, 1985). This article studies the other cases where *hěn* is not obligatory and concludes that, in addition to *hěn*-insertion, affixation, and reduplication identified by Huang (2006), the negator *bù* and VP or IP movement can also function as type-lifters for simple adjectives. I further argue that only one type-lifter device is allowed per sentence.

**Keywords:** Mandarin Chinese, *hěn*, adjective, type-lifting, VP movement, IP movement

### 1. The usages of *hěn*

#### 1.1 The obligatory *hěn*

(1) and (2) show that *hěn* is obligatory before an adjective in affirmative sentences (Lü, 1981). Li & Thompson (1981) have reported that, unless stressed, the intensifier function of *hěn* is bleached. Sybesma (1992) calls *hěn* the most neutral positive degree marker. (1) does not necessarily mean that ‘Zhangsan is very tall.’ The insertion of other degree adverbs such as *fēicháng* ‘extraordinarily’, *tèbié* ‘particularly’, *shífēn* ‘quite’, and *tè* ‘especially’ can save (2) from ungrammaticality, but then they must contribute to degree intensification, as shown in (3):

- (1) *Zhāngsān hěn gāo.*  
Zhangsan very tall  
‘Zhangsan is tall.’ or ‘Zhangsan is very tall.’
- (2) \**Zhāngsān gāo.*  
Zhangsan tall  
‘Zhangsan is tall.’

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- (3) *Zhāngsān fēicháng / tèbié/ shífēn / tè gāo.*  
 Zhangsan extraordinarily / particularly / quite / especially tall  
 ‘Zhangsan is extraordinarily / particularly / quite / especially tall.’

The obligatory occurrence of *hěn* suggests that it is more than a semantic marker that specifies the degree of a gradable adjective (Doetjes, 2008). It must have some syntactic properties. One natural assumption is that *hěn* is the adjectival copula, a counterpart of *shì* that links the subject and the nominal predicate, as shown by the contrast in (4):

- (4) a. *Wǒ shì xuéshēng.*      b. \**Wǒ xuéshēng.*  
 I be student                      I student  
 ‘I am a student.’                      ‘I am a student.’

But an A-not-A question test will exclude such an intuition. The A in A-not-A questions can only refer to the main predicate or the auxiliary, be it a modal verb like *néng* ‘can’, a stative verb<sup>①</sup> like *gāo* ‘tall’, or an activity verb like *lái* ‘to come’ (Liu, 2008; Hagstrom, 2005; Ernst, 1994; Huang, 1991) as shown in (5) through (7):

- (5) *Zhāngsān néng bù néng lái?*  
 Zhangsan can not can come  
 ‘Can Zhangsan come?’

- (6) *Zhāngsān gāo bù gāo?*  
 Zhangsan tall not tall  
 ‘Is Zhangsan tall or not?’

- (7) *Zhāngsān lái bù lái?*  
 Zhangsan come not come  
 ‘Does Zhangsan come or not?’

The contrast in (8) suggests that *hěn* cannot be identified as a main predicate as the copula *shì* does:

- (8) \**Zhāngsān hěn bù hěn gāo?*                      *Zhāngsān shì bú shì xuéshēng?*<sup>②</sup>  
 Zhangsan very not very tall                      Zhangsan be not be student  
 ‘Is Zhangsan tall or not?’                      ‘Is Zhangsan a student or not?’

In order to explain the obligatory occurrence of *hěn* in affirmative sentences, Huang (2006) argues that it is a type-lifter, changing the otherwise type <e> or simple adjective *gāo* ‘tall’ into a type <e, t> or complex adjective, so that *hěn gāo* ‘very tall’ can appear in

<sup>①</sup> Adjectives are usually referred to as stative verbs in Mandarin linguistics (Li & Thompson, 1981), though Dixon (2004) and Xu (1998) suggest that Chinese should have adjectives as a separate part of speech. In this paper, I hold that adjectives project their own VPs, just like regular verbs.

