

The Pragmatic Turn: Articulating Communicative Practice in the *Analects**

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Introduction

One of the shortest sayings by Confucius in the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語) happens to be about language and communication:

辭達而已矣。¹

Words are merely for communication.²

The point Confucius is trying to communicate here, according to Classical Chinese commentators, is that when one speaks or writes, it is enough if one only communicates the substantive meaning; there should be no “decorative and charming words” (*wen yan ci* 文艷辭),³ which are unnecessary embellishments. However, there is something puzzling about Confucius’ utterance. The sentence has five characters, but only two of them (*ci da* 辭達) are what Classical Chinese scholars call *shizi* 實字 (substantive characters), which are characters that have substantive meaning; the remaining three characters (*er yi yi* 而已矣) are what Classical Chinese scholars call *xuzi* 虛字 (empty characters), which are characters that have no substantive meaning.⁴ Isn’t it the case that these three empty characters are exactly the kind of embellishments Confucius deems unnecessary in his saying? If this is true, then isn’t Confucius’ utterance itself an instance of what is known as “performative contradiction”?⁵

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1 *Lunyu* 15.41.

2 All quotations from the *Lunyu* are to book and passage number in Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu* 論語譯注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980). All translations in this paper are by either Simon Leys, *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Norton, 1997), or D. C. Lau, *The Analects* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), with modifications.

3 This phrase is from Kong Anguo’s 孔安國 comment on *Lunyu* 15.41, collected in Ma Guohan 馬國函, *Yubanshanfang ji yishu* 玉函山房輯遺書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1995–99), 1615. See also Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 169.

4 For a useful collection of Classical Chinese scholars’ remarks on *shizi* and *xuzi*, see Zheng Dian 鄭奠 and Mai Meiqiao 麥梅翹, *Gubanyu yufaxue ziliao huibian* 古漢語語法學資料匯編 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1964), 91–104. Wang Niansun 王念孫 says that *xuzi* have no “substantive meaning” (*shiyi* 實義); Wang Yinzhi 王引之 says that they have no “meaning” (*yiyi* 意義). Both are cited on page 2.

5 Here are two examples of performative contradiction: “I am not writing in English,” or “One should always do one’s best, no matter how difficult or unpopular, to express oneself in very short English sentences.”

However, Classical Chinese scholars do not see characters such as *er yi yi* as unnecessary decorations. They insist that even though these characters do not have substantive meaning, they play important roles in communicative practice, for these characters convey what Classical scholars call *kouwen* 口吻 (tone of voice) or *yuyi* 語氣 (tone of speech). Classical scholars have long been aware of the importance of such characters; they have labelled these characters *ci* 辭, *ci* 詞, *yuci* 語辭, *yuzhizhu* 語之助, *yuzhu* 語助, *yuzhuci* 語助辭, *zhuoyuci* 助語辭, or *zhuizi* 助字.⁶ The literal meaning of the last five terms is roughly the same, which is “supportive words”. I shall use the English term “particle” to refer to these terms.⁷

What roles do these particles play in people’s communicative practice in early Chinese texts? Contemporary scholars have assumed that the role of particles is to indicate grammatical mood of sentences, and *yuyi* (voice of speech) has often been translated as “mood”. In this paper, I argue that this is not the case. I believe that *yuyi* does not refer to grammatical features of sentences, but pragmatic features of utterances, such as the voice of speech, and that one of the functions of particles is to indicate the force of the utterances. This is the first of the three theses I argue for in this paper.

The second thesis is that, as force-indicators, particles are not always reliable ones; in Classical Chinese texts, there are cases in which sentences with the same particle may be used to do different things, i.e., they have different forces. In other words, there is no strict correlation between grammatical mood (such as particles) and pragmatic force (what an utterance is doing).

The third thesis deals with the fact that there are many sentences without particles in Classical Chinese texts; obviously the forces of the utterances of these sentences are not indicated by particles. Nevertheless, as I show in this paper, Classical scholars are still able to make judgments about the force of the utterances of these sentences, specifically in the case of interpreting the *Analects*. In general, when they try to articulate the force of utterances, they do not always rely on grammatical or conventional indicators. Rather, they focus more on the pragmatic aspects of communicative practice in the *Analects*, with special attention to the concrete contexts in which the sentences are put to work.

Here is the roadmap of this paper: In Part I, I first introduce the concepts of mood and force. I argue that it is very important to distinguish mood, which is a grammatical and

6 These terms are widely used in the commentaries on the classics. For a useful collection of Classical Chinese scholars’ remarks on them, see Zheng and Mai, *Gubanyu*, 1–90.

7 Francisco Varo 萬濟國 (1627–1687), a Seville-born missionary in China, might have been the first to use the Spanish term “particula” to talk about the supportive words in spoken Chinese; see Francisco Varo, *Francisco Varo’s Grammar of the Mandarin Language, 1703: An English Translation of Arte de la Lengua Mandarina*, ed. and trans. W. South Coblin and Joseph A. Levi (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2000). Sandra Breitenbach believes that Varo invented the term “particula” to talk about a uniquely Chinese linguistic phenomenon, which is *yuzhuci* 語助詞; see Sandra Breitenbach, “Zai zhongguo de xifang yuyanxue chuantong” 在中國的西方語言學傳統, in Zhuo Xiping 卓新平 (ed.), *Xiangyu yu duihua: Mingmo Qingchu Zhong Xi wenhua jiaoliu guoji xueshu yangtaohui wenji* 相遇與對話：明末清初中西文化交流國際學術研討會文集, (Beijing: Zhongjiao wenhua, 2000), 268. I think we should also consider the possibility that Varo might have been influenced by Chinese scholars. The first book-length study of particles, *Zhuoyuci* 助語辭, was published in 1324; it is possible that Varo might have used “particula” to translate Chinese terms such as *ci*, *yuzhuci*, or *zhuoyuci*. In the Appendix of Zheng and Mai’s book, one can find a list of about forty books on particles and “empty characters” written by Classical scholars in the Yuan and Qing dynasty (Zheng and Mai, *Gubanyu*, 320–321).

context-independent feature of sentences, and force, which is a pragmatic and context-dependent feature of utterances. I also argue that there is no strict correlation between the two. Through a close analysis of Classical scholars' studies of the roles of particles, we can see that it is more accurate to say that particles are used to indicate force or *yuqi*, not mood.

In Part II, I give a close examination of Classical Chinese scholars' commentaries on several passages in the *Analects*. Their hermeneutic practice shows that they do not believe that the force of an utterance is determined by grammatical conventions, such as that certain particles must always indicate certain forces. Moreover, in the cases of sentences without particles, Classical scholars are still able to articulate the force of the utterances of these sentences without particles through understanding the utterances in the context of the "total speech situation".

Part I: The Distinction between Mood and Force

1 Mood and Force

The Classical Chinese terms such as *yuqi* or *qi* have often been translated as "mood", rather than "force".⁸ In fact, among contemporary scholars who study Classical Chinese, it is a common practice to use the concept of mood, which is originally used to characterize a grammatical feature of sentences in inflected languages, to talk about certain linguistic phenomena in Classical Chinese that are associated with *yuqi*. For instance, in his influential book *Outline of Classical Chinese Grammar*, Edwin Pulleyblank makes use of the concept of mood throughout the book, even though he is aware that "Classical Chinese in general is regarded as an uninflected language."⁹ This is how he defines the concept of mood:

In inflected language verbs very often have formal distinctions to show the tense (in English, past, present, or future), the aspect (primarily whether and in what sense the situation described is looked on as complete or incomplete), or the mood/modality (terms that can cover various things including the nature of speech-act involved – statement, question, command – and the attitude of the speaker towards the necessity or possibility of what is being said).¹⁰

I think Pulleyblank is right to emphasize that, when we hear a speaker uttering a sentence, it is not enough to know only the literal meaning and the grammatical features of a sentence; one must also know what the speaker is doing with the sentence, i.e., the nature of the speech act involved. To use Pulleyblank's own example, one needs to know whether the speaker is using the sentence to make a statement, to ask a question, to issue a command, or to do something else. Linguists and philosophers call this pragmatic feature the "illocutionary force" (or simply "force") of utterances. However, as we have seen in the passage cited above, Pulleyblank uses "mood" rather than "force" to refer to this pragmatic feature of utterances. This could be very confusing, because the term "mood" is mostly used to refer to a formal or grammatical feature of sentences. This confusion is common among contem-

8 For example, Charles N. Li and Sandra A. Thompson translate the traditional Chinese term *yuqi* as "mood words" in their influential book *Mandarin Chinese: A Functional Reference Grammar* (Berkeley: University of California, 1981), 317. See also Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *Outline of Classical Chinese Grammar* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1995), 112, 116, and 122–125.

9 Pulleyblank, *Outline*, 112.

10 Pulleyblank, *Outline*, 112.

porary scholars of Classical Chinese linguistics. There are two possible explanations: either they do not make the analytic distinction between mood (grammar) and force (pragmatics), or they believe that there is a strict correlation between the two.¹¹

Let us use English, an inflected language, to illustrate the concepts of mood and force before we discuss whether we can apply them to Classical Chinese. The English verb “to sacrifice” has at least four inflections, which means that we can have at least four different sentences:

- (1) He sacrificed to the dead as if they were present.
- (2) He ought to sacrifice to the dead as if they were present.
- (3) Could he sacrifice to the dead as if they were present?
- (4) He could have sacrificed to the dead as if they were present.¹²

In linguistics, we say that these four sentences have the “indicative”, “imperative”, “interrogative” and “subjunctive” mood, respectively. We call the inflected part of the verb “grammatical mood indicator”. For instance, the inflected verb “ought to sacrifice” in (2) is an imperative mood indicator, and the inflected verb “could [he] sacrifice” in (3) is an interrogative mood indicator.

However, when one hears a speaker uttering a sentence, it is not enough to understand just the literal meaning and the grammatical mood of the sentence. Consider the following sentence:

- (5) Can you reach the salt?

If we focus on its grammatical features, we can see clearly that (5) has the same mood as (3), both being interrogative sentences. However, when people utter (5), they usually do not use it to ask a question. The sentence is normally uttered at dining tables; for instance, the person sitting next to you at a dinner party might turn to you and say, “Can you reach the salt?” You understand immediately that she is not really (or not merely) asking a question about whether you have the capacity to reach the salt shaker in front of you. Rather, the speaker is (politely) requesting you to pass the salt. To put it in our technical terms, (5) has the same force as the utterance of the following imperative sentence:

- (6) Please pass the salt.

In other words, when we communicate with one another, we should pay attention to what a speaker is doing with the sentence. Linguists and philosophers use the concept of “illocutionary force” to characterize this pragmatic feature of an utterance.¹³

11 W.A.C.H. Dobson also uses “mood” to mean what we call force; see Dobson, *Late Archaic Chinese* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1959), 97. Linguists in mainland China use *yuqi ci* (mood words) to mean what we call force-indicators. There are also philosophers and linguists of other languages who use “mood” and “force” interchangeably, because they believe that there is a strict correlation between the two. For an account of how the term “mood” is systematically misused by philosophers, see G. P. Baker and P. M. S. Hacker, *Language, Sense and Nonsense: A Critical Investigation into Modern Theories of Language* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 71.

12 We shall come back to these examples when we discuss a sentence from the *Analecst*, *ji ru zai* 祭如在.

13 J. L. Austin is one of the first philosophers of language to use this term; see *How to Do Things with Words*, second edition, edited by J. O. Urmson and M. Sbsà (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1975).

Note that the grammatical moods of (5) and (6) are different: the first is an interrogative sentence, and the second is an imperative sentence. However, both are used to make a request. Apparently, the grammatical mood is not an infallible force-indicator; there is no strict correlation between mood and force.

However, one might still be tempted to believe that there is a “natural” correlation between mood and force. It goes something like this. It seems that indicative sentences can only be used to describe facts, and that interrogative sentences are always being used to ask questions. Therefore, it seems natural to say that, whenever one utters one of the four sentences, (1)-(4), one can use them to do one of the following four things, respectively:

- (1)' describing a certain characteristic of a person;
- (2)' offering an instruction about what one ought to do;
- (3)' asking a question about whether someone has a certain capacity;
- (4)' describing a counterfactual situation [to express regret].

This is what we call the “mood-force correlation thesis”, which is that there is a strict correlation between (1)-(4) and (1)'-(4)', between the grammatical moods of a sentence (the indicative, interrogative, imperative, or subjunctive), and the pragmatic forces of the utterances of the sentence (making an assertion, offering an instruction, asking a question, or describing a counterfactual situation to express regret).

2 The Grammatical Approach to Pragmatics

This thesis provides a justification for a grammatical approach to pragmatics, because the thesis implies that one can know the pragmatic force of the utterance of a sentence by looking at the grammatical mood of the sentence. There are scholars of China who have adopted this grammatical approach to Chinese pragmatics. They focus on the grammatical differences between Chinese and Indo-European languages, and draw conclusions about their pragmatic differences. For example, some scholars have argued that, since Classical Chinese is not an inflected language and since Chinese verbs do not have grammatical moods such as indicative, interrogative, imperative, and subjunctive moods, the Chinese are either incapable of doing things such as describing a fact, asking a question, issuing an instruction, describing a counterfactual situation, or they are incapable of telling them apart. Alfred Bloom's work is a good example of this grammatical approach to pragmatics. He starts with a comparison of the grammar of inflected languages and the grammar of Chinese:

English, like other Indo-European languages, has distinct linguistic structures designed to signal entry into the counterfactual realm – to invite the reader or listener explicitly to shunt aside reality considerations in order to consider a state of affairs known to be false, not for the purpose of simply pretending, but for the express purpose of drawing implications as to what might be or might have been the case if that state of affairs were in fact true.