<sup>②</sup> As a reviewer points out, the *shì-bú-shì* ‘be-not-be’ in (8) is the A-not-A question form of the copula *shì* ‘to be’ used before the noun *xuéshēng* ‘student’, which is different from the *shì-bú-shì* that forms a B-not-B question (Wu, 1997), with *shì* not functioning as the copula any more, but as part of *shì-bu-shì* that is located in CP as illustrated in (15).

the predicate position as required by the Property Theory (Chierchia, 1984, 1985). To account for such a predicate-type hierarchy, Partee (2004) argues that there is a general processing of languages trying lowest types of predicates first and using higher types only when they are required in order to combine meanings by available compositional rules.

### 1.2 The optional and the prohibited *hěn*

But Huang (2006)'s generalization does not explain why *hěn* is optional in negation, yes-no questions, and contrastive structures as shown in (9) through (11); and why *hěn* is not allowed in comparative structures, comparative correlatives<sup>①</sup>, A-not-A questions, or inchoative structures as shown in (12) through (16)<sup>②</sup>:

- (9) *Zhāngsān bù (hěn) gāo.* (optional in negation)  
 Zhangsan not (very) tall  
 'Zhangsan is not (very) tall.'
- (10) *Zhāngsān (hěn) gāo ma?* (optional in yes-no question)  
 Zhangsan (very) tall Yes.No.Question  
 'Is Zhangsan (very) tall?'
- (11) *Zhāngsān (hěn) gāo, Lìsì (hěn) āi* (optional in contrastive)  
 Zhangsan (very) tall Lisi very short  
 'Zhangsan is (very) tall, but Lisi (very) short.'
- (12) *Zhāngsān bǐ Lìsì (\*hěn) gāo.* (prohibited in comparative)  
 Zhangsan compare Lisi (\*very) tall  
 'Zhangsan is taller than Lisi.'
- (13) *Zhāngsān yuè chī yuè (\*hěn) gāo* (prohibited in comparative correlative)  
 Zhangsan the.more eat the.more (\*very) tall  
 'The more Zhangsan eats, the taller he is.'
- (14) *Zhāngsān (\*hěn) gāo bú gāo?* (prohibited in A-not-A question)  
 Zhangsan (\*very) tall not tall  
 'Is Zhangsan tall or not?'

Compare:

- (15) *Zhāngsān shì-bú-shì hěn gāo?* (allowed in B-not-B question)  
 Zhangsan be-not-be very tall  
 'Is it the case that Zhangsan is very tall?'

<sup>①</sup> Some linguists, e.g. Beck (1997) and McCawley (1988), use the term 'comparative conditional' for the corresponding 'the Comparative...the Comparative' structure in other languages. In this paper, I use the more Chinese-specific 'comparative correlative' as proposed by Liu (2008).

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- (16) *Zhāngsān* (\**hěn*) *gāo le*. (prohibited in inchoative)  
 Zhangsan (\*very) tall Perfective  
 ‘Zhangsan is now tall.’

Huang (2006) uses (17)-(19) to illustrate that only complex adjectives are allowed to appear in the predicate position without *hěn*, and complex adjectives are derived from simple adjectives by either reduplication or affixation (cf. Li & Thompson, 1981).

- (17) *Tā shū -shū -fū -fū de*<sup>①</sup>. vs. \**Tā shūfu*. (reduplication)  
 he comfortable DE he comfortable  
 ‘He is comfy.’ ‘He is comfortable.’
- (18) *Tā hēi-bùliúqīu de*. \**Tā hēi*. (suffixation)  
 he dark-Suffix DE he dark  
 ‘He is pretty dark.’ ‘He is dark.’
- (19) *Tāde shǒu bīng-liáng*. \**Tāde shǒu liáng*. (prefix)  
 His hand ice-cold his hand cold  
 ‘His hands are ice-cold.’ ‘His hands are cold.’