Austin has probably borrowed the term from Frege, who is the first to introduce the concept of “assertive force” (*behauptende Kraft*).

[T]he Chinese language has no distinct lexical, grammatical, or intonational device to signal entry into the counterfactual realm, to indicate explicitly that the events referred to have definitely not occurred and are being discussed for the purpose only of exploring the might-have-been or the might-be.¹⁴

From this observation about grammar, he derives a conclusion about the pragmatics of Classical Chinese:

[T]he fact that [Classical] Chinese has not offered its speakers incentives for thinking about the world in counterfactual and entifactual ways is likely to have contributed substantially to sustaining an intellectual climate in which these modes of thinking were less likely to arise; but if Chinese speakers at some point in the past had felt a sufficient need to venture into the realm of the counterfactual or the theoretical, the Chinese language would have evolved to accommodate that need, as it is doing today.¹⁵

Chad Hansen's work is another good example of the grammatical approach. In the following passage, which is representative of his arguments, he starts with an observation about the grammar of Classical Chinese, and ends up with a conclusion about the pragmatic function of language:

Classical Chinese does not have explicit descriptive and prescriptive forms. Students of comparative translation, therefore, will find huge chunks of text that one translator renders in declarative English and another in imperative English. Behind this apparent ambiguity, I suggest, lies this assumption about the function of language. *All* language functions to guide behavior.¹⁶

There are two unstated assumptions shared by Bloom's and Hansen's arguments. The first is what we have called the "mood-force correlation thesis". The second is what may be called the "empirical assumption", which is that the Classical Chinese language does not have any linguistic device to indicate or differentiate grammatical moods.

I have argued elsewhere that we can respond to Bloom's and Hansen's empirical assumption on its own ground by showing that there are other grammatical devices such as particles to indicate grammatical mood in Classical Chinese.¹⁷ In the next two sections, I discuss how other scholars address this issue, and I argue that this particle-based approach is still based on grammatical observations, and thus has its limits.

14 Alfred Bloom, *The Linguistic Shaping of Thought: A Study in the Impact of Language on Thinking in China and the West* (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1981), 14 and 16. In his study, Bloom focuses on modern Chinese, but he believes that his conclusions about the lack of counterfactual thinking apply to Classical Chinese. In fact, he claims that modern Chinese has become better than Classical Chinese in this regard (*ibid.*, 59).

15 Bloom, *The Linguistic Shaping*, 59.

16 Chad Hansen, *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1992), 51; the emphasis is Hansen's.

17 See Yang Xiao, "Reading the *Analects* with Davidson: Mood, Force, and Communicative Practice in Early China," in *Davidson's Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy: Constructive Engagement*, ed. Bo Mou (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

3 Classical Chinese Particles as Mood-Indicators

Bloom and Hansen seem to presuppose that inflection is the only way for a language to have mood-indicators. However, Classical Chinese writers use different devices to indicate mood, one of which is through “particles”. In his *Mashi Wentong* 馬氏文通 (Ma’s General Rules of Writing), which was published in 1898, Ma Jianzhong 馬建忠 makes the point that, in Western languages, grammatical mood is indicated by verb inflections, whereas in Chinese it is indicated by *zhuqi* 助字 (particles), and he claims that this phenomenon only exists in Chinese.¹⁸

Christoph Harbsmeier has responded to Bloom by showing that Chinese writers regularly use what he calls “counterfactual particles” such as *wei* 微 to talk about counterfactual situations:

The counterfactual particle *wei* (if it had not been for, but for), on the other hand, like its English paraphrases, is entirely limited to counterfactual usage: the noun mentioned after *wei* must refer to something that is presupposed to have been non-existent.¹⁹

Here is an example from the *Analects* to demonstrate Harbsmeier’s point:²⁰

子貢曰：「管仲非仁者與？桓公殺公子糾，不能死，又相之。」子曰：「管仲相桓公，霸諸侯，一匡天下，民到于今受其賜。微管仲，吾其被髮左衽矣。豈若匹夫匹婦之為諒也，自經於溝瀆，而莫之知也。」²¹

Zigong said: “Kuan Zhong was not a benevolent man. After Duke Huan killed Prince Jiu, not only did he choose to live, but he became a minister of the murderer.” The Master said: “By serving as Duke Huan’s minister, Guan Zhong helped Duke Huan to become the leader of all the feudal lords and set the entire world in order; to this very day, the common people still enjoy the benefits of his deeds. Had it not been for Guan Zhong, we would have been dishevelled savages who fold their robes on the wrong side. Surely his was not the petty faithfulness of the common man or woman who commits suicide in a ditch without anyone taking any notice.”

Here the particle *wei* 微 at the beginning of the clause *wei Guan Zhong* 微管仲 indicates that this clause is describing a counterfactual situation.

However, we can make at least two critiques regarding such a particle-based grammatical response to Bloom and Hansen. First, it seems more accurate to say that particles are used to indicate pragmatic force, rather than grammatical mood.²² Second, particles are fallible force-indicators, and they are not the only means by which we indicate the force of an utterance.

18 Ma Jianzhong 馬建忠, *Mashi wentong duben* 馬氏文通讀本 (Shanghai: Shanghai shiji, 2001), 530.

19 Christoph Harbsmeier, *Science and Civilization in China, Volume 7 Part I: Language and Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998), 117.

20 Harbsmeier gives examples from the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, and the *Zhan guo ce* 戰國策 (ibid., 117).

21 *Lunyu* 14.17.

22 It is not entirely clear whether Harbsmeier’s approach is grammatical. Nevertheless, the heading of the section in which Harbsmeier discusses particle *wei* is “Counterfactual conditional sentences”, which seems to indicate that he sees particles as a mood-indicator of sentences, rather than force-indicator of utterances.

In the next section, we show that, unlike contemporary scholars, Classical Chinese scholars see *yuqi* as indicating pragmatic force, not grammatical mood, and they see particles as force-indicators, not mood-indicators. In Part II, we show that in Classical Chinese texts (here we focus on the *Analects*), there are sentences without particles, which the particle-based approach obviously cannot handle, and we examine how Classical scholars are still able to articulate the force of the utterances of these sentences without particles.

4 Classical Chinese Particles as Force-Indicators

The earliest use of *ci* 辭 as referring to particles can be found in the commentary on the *Analects* by the Western Han scholar Kong Anguo 孔安國 (2nd century BC). The commentary is lost, but in one of the fragments cited by others, Kong makes the following comment on a sentence from the *Analects* that has four ending particles and only three substantive characters:

子游為武城宰。子曰：「女得人焉耳乎哉？」曰：「有澹臺滅明者，行不由徑。非公事，未嘗至於偃之室也。」²³

Ziyou was governor of Wucheng. The Master said: “Have you got the right sort of people there?” Ziyou said: “There is one Tantai Mieming: he takes no shortcuts; he has not once come to my house, except on official business.”

孔注：「焉耳乎哉，皆辭也。」²⁴

Kong Anguo: “*Yan, er, hu, zai*, these are all particles.”

Scholars believe that Lu Yiwei 盧以緯, a Yuan Dynasty scholar, was the first to write a book-length study of the particles.²⁵ We do not know much about the author except that the book was written no later than 1324. In this study, Lu Yiwei examines 128 items: 61 single character particles, 10 complex particles, and 57 phrases.²⁶ Lu Yiwei believes that one should not take the “original literal meaning” (*benzì yì* 本字義) of the particles as their meaning when one interpret the sentences.²⁷

In his book *Xuzi shuo* 虛字說 (On Empty Characters), the Qing scholar Yuan Renlin 袁仁林 says that the function of “empty characters” is to convey *kouwen* 口吻 (tone of voice), which express emotions or feelings.²⁸ He also uses the following terms: *jingshen* 精神 (spirit of vital essence), *yuqi* 語氣 (tone of speech), or *shenqing shengqi* 神情聲氣 (spirit and voice).²⁹ Responding to the popular view that *xu zi wu yi* 虛字無義 (empty characters have no meaning),³⁰ Yuan Renlin insists that, although they might have no substantive meaning, they have

23 *Lunyu* 6.14.

24 Ma Guohan, *Yubanshanfang*, 1591.

25 Lu Yiwei 盧以緯, *Zhuyuci jizhu* 助語辭集注, edited and commented by Wang Kezhong 王可仲 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1988).

26 See Li Kai 李開, *Hanyu yuyan yanjiu shi* 漢語語言研究史 (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu, 1993), 208.

27 Lu Yiwei, *Zhuyuci*, 106.

28 Yuan Renlin, *Xuzi shuo*, edited and commented by Jie Huiquan 解惠全 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1989), 11 and 128. The book was finished in 1710 and published in 1746; see Jie Huiquan’s preface, 1.

29 Yuan Renlin, *Xuzi shuo*, 11 and 128.

30 Yuan Renlin, *Xuzi shuo*, 11.

qi 氣 (breath or voice), and *qi* is their meaning (*qi ji qi yi er* 氣即其義耳).³¹ Other scholars have used various terms to talk about what particles convey; Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) uses *ciqi* 辭氣 (tone of speech) and *shengqi* 聲氣 (tone of voice),³² and Ma Jianzhong uses *shenqing* 神情 (expression and feeling), *ciqi* 詞氣 (tone of speech), *ciqi* 辭氣 (tone of speech), *yuqi* 語氣 (tone of speech), and *shengqi* 聲氣 (tone of voice).³³

If we take a look at how these terms are being used by Classical scholars, it is clear that none of these terms could mean “grammatical mood”. Classical Chinese scholars do identify particles by what we call “grammatical” and “semantic” features; for example, particles are often at the beginning or end of a sentence, and they have no substantive meaning. Nevertheless, if we look at how Chinese scholars talk about the function of particles, we can see clearly that they are not only talking about the grammatical functions of particles, but also their pragmatic functions in composition, persuasion, rhetoric, and argumentation.³⁴ They claim that the main function of particles is to convey the *yuqi*, *ciqi* or *shengqi* of speech, as we have just shown. The closest English terms we can find to translate these terms are “voice”, “tone of voice”, or “spirit of the speech”.³⁵

Let us end this section by closely examining Zhu Xi’s comments on the *Analects* and the *Odes*, in which he uses the term *ciqi* in the sense of tone of voice:

陽貨欲見孔子，孔子不見，歸孔子豚。孔子時其亡也，而往拜之，遇諸塗。謂孔子曰：「來！予與爾言。」曰：「懷其寶而迷其邦，可謂仁乎？」曰：「不可。」「好從事而亟失時，可謂知乎？」曰：「不可。」「日月逝矣，歲不我與。」孔子曰：「諾。吾將仕矣。」³⁶

Yang Huo wanted to see Confucius. Confucius would not see him. Yang Huo sent him a suckling pig. Confucius chose a time when the other was not at home, and called to acknowledge the present. They met on the road.

Yang Huo said to Confucius: “Come! I have something to tell you.” He went on: “Can a man be called virtuous if he keeps his talents for himself while his country is going astray? I do not think so. Can a man be called wise if he is eager to act, yet misses every opportunity to do so? I do not think so. The days and months go by, time is not with us.” Confucius said: “All right, I shall take office.”

Zhu Xi’s comment on Confucius’ answer to Yang Huo is “*ci qi wen hou* 辭氣溫厚” (its tone of voice is warm and genial), and this is because Confucius wants to be polite even though he does not really want to take office from Yang Huo, who is known as a corrupt politi-

31 Yuan Renlin, *Xuzi shuo*, 11.

32 Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1986), 1177, 2134 and Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju*, 104.

33 Ma Jianzhong, *Mashi wentong*, 2, 53, 530, 533, 540, 582, and 624.

34 For a study of the important roles of introductory particles *gu* 故, *shigu* 是故, and *fu* 夫 in the arguments in the *Huainanzi*, see Hans van Ess, “Argument and Persuasion in the First Chapter of *Huainanzi* and its Use of Particles” (contained in the same volume). He criticizes the translators of the French translation of the *Huainanzi* for having left these particles un-translated.

35 For a study of the concepts of *qi* and *wenqi* 文氣 in Classical literary theory, see Zhu Rongzhi 朱榮智, *Wenqi lun yanjiu* 文氣論研究 (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1986).

36 *Lunyu* 17.1.

cian.³⁷ It is clear that *ciqi* here can't be referring to a grammatical feature, but must refer to a pragmatic one; Zhu Xi thinks that Confucius is expressing his politeness through his tone of voice.

In fact, the term *ciqi* also appears in the *Analects*. Here is the passage, and Zhu Xi's comment:

曾子有疾，孟敬子問之。曾子言曰：「鳥之將死，其鳴也哀；人之將死，其言也善。君子所貴乎道者三：動容貌，斯遠暴慢矣；正顏色，斯近信矣；出辭氣，斯遠鄙倍矣。籩豆之事，則有司存。」³⁸

Master Zeng was seriously ill. Lord Mengjing came to visit him. Master Zeng said: "When a bird is about to die, his song is sad; when a man is about to die, his words are good. In following the Way, a gentleman pays special attention to three things: he should eschew rashness and arrogance in his attitude; he should cling to good faith in his expression; he should remove all traces of coarseness and impropriety from his speech and tone of voice. As to the details of liturgy, leave these to the sextons."

朱注：「辭，言語；氣，聲氣也。」³⁹

Zhu Xi: "*Ci* means speech; *qi* means the tone of voice."

Here, Zhu Xi is explaining *ci* and *qi* as meaning speech and voice respectively, and in the corresponding *Analects* passage, Master Zeng is saying that one should pay attention to how one speaks, for one's tone of voice can reveal one's inner vices and virtues.