In order to explain its status as a type-lifter, Chui (2000) argues that *hěn* ‘very’ is a clitic attached to the adjacent scalar stative verb, as shown in (20). Unlike its English counterpart ‘very’, for example, *hěn* cannot occur alone.

- (20) Q: *Tā cōngmíng ma?* A: \**hěn (cōngmíng)*.  
 he smart Yes.No.Question very smart  
 ‘Is he smart?’ ‘Very (smart).’

I follow Chui (2000) and expand Huang (2006)’s list of type-lifting tools from reduplication, affixation, *hěn*-cliticization to *bù*-cliticization and VP or IP movement. Not calling *hěn* a prefix is out of the concern that no adjective is formed with *hěn* in it, and later in 2, I will show that there is a distinction between a prefixal *bù* and a clitic *bù*. (21) through (23) further show the differences between *hěn*, the bound-morphemic type-lifter, and other pure adjectival intensifiers; *hěn* must be always attached to an adjective, while *tèbié* ‘extraordinary’, for example, can reduplicate itself for intensity:

- (21) *Tā hěn gāo hěn gāo*.  
 he very tall very tall  
 ‘He is very very tall.’
- (22) \**Tā hěn hěn gāo*.  
 he very very tall  
 ‘He is very very tall.’

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<sup>①</sup> All the reduplicated and suffixed adjectival predicates sound better with the nominalizer *de* attached (Zhu, 1982), which is not discussed in Huang (2006).

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- (23) *Tā tèbié tèbié gāo.*  
 he extraordinarily extraordinarily tall  
 ‘He is extraordinarily extraordinarily tall.’

If we follow Huang (2006), without *hěn*, reduplication, or affixation, the adjectives in (9) through (16) do not qualify as complex adjectives and therefore should not have acted as independent predicates. In the following sections, I will inspect what structurally (9) through (16) share in common.

A reviewer has brought to my attention a very interesting contrast. As seen from the pair of (24) and (25), only the simple stative verb *gāo* ‘tall’ can be nominalized with the suffix *-de*, but not the complex adjectival predicate *hěn-gāo* ‘very tall’:

- (24) *Zhāngsān de gāo duì tā dǎ lánqiú hěn yǒu bāngzhù.*  
 Zhangsan ’s tall to he play basketball very helpful  
 ‘Zhang’s being tall/height is very helpful for his basketball-playing.’
- (25) \**Zhāngsān de hěn gāo duì tā dǎ lánqiú hěn yǒu bāngzhù.*  
 Zhangsan ’s very tall to he play basketball very helpful  
 ‘Zhangsan’s being very tall is very helpful for his basketball-playing.’

I argue that first, as the Property Theory (Chierchia, 1984, 1985) specifies, the reason for type-lifting is to equip a simple adjective like *gāo* ‘tall’ with predicatehood, allowing it to surface in a sentence. Nominalizing an already valid predicate *hěn-gāo* ‘very tall’ is redundant. Another reason I suggest is that *gāo* can function as a noun in Chinese that means ‘height’, but *hěn-gāo* cannot, unable to serve as the nominal subject in (25).

## 2. Negation

Mandarin has four negators, which are sensitive to predicate type: *bù* for individual-level predicates (Kratzer, 1995) that consist of stative verbs, bare activity verbs, and modals, *méi* for stage-level predicates that consist of aspect-marked verbs, *bié* for imperatives, and *méiyǒu* for existential subjects (Liu, 2008; Lin, 2003):

- (26) *Tā bù cōngmíng yě bù xǐhuān wùlǐ.* (*bù* negates individual-level predicates)  
 he not smart also not like physics  
 ‘He is not smart; nor does he like physics.’
- (27) *Wǒ méi qù guò Zhōngguó.* (*méi* negates stage-level predicates  
 I not go Experiential China marked with experiential aspect)  
 ‘I have never been to China.’
- (28) *Bié zǒu!* ‘Don’t go’ (*bié* negates imperatives)
- (29) *Méiyǒu rén lái.* (*méiyǒu* negates existential subjects)  
 no person come  
 ‘No one comes / came.’