Our last example is Zhu Xi's use of *ciqi* in his comment on the *Odes*. When commenting on the poem "Yi 抑",⁴⁰ Zhu Xi disagrees with some Han scholars' interpretation, which is that the poem is deriding King Li. Zhu Xi believes that the poem is not deriding someone else, but is self-admonishing:

詩中辭氣，若作自警，甚有理。若作刺厲王，全然不順。⁴¹

If we interpret the tone of the voice of the poem as self-admonishing, it sounds rather convincing; it does not make any sense if we read it as deriding King Li.

Here we can see that Zhu Xi is articulating what the poem is doing, i.e., whether its force is to caution oneself or to deride someone else. It seems that Classical Chinese scholars' concept of *ciqi* or *yuyi* (voice) is a much richer concept than what we call force, although sometime it does mean force. Since particles are indicators of *ciqi*, we can also say that particles are force-indicators.

37 Zhu Xi, *Zhuji yulei*, 1177. Kong Anguo's comment on 17.1 is that Confucius' answer is *shunci* 順辭 (smooth words); see Ma Guohan, *Yubanshanfang*, 1618.

38 *Lunyu* 8.4.

39 Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju*, 104.

40 *Maoshi* 毛詩, no. 256.

41 Zhu Xi, *Zhuji yulei*, 2134.

Part II: Particles as Unreliable Force-Indicators

We have shown that particles are force-indicators. However, as we will see, as force-indicators they are not reliable ones. That is to say, there are cases in which sentences with the same particle may be used to do different things, i.e., having different forces. Moreover, there are sentences without any particles; obviously their forces are not indicated by particles. In this part of the paper, we are going to address the limits of the particle-based approach to understanding force. This approach is limited in at least two ways. First, there is no strict correlation between particle and force. In other words, the force of an utterance is not determined by grammatical conventions that link particle and force. Second, in Classical texts, many sentences have no particles, and one has to make a judgment about their forces according to the specific contexts in which they are being used.

1 Same Particle, Different Forces

In this section, we show that in the *Analects*, there are sentences without a typical subjunctive particle such as *wei*, and yet they can still be used to describe a counterfactual situation (14.6):

[子曰：「君子而不仁者有矣夫，未有小人而仁者也。」]⁴²

孔安國注：「雖曰君子，猶未能備也。」⁴³

Kong Anguo comments: “Even the so-called *junzi* can’t be perfect.”

王弼注：「假君子以甚小人，君子無不仁也。」⁴⁴

Wang Bi comments: “Confucius is assuming [a counterfactual statement about] the *junzi* to criticize the small men. [In fact, Confucius thinks that] there is no *junzi* who is not benevolent.”

Kong Anguo understands the force of Confucius’ utterance as an assertion, whereas Wang Bi takes it as a counterfactual utterance. Hence, there could be two translations of the original passage, depending on whose interpretation of the force of the utterance we adopt. I shall use (14.6KA) to refer to the translation based on Kong Anguo’s interpretation of the force, and (14.6WB) to the translation based on Wang Bi’s interpretation:

(14.6KA) The Master said: “Alas, there have been *junzi* who are not benevolent, but there have never been little men who are benevolent.”

(14.6WB) The Master said: “[Well, perhaps you could assume that] there might have been *junzi* who were not benevolent, but there is absolutely no such thing as a small man who is benevolent.”

Here we can see clearly the importance of figuring out what the force of an utterance is. If we agree with Kong Anguo’s judgment, we should then attribute to Confucius the belief that *junzi* (gentlemen) are not always benevolent. If we accept Wang Bi’s judgment, we should attribute to Confucius an opposite belief, which is that *junzi* (gentlemen) are always benevolent.

42 *Lunyu* 14.6. I leave the passage un-translated for the time being. Two different translations will soon follow.

43 Ma Guohan, *Yubanshanfang*, 1611.

44 Ma Guohan, *Yubanshanfang*, 1699.

Many Classical scholars have commented on this passage. Huang Kan lists the previous commentaries by scholars including Kong Anguo and Wang Bi; however, he does not say which one he endorses.⁴⁵ Zhu Xi endorses a reading that is similar to Kong Anguo's.⁴⁶ Most English translators (James Legge,⁴⁷ Raymond Dawson,⁴⁸ Edward Slingerland,⁴⁹ Bruce and Taeko Brooks⁵⁰) use an English indicative sentence to translate the first sentence; they seem to take it as an assertion. Unlike Wang Bi, they attribute to Confucius the belief that *junzi* are not always benevolent. Arthur Waley, D. C. Lau, and Simon Leys are the three English translators who do not attribute this belief to Confucius. They use English modal words, "it is possible," "we may take it that," and "may" to translate the ending particle *yifu* 矣夫.⁵¹

We do not know why Wang Bi reads Confucius' first utterance as a counterfactual utterance, which enables him to insist that, for Confucius, *junzi* are always benevolent. One possibility is that he takes the ending particle *yifu* as a counterfactual force indicator. However, if we look at all the other seven passages in the *Analects* where *yifu* appears as an ending particle (6.10, 6.27, 9.9, 9.22, 12.15, 15.13, and 15.26), the contexts seem to suggest that none of them should be read as a counterfactual utterance. On the contrary, the pattern seems to be that *yi* is an assertive particle, and *fu* is an exclamatory particle. When they are used together, it indicates that the speaker intends it to be an assertion about a fact, and it also conveys the speaker's act of exclamation.

However, such a survey does not really settle the issue. What our survey of the uses of *yifu* establishes is simply a pattern or tendency, not a norm or standard. It just shows what the average use of *yifu* is. And this does not imply that when a speaker uses a sentence with *yifu*, he or she can never be describing a counterfactual situation in certain circumstances. Indeed, why should we assume that people must always act in a standard and average way? The force of the utterance of a sentence cannot be determined by the grammatical or con-

45 Huang Kan 皇侃, *Lunyu jijie yishu* 論語集解義疏, included in *Lunyu zhuben ji buzheng* 論語注疏及補正 (Taipei: Shijie, 1963), 141.

46 Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju*, 150.

47 This is Legge's translation: "The Master said, 'Superior men, and yet not always virtuous, there have been, alas! But there never has been a mean man, and at the same time, virtuous'" See *Confucian Analects, The Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean*, transl. James Legge (repr. New York: Dover Publications, 1971), 277. Legge uses "alas" to translate the ending particle *yifu*. This shows that he takes it as an exclamatory particle.

48 Dawson's translation is: "There are people who are not humane although they are gentlemen, aren't there?" (Dawson, *Analects*, 54). He uses "aren't there" to translate *yifu*.

49 Slingerland's translation is: "Certainly there are those gentlemen who are not Good" (Slingerland, *Analects*, 156). He uses "certainly" to translate *yifu*.

50 This is Bruce and Taeko Brooks' translation: "The Master said, A gentleman who was not also *ren*: such things have been. But there never was a little man who was *ren*?. Cf. Bruce and Taeko Brooks, *The Original Analects* (New York: Columbia University, 1998), 139. They do not translate *yifu*. Their comment on the passage is: "An admission (we Confucians have had our share of failures) and a complaint (but the nobodies who took our places at court lacked our special qualities)" (139).