Upon closer investigation, *bù* can only be used to negate simple adjectives, but not complex adjectives derived from simple adjectives through reduplication or affixation, as shown in (30) through (33)<sup>①</sup>. Also, if *bù* negates an adjective modified by *hěn*, the *hěn* is no longer a type-lifter, but a degree marker, as can be seen from the translation of (33):

(30) Reduplication:

* <i>Tā bù shū-shū-fu-fu de.</i>	cf. <i>Tā méi shū-shū-fu-fu de.</i>
he not comfortable DE	he not comfortable DE
‘He was not comfortable.’	‘He is not comfy.’

(31) Suffixation:

* <i>Tā bù hēi-bulūqiu de.</i>	cf. <i>Tā méi hēi-bulūqiu de.</i>
he not dark-suffi DE	he not dark DE
‘He is pretty dark.’	‘He was not pretty dark.’

(32) Prefixation:

* <i>Tāde shǒu bù bīng-liáng.</i>	cf. * <i>Tāde shǒu méi bīng-liáng.</i>
his hand not ice-cold	his hand not ice-cold
‘His hands are not icy-cold.’	‘His hands were not icy-cold.’

(33) *Tā bù hěn gāo.*

he not very tall  
 ‘He is not very tall.’ (\*‘He is not tall.’)

As shown in (34) and (35), *bié* and *méi* negate only complex adjectives but not simple ones; for example, *tài* ‘too’ can be considered a prefixal type-lifter, changing *cōngmíng* ‘smart’ into a complex adjective that can be consequently negated by *bié* and *méi*.

(34) * <i>Bié cōngmíng!</i>	<i>Bié tài cōngmíng</i>
don’t smart	don’t too smart
‘Don’t be smart!’	‘Don’t be too smart.’

(35) * <i>Nǐ méi cōngmíng.</i>	<i>Nǐ méi tài cōngmíng</i> <sup>②</sup> .
you not smart	you not too smart
‘You were not smart.’	‘You were not too smart.’

I argue that *bù* is different from the other negators in that it can be a clitic type-lifter

<sup>①</sup> Although the complex adjectives involving reduplication and suffixes can be negated by *méi*, those formed by a nominal-modifier prefix like *bīng* ‘ice’ cannot, unless the adjective is reduplicated. Compare (32) and below:

<i>Tāde shǒu méi bīng-liáng bīng-liáng de.</i>
his hand not ice-cold ice-cold DE
‘His hands were not ice-cold.’

<sup>②</sup> In (35), a proper context for *nǐ méi tài cōngmíng* would be, for example, after a student shows off his tricks of cheating in an exam, his parent said this to criticize his self-deception. At any rate, *nǐ méi tài cōngmíng* sounds more natural than \**nǐ méi cōngmíng*.

itself, an NPI counterpart of *hěn* ‘very’, giving a simple adjective the predicate status by changing it into a complex adjective. I further argue that only one type-lifter is allowed per sentence. Such a requirement explains why (26), a negative sentence, does not require *hěn* and why in (30)-(32), after reduplication and prefixation, *bù* is not allowed any more, and why in (33), *hěn* is interpreted as an intensifier only. Actually, Huang (1988) also treats *bù* as a clitic, which forms an immediate constituent with the first V° element following it. Furthermore, I argue that *hěn*, when used as a degree intensifier, is an NPI.