51 This is Waley's translation: "The Master said, It is possible to be a true gentleman and yet lack Goodness. But there has never yet existed a Good man who was not a gentleman" Cf. Arthur Waley, *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 181. Lau's translation is: "We may take it that there are cases of gentlemen who are un-benevolent" (Lau, *Analects*, 124). Leys' translation is: "Gentlemen may not always achieve the fullness of humanity" (*Analects of Confucius*, 67).

ventional features of the sentence, nor can it be determined by what people usually do with the sentence. That is to say, when we make our judgments about the force of an utterance, we cannot simply rely on the grammatical features of the sentence such as particles or conventions about the average uses of particles. We have to pay attention to the specific context of the utterance; we must take into account what Austin calls the “total speech situation” in which the speaker utters the sentence.⁵²

If we read the *Analects* as a whole, can we take it as a “total speech situation” to determine the force of *Analects* 14.6? We can find two uses of the term *junzi* (gentlemen) in the *Analects*. The Chinese term *junzi* consists of two characters: *jun* literally means “the ruler”, and *zi* “the son(s)”. In the *Odes*, *junzi* always means “the son(s) of the ruler” or “the aristocrat”. In the *Analects*, the term appears 107 times. In some cases it still has its old literal meaning, referring to the ruler or lord, but in most cases, it refers to a noble or virtuous person that anyone is capable of becoming. Here we see the process of the transformation of a new concept of *junzi* that is no longer a matter of birth, but rather of character.⁵³ If the term *junzi* in *Analects* 14.6 means “virtuous persons”, Wang Bi’s interpretation is right, because a virtuous person is always benevolent. If the term means “ruler” or “lord”, then Kong Anguo’s interpretation is right, because a ruler is not necessarily always benevolent. Both Kong Anguo’s and Wang Bi’s interpretations find support in the *Analects*, and this is a reflection of the fact that the concept of *junzi* is going through a transformation in the text.

2 Sentences without Particles: Assertion or Counterfactual Statement?

In this section, we show that even a sentence without particles can sometimes be used to describe counterfactual situations in certain circumstances. Let us take a close look at how commentators interpret the following passage from the *Analects*:

子曰：「道不行，乘桴浮于海。從我者其由與？」子路聞之喜。子曰：「由也好勇過我，無所取材。」⁵⁴

Here we have a Chinese sentence, *dao bu xing, cheng fu fu yu hai* 道不行，乘桴浮于海, which does not have any particle, let alone subjunctive particles. However, at least two commentators take it as being used to describe a counterfactual situation:

鄭注：「子路信夫子欲行，故言好勇過我也。[...] 以子路不解微言，故戲之耳。」⁵⁵

Zheng Xuan comments: “[The Master thinks that] Zilu believes that Confucius sincerely intends to sail away; this is why the Master says that ‘he is even bolder than I.’ [...] The Master believes that Zilu does not understand the subtle words; this is why he makes fun of him [by uttering the sentence].”

52 The term “total speech situation” is from Austin’s *How to Do Things with Words*, 52 and 148.

53 Here I am indebted to Wing-tsit Chan, who is likely to be the first scholar who emphasizes this transformation; see Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1963), 15.

54 *Lunyu* 5.7. I leave the passage un-translated for the time being. Different translations will soon follow.

55 Ma Guohan, *Yubanshanfang*, 1662. Zheng Xuan’s comment in the Tang hand-written version is slightly different; see Wang Su 王素, *Tang xieben Lunyu Zhengshi zhu jiqi yanjiu* 唐寫本論語鄭氏注及其研究 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1991), 42.

朱注：「夫子浮海，假設之言，且如此說，非是必要去。」⁵⁶

Zhu Xi comments: “It’s a counterfactual utterance when the Master said that he would put out to sea. Although he said so, it does not mean that he necessarily wanted to go away.”

To reformulate Zheng Xuan’s and Zhu Xi’s comments in our terms, we can say that Confucius is aware that Zilu often does not understand the subtle forces of utterances such as counterfactual ones (*jia she zhi yan* 假設之言). Confucius thus anticipates that, when he makes a counterfactual utterance, Zilu would mistake it as an assertion. Seen in this light, one may suggest that one of Confucius’ purposes in the above passage is to teach Zilu, in a rather light-hearted way, something about language (*yan* 言) by making fun of his incapacity to understand the subtle words (*weiyán* 微言) and their subtle purpose (*weizhi* 微旨). Huang Kan has a similar reading of this passage; he comments that Zilu does not understand Confucius’ *weizhi* (subtle purpose), and thus he believes that the Master really intends to leave.⁵⁷ If we adopt these scholars’ interpretation, the passage should then be translated as follows:

The Master said: “If the Way were not to prevail, I would take a raft and put out to sea! I am sure Zilu would accompany me!” Hearing this, Zilu was overjoyed. The Master said: “Zilu loves courage more than I do, and has not learned to make good judgments.”

The English translators who do not translate Confucius’ first utterance in subjunctive mood are Legge, Brooks and Brooks, Leys, and Slingerland.⁵⁸ Lau and Dawson are the two translators who are open to other interpretations. They think that Confucius is not seriously making an assertion or prediction that if the Way does not prevail he will leave on a raft, with Zilu accompanying him. Dawson has the following comment on the raft: “Master Kong is only joking when he suggests this means of transport. He has a dig at his disciple’s thoughtless desire for action.”⁵⁹ Lau uses sentences with subjunctive mood to translate this passage:

The Master said: ‘Should the Way fail to prevail and I were to put to sea on a raft, the one to follow me would, I suppose, be Yu.’ [...]⁶⁰

3 Forces without Grammatical Indicators: Description or Prescription?

In the next two sections we are going to show that, in the *Analects*, we can find utterances whose forces do not have any grammatical indicators, such as particles. In such cases, people rely on the context of the utterances to make judgments about the force of these utterances. In this section, we deal with how scholars make judgments about whether an utterance is a description or prescription. In the next section, we look at how they make judgments about whether an utterance is an assertion or quotation.

56 Zhu Xi, *Zhu Xi yulei*, 718. Elsewhere Zhu Xi cites Cheng Xi’s comment with endorsement; see Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju*, 76.

57 Huang Kan, *Lunyu jijie yishu*, 42.

58 Legge, *Confucian Analects*, 174, Leys, *Analects of Confucius*, 20; Slingerland, *Analects*, 41; Brooks and Brooks, *The Original Analects*, 41; Leys, *Analects of Confucius*, 20; Slingerland, *Analects*, 41.

59 Dawson, *Analects*, 89.

60 Lau, *Analects*, 37.

Now let us start with a sentence from *Analects* 11.22:

(W) 聞斯行之。

If we focus on the sentence itself, without taking into account its context, we can see that there are no particles in (W). Since the character *xing* 行 is used here as a verb, and it has no inflection, we do not know whether its grammatical mood is indicative or imperative, or whether it has any grammatical mood at all. There are many possible interpretations of (W). For example, either of the following two English sentences can be a translation of (W):

(W₁) What has just been learned is being immediately put into practice.