When *bù* and *hěn* both occur, I argue that the *bù* will end up being the type-lifter, as in the case of (33), and *hěn* is an intensifier. Actually, *bù* always precedes *hěn* and has scope over it, unless *bù* prefixes some of the adjective compounds; for example, *bú-cuò* ‘not bad’ and *bù-wěndìng* ‘unstable’ are fine, but *\*bù-gāo* ‘not tall’, *\*bú-piàoliang* ‘unpretty’, or *\*bú-lèi* ‘untired’ are not. Compare (36) and (37):

(36) \**Tā hěn bù gāo / piàoliang / lèi.*  
she very not tall / pretty / tired  
‘She is very untall / unpretty / untired.’

(37) *Tā hěn bú -cuò / -wěndìng.*  
he very not -bad / - stable  
‘He is pretty good / very unstable.’

Such a distinction can also be seen in the comparative structure. Only a compound like *bù-wěndìng* ‘unstable’ can be the standard for comparison, but not a negated adjective like *bù gāo* ‘not tall’. Compare (38) and (39):

(38) *Wǒ bǐ tā gèng bù wěndìng.*  
I Compare he even not stable.  
‘I am even less stable than he is.’

(39) \**Wǒ bǐ tā gèng bù gāo.*  
I Compare he even not tall  
‘I am even more untall than he is.’

### 3. Movements

What do yes-no questions and contrastive structures share in common, where *hěn* is also optional like in negation, as shown in (10) and (11)? Furthermore, what do comparatives, comparative correlatives, A-not-A questions, and inchoative structures share in common, where *hěn* is prohibited as shown in (12) through (16)?

Judging from their underlying derivations, I argue that examples (9) through (16) each involve some kind of movement, either of the adjectival predicate, i.e. the VP, or of the IP that contains the stative VP. I argue that a movement that involves the adjective is another

way of deriving complex adjectives from simple ones.

I further propose that *hěn* is prohibited when a VP movement is involved, but it is an optional NPI degree-intensifier when an IP movement is involved. The reason is that VP movement is for predicate forming, which therefore excludes *hěn* as an extra type-lifter. But IP movement targets the illocutionary force, like interrogative and comparative, which either applies on the predicate or the degree of the adjectival predicate, and therefore makes *hěn* optional. Now, I survey in greater detail all the cases that involve a movement.

### 3.1 Yes-No questions

Apparently, a yes-no question like (10) involves the movement of the whole IP, complement of CP, to [Spec, CP] to have the interrogative feature checked. In a yes-no question, what is questioned is either the truth value of the predicate or the degree of the truth value of the predicate, cf. Doetjes (2008). The IP movement, therefore, applies only to stative verbs that have achieved already predicatehood; or in other words, the movement itself is a type-lifter, giving the questioned adjective the predicatehood, no longer in need of *hěn* for type-lifting. Consequently, *hěn* is optional, surfacing as a degree intensifier only when the degree of the adjective is questioned.

### 3.2 Contrastive structures

In order to derive the English contrastive structures, Lee (2003) (see also Büring (2007a & b) and Jun, Kim, Lee et al. (2006)) proposes a Contrastive Topic (CT) that is different from Non-contrastive Topic (NCT) in that the former is both topic-marked and contains a focused item, as shown in (40):

(40) [[These]<sub>Focus</sub> examples]<sub>Topic</sub> I found [in Gundel].

Lee (2003) argues that CT construction involves some leftward movement of the topicalized nominal or predicate. According to him, while the nominal CT is located in [Spec, TopicP] in the left periphery, the predicate CPT takes a mid-sentential position, outside a VP, which accounts for the Mandarin V-*shì*-V structure in (41):

(41) *Lái shì lái le, kěshì tā méi dài piào.*  
come be come Perf. but he not bring ticket  
'He indeed came, but forgot to bring the ticket.'