(W₂) What has just been learned should be immediately put into practice.

Note that (W₁) is an indicative English sentence, and (W₂) is an imperative sentence. But the original Chinese sentence (W) does not have any mood indicator; we do not know whether it is indicative or imperative. Now if one only focuses on this grammatical difference between Chinese and English, and if one accepts the mood-force correlation thesis, one would be easily compelled to conclude that people who speak English have no problem distinguishing descriptive and prescriptive forces of utterances, whereas the Chinese cannot tell them apart.

However, (W) appears in a context of *Analects* 11.22, which is a long passage. If we judge the force of (W) based on the context of the entire passage, it is obvious that the force of (W) is to issue an instruction. It is significant that no translator has had difficulty figuring out what the appropriate translation of (W) should be; almost all the English translators interpret (W) as issuing an instruction in *Analects* 11.22. This is probably why they have all chosen to use an English sentence with imperative mood to translate it: “One should practice immediately what one has just learned,” or “Practice immediately what one has just learned.”⁶¹

However, sometimes we may not be able to determine the force of an utterance because we know very little about the context in which the utterance is made. Let us take another example, a very short passage from *Analects* 3.12:

祭如在祭神如神在子曰吾不與祭如不祭⁶²

Let us focus on the first part of it:

(J) 祭如在

Like (W), the sentence (J) allows more than one interpretation of its force. For instance, any of the following sentences could be a possible translation:

(J₁) [Confucius] sacrificed to the dead as if they were present.

(J₂) One should sacrifice to the dead as if they were present.

(J₃) The word *sacrifice* is like the word *present*.

(J₄) “One should sacrifice to the dead as if they were present.”

61 For a more detailed analysis, see Yang Xiao, “How Confucius Does Things with Words: Two Paradigms of Hermeneutic Practice in the *Analects* and Its Exegeses,” *Journal of Asian Studies* (forthcoming).

62 I leave the passage un-punctuated and un-translated for the moment. Translations and punctuations will soon follow.

If we adopt (J₁), then its force is a report about the sincere intention of the Master's ritual acts (as we shall see, this is Zhu Xi's reading). If we adopt (J₂), then it is an instruction about how one should conduct rituals (this is Kong Anguo's reading). (J₃) is Arthur Waley's reading; he imagines that the character *ji* 祭 here is being mentioned or quoted, not used. (J₄) is Zheng Xuan's reading; he believes that the utterance *Ji ru zai* here is not an assertion, but part of a quotation. I shall have more to say about (J₃) and (J₄) in the next section. The important point here is that, compared to *Analects* 11.22, which is a long passage, *Analects* 3.12 is a very short one, and it does not provide enough clues for us to make a conclusive judgment about what the force of (J) really is.

4 Forces without Grammatical Indicators: Assertion or Quotation?

We have just shown how scholars make judgments about whether an utterance without particles is a description or prescription. In this section, we look at how they make judgments about whether an utterance is an assertion or quotation without the help of particles.⁶³

Quotations are an important part of communicative practice in early China; people often use quotations in their speech when they try to persuade people.⁶⁴ It is a common practice in the pre-Qin period to quote from Classical texts such as the *Odes*, or to quote popular sayings or important sayings by the sages, which are what Zhuangzi calls “*zhongyan* 重言” (important quotations).⁶⁵

How do we identify a quotation in Classical texts? This can be a difficult task since there is no quotation mark in Classical Chinese to indicate that a sentence is not being asserted, but quoted. However, there are other linguistic devices to indicate quotations. For example, a reader of the *Analects* knows that the sentences appearing after the following phrases must be quotations:

- 詩云 (in the *Odes*, it is said) in *Analects* 1.15 and 8.3;
- 書云 (in the *Documents*, it is said) in *Analects* 14.40;
- 人之言曰 (there is this saying) in *Analects* 13.15;
- 南人有言曰 (The southerners have a saying) in *Analects* 13.22;
- 昔者...聞諸夫子曰 (once ... heard the Master say) in *Analects* 17.4 and 17.7.

Sometimes this is followed by a question *he wei ye* 何謂也 (what does that mean). Here is one example (14.40):

63 Elsewhere I have argued that there are no grammatical indicators or conventions that can always determine conclusively whether an utterance is an assertion or an ironic remark in Classical Chinese; see Yang Xiao, “Reading the *Analects*.”

64 See Li Ling 李零, *Guodian Chujuan jiaodu ji* 郭店楚簡校讀記 (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 2002), 50–53.

65 It is also a common practice in the pre-Qin period to put important sayings together as a collection. We find collections of important sayings among the Guodian materials; see Jingmenshi bowuguan 荆門市博物館 (ed.), *Guodian Chumu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1998), 193–219. See also Rao Zongyi 饒宗頤, “Cong xin ziliao zhuishuo xiandai qilao de *zhongyan*” 從新資料追溯先代耆老的‘重言’, *Zhongyuan wenwu* 4 (1999), 60–62.

子張曰：「書云：『高宗諒陰，三年不言。』何謂也？」⁶⁶

Zizhang said: “In the *Documents*, it is said: ‘When King Gaozong was mourning his father, he did not speak for three years.’ What does that mean?”

Sometimes *shi yun* or *shu yun* is omitted, and we just have a quotation followed by *he wei ye* 何謂也 (what does that mean). Here is just one example:⁶⁷

子夏問曰：「『巧笑倩兮，美目盼兮，素以為絢兮。』何謂也？」⁶⁸

Zixia asked:

“‘Oh, the dimples of her smile!

Ah, the black and white of her beautiful eyes!

It is on plain white silk that colors shine.’

What is the meaning of these lines?”

Sometimes if sentences are followed by a comment that makes reference to them as a saying, we can also recognize that we have a quotation here:

子曰：「善人為邦百年，亦可以勝殘去殺矣。誠哉是言也！」⁶⁹

The Master said: “‘After a country has been run by good men for a hundred years, it is possible to get the better of cruelty and do away with killing.’ How true is this saying!”

However, sometimes none of these linguistic devices are present:

「不恆其德，或承之羞。」子曰：「不占而已矣。」⁷⁰

“To have virtue without constancy would probably expose one to shame.” Confucius commented: “In such a case there is no point in consulting the oracle.”

子曰：「衣敝緼袍，與衣狐貉者立，而不恥者，其由也與？『不忮不求，何用不臧？』」子路終身誦之。子曰：「是道也，何足以臧？」⁷¹

The Master said: “Only Zilu can stand in his tattered gown by the side of people wearing fine furs without feeling any embarrassment:

‘Without envy and without greed

He must be a good man.”

From then on, Zilu was continually chanting these two lines [from the *Odes*]. The Master said: “Come on, this is not the recipe for perfection.” (9.27)

Many commentators are able to identify *bu heng qi de huo cheng zhi xiu* 不恆其德或承之羞 in *Analects* 13.22 and *bu zhi bu qiu he yong bu zang* 不忮不求何用不臧 in *Analects* 9.27 as quotations, because they identify these lines as quotations from the *Book of Change* and the *Odes*, respectively.⁷²

66 *Lunyü* 14.40.