I, however, find that the Chinese contrastive structure (11) is more complicated than (40), because it involves more than one contrast: the one between the subjects *Zhāngsān* and *Lǐsì*, and the one between the predicates *gāo* 'tall' and *ǎi* 'short'. I argue that if the arguments, *Zhāngsān* and *Lǐsì*, are contrasted and one of them moves to CT-P, *hěn* is needed for predicate type-lifting; but if the predicates, *gāo* and *ǎi*, are contrasted and one of them moves to CPT, *hěn* is not allowed, due to the violation of the requirement that no two type-lifters can be used at the same time, in this case, VP movement and *hěn*.

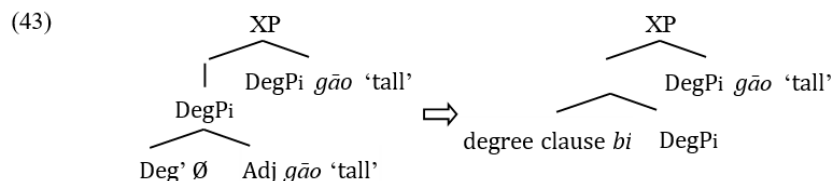


### 3.3 Comparative structures

(42) is the grammatical version of (12), which shows that although a prefix like *gèng* ‘even’ or a suffix like *deduō* ‘a lot’ can be attached to a simple adjective in comparative structures, *hěn* cannot.

- (42) *Zhāngsān bǐ Lǐsǐ gèng gāo.* Or *Zhāngsān bǐ Lǐsǐ gāo-deduō.*  
 Zhangsan compare Lisi even tall Zhangsan compare Lisi tall-a.lot  
 ‘Zhangsan is even taller than Lisi.’ ‘Zhangsan is a lot taller than Lisi.’

Bhatt & Pancheva (2004) suggest a counter cyclic derivation of English comparative structures, which solves the problem of lacking motivation for the extraposition of the degree clause ‘than...’ proposed in the classical literature, cf. Chomsky (1965) and Heim (2000). Bhatt & Pancheva (2004) argue that for the predicate ‘...taller than...’, first the quantificational DegP headed by *-er* undergoes rightward QP to a higher scope position, leaving a copy behind; then, the degree clause is merged as an argument to the QR-ed *-er*. The degree head *-er* is interpreted in its scope position but is pronounced from its base position. Mandarin does not have overt comparative morphology like the English *-er* marked on the adjectives, neither does Mandarin surface structure need to worry about motivation for extraposition of the degree clause. Instead, the adjective in a comparative structure is analytical and is interpreted for both lexical and syntactic information. I argue that, as shown in (43), the adjective in the comparative structure involves a DegP with a zero-marking head and an AdjP complement, where the adjective checks its comparative feature against Deg<sup>o</sup> and later the whole DegP undergoes QR. The degree clause *bǐ... ‘than...’* is merged to the base DegP. If the degree clause is merged to the QR-ed DegP, the surface form would be ‘A *gāo guò* B’, another possible comparative structure in Mandarin and other Chinese dialects:

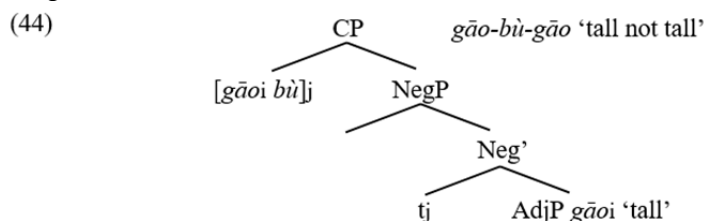


I contend that the QR-ed simple adjective *gāo* ‘tall’ undergoes VP movement, through which, it becomes a complex predicate.