67 See also *Lunyü* 3.13 and 12.22, which have the same structure.

68 *Lunyü* 3.8.

69 *Lunyü* 13.11.

70 *Lunyü* 13.22.

71 *Lunyü* 9.27.

72 See Ma Guohan, *Yubanshanfang*, 1610 and Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju*, 147 and 115. See also Zhu Xi’s comment on *Lunyü* 14.39 (ibid., 159), and Zheng Xuan’s comment on *Lunyü* 12.10 (Wang Su, *Tangxieben*, 134).

However, this method does not always work either. For example, sometimes the source of the sentences that look like lines from a verse cannot be identified. Here is one example:

「唐棣之華，偏其反而。豈不爾思？室是遠而。」子曰：「未之思也，夫何遠之有？」
73

“The Flowers of the cherry tree

How they wave about!

It’s not that I do not think of you,

But your home is so far away.”

The Master commented: “He did not really think of her. If he did, there is no such thing as being far away.”⁷⁴

This is Lau’s translation, and he takes the part before *zǐ yuē* 子曰 as a quotation. However, as Lau is aware, these lines cannot be found in the present version of the *Odes*.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, judging from the context, we can agree with him that these sentences look like lines from a poem.

Let us now go back to *Analects* 3.12, which is a more complicated passage. As we have seen, there could be radically different translations of the first sentence, *jì rú zài* 祭如在, depending on which interpretation of the force of *jì rú zài* we adopt. This is how Waley punctuates the passage:

「[祭]如[在]，祭神如神在。」子曰：「吾不與祭，如不祭。」

Waley takes the above passage as having the same structure as *Analects* 9.31. That is to say, he thinks that the sentences before *zǐ yuē* are a quotation, and the rest of the passage is Confucius’ comment. His translation is as follows:

Of the saying, “The word ‘sacrifice’ is like the word ‘presence’; one should sacrifice to a spirit as though that spirit was present,” the Master said, “If I am not present at the sacrifice, it is as though there were no sacrifice.”⁷⁶

However, there is no conclusive evidence to support Waley’s reading that the sentences before *zǐ yuē* must be a quotation. In fact, Kong Anguo takes it as consisting of two instructions:

孔注：「祭如在：言事死如事生。祭神如神在：謂祭百神。」⁷⁷

Kong Anguo comments: “*Jì rú zài* is saying that one should treat the dead as if they were alive. *Jì shén rú shén zài* is about how to sacrifice to the gods.”

If we adopt this interpretation, the translation should be as follows:

One should sacrifice to the dead as if they were present. One should sacrifice to the gods as if they were present. [...]

73 *Lunyu* 9.31.

74 Lau, *Analects*, 100.

75 Lau, *Analects*, 100, 16n.

76 Waley, *Analects*, 97. Brooks and Brooks also read the part before *zǐ yuē* as a quotation; see *The Original Analects*, 82.

77 Ma Guohan, *Yubanshanfang*, 1593.

However, Zhu Xi does not take *ji ru zai ji shen ru shen zai* as instructions:

朱注：「愚謂此門人記孔子祭祀之誠意。」⁷⁸

Zhu Xi comments: “I believe this is the students recording the sincere intention of the Master’s ritual acts.”

Legge seems to have adopted Zhu Xi’s interpretation. This is his translation:

He sacrificed to the dead, as if they were present. He sacrificed to the spirits, as if the spirits were present.

The Master said: “I consider my not being present at the sacrifice, as if I did not sacrifice.”⁷⁹

However, Zheng Xuan has a very different take on this passage. This is his comment:

鄭注：「祭如在：時仁 [人] 所存賢聖之言也。祭神如神在：恐時不曉如在之意故為解之。」⁸⁰

Zheng Xuan comments: “*ji ru zai* is a saying by noble and sagely people preserved by Confucius’ contemporaries. Confucius is afraid that they do not understand what *ru zai* means, so he explains its meaning by saying *ji shen ru shen zai*.”

Zheng Xuan does not regard *ji ru zai* as Confucius’ own words, but rather as an important saying made by others, which might have been a popular saying or a *zhongyan* (important quotation). However, unlike Waley, he does not take the entire part before *zhiyue* as a quotation. According to Zheng Xuan, only *ji ru zai* is a quotation; he thinks that *ji shen ru shen zai* is Confucius’ own words, which are Confucius’ elaboration of the meaning of *ji ru zai*. Lau’s translation is consistent with this interpretation:

“Sacrifice as if present” is taken to mean “sacrifice to the gods as if the gods were present.”

The Master, however, said, “Unless I take part in a sacrifice, it is as if I did not sacrifice.”⁸¹

Since we know so little about the context of *Analects* 3.12, it seems to be very difficult for us to determine which interpretation might be the correct one.

Conclusion

I hope this study has shown that Classical Chinese scholars have articulated in various ways one of the pragmatic aspects of communicative practice, namely, the force of utterances, through commenting on the role of particles or the tone of voice in Classical texts such as the *Analects*. This is just one of the first steps towards a systematic study of communicative practice in early Chinese philosophy that emphasizes its pragmatic rather than its logical, grammatical, and semantic aspects.⁸²

78 Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju*, 64; also see *Zhuzi yulei*, 1122.

79 Legge, *Confucian Analects*, 159.

80 Wang Su, *Tangxieben*, 20.

81 Lau, *Analects*, 69. See also Dawson, *Analects*, 10, and Slingerland, *Analects*, 21. Lau, Dawson and Slingerland share Zheng Xuan’s view that *ji shen ru shen zai* is an elaboration of the meaning of *ji ru zai*. But they are not committed to Zheng Xuan’s more specific idea that this is Confucius’ own elaboration.

82 For recent works that take seriously the pragmatic aspect of Chinese Classical scholarship, see Hans-Georg Moeller, “Chinese Language Philosophy and Correlativism,” *Bulletin of the Museum of Far East-*

Based on the evidence presented, we can see that Classical scholars have used particles as force-indicators; they have also tried to articulate the force of utterances without the help of grammatical indicators such as particles. In fact, Classical scholars who have written on particles have explicitly claimed that there is no strict correlation between particles and their pragmatic functions (including force and purpose).⁸³ In his 1324 book on the particles, *Zhuyuci*, Lu Yiwei points out that sentences with the same ending particle can be used to serve different purposes. Based on his analysis of various sentences with the same ending particle *xi* from Classical texts, Lu Yiwei concludes that these sentences are being used to serve different purposes (*xi* 旨), and that one should make judgments about them on a case-by-case basis, one should not generalize through the presence of the ending particle.⁸⁴ In other words, neither the force nor the purpose of the utterances can be determined by the ending particles.

In his 1687 supplementary to Lu Yiwei's book, the Qing scholar