### 3.4 A-not-A questions

Regarding the derivation of an A-not-A question, Huang (1991) argues that A-not-A questions have an INFL, or a VP according Ernst (1994) and Law (2006), with an interrogative feature +Q that is realized by copying a sequence immediately following INFL and then inserting the negator either *bù* or *méi* (cf. Liu, 2008). +Q then moves to its scope position for interpretation at LF (Ernst, 1994). To pinpoint the location and capture

the derivation of +Q and to account for its sensitivity to the Aktionsart of the verb; i.e. there are *A-bù* and *A-méi*, Liu (2008) argues that the main predicate moves to NegP and form an [A-not] template, with the trace undeleted for not being strictly a head movement (cf. Fanselow, Gisbert, and Mahajan, 2000), and then the [A-not] template moves to CP to form an A-not-A question. As shown in (44), the simple adjective *gāo* ‘tall’ first moves to NegP to form the [*gāo-bù*] ‘tall-not’ template, which then further moves to CP to check the force feature of the sentence. The first-step movement of *gāo* has its trace remained in AdjP. Thus, the surface *gāo-bù-gāo* ‘tall not tall’ is achieved. A VP movement is responsible for the type-lifting of the simple adjective *gāo* ‘tall’ and prevents *hěn* from surfacing:



### 3.5 Comparative correlatives

According to von Stechow (1994), Beck (1997), and Culicover & Jackendoff (1999), in English comparative correlatives, *the*’s in the antecedent and consequent clauses move to [Spec, C] with the adjective, in its comparative form, pied-piped to satisfy the [EPP] feature of C. For Mandarin comparative correlatives like (13), Liu (2006) argues that the correlative adverb *yuè* ‘the more’ induces comparison semantically, i.e. the two quantity or degree arguments in the antecedent and consequent clauses respectively. Semantically, Lin (2007) considers *yuè* as a degree adverb adjoined to a VP, which undergoes QR with the simple adjective complement, cf. Doetjes (1997) and Tsao and Hsiao (2002).

- (45) *Zhāngsān yuè chī yuè (\*hěn) gāo.*  
 Zhangsan the.more eat the.more (\*very) tall  
 ‘The more Zhangsan eats, the taller he is.’

Similar QR in comparative correlatives is also identified by Kapetangianni & Taylor (2009) in Greek. Once again, we see the connection between the unavailability of *hěn* and the movement of VP, in this case, again a QR type.

### 3.6 Inchoative structure

Lastly, in inchoative structures, it is obvious that the simple adjective has moved to the specifier position of the Currently-Relevant-Status Phrase (Li & Thompson, 1981), i.e. a CRS-P headed by *le*, to check its inchoative interpretation through a VP movement that is in complementary distribution with *hěn*.

#### 4. Conclusion

I have shown that simple adjectives in Mandarin can function as a predicate, not always with *hěn*, the type-lifter, as argued by Huang (2006). I argue that IP and VP movements can also change a simple adjective into a complex adjective on a par with lexical reduplication and affixation. Furthermore, restricted by the constraint that no two type-lifting techniques be employed at the same time, *hěn* is optional or banned in negation, yes-no questions, contrastive structures, comparative structures, A-not-A questions, comparative correlative structures, and inchoative structures. In negation, I argue that *bù* is the type lifter, which reduces *hěn* only to an optional NPI adjectival intensifier. In yes-no questions and in inchoative structures, with the movement of the whole IP that involves the AdjP or VP, the simple adjective has achieved predicatehood prior to the movement, and therefore *hěn* functions only as an optional intensifier. In the other structures, the movement of the AdjP or VP makes a simple adjective complex and therefore bans the occurrence of *hěn*, another type-lifter.

Linguists have noticed that there is a close connection between the lexical semantics of adjectives and their degree modifiers. For example, Doetjes (2008) contends that there are restrictions over adjectival degree expressions and the categories of adjectives, as can be seen from the differences between the French *trop* and its English counterpart *too*. On the other hand, Pima, a Uto-Aztecan language, has a prefix *s-* that is obligatory like *hěn* in many situations and Jackson (2005) argues that it is a grammaticalized stative marker. The findings in this paper shed light on how adjectival degree modifiers can also reflect more sentential syntactic operations beyond the regional VP or AdjP syntax, to be more specific, through their relation with movements.

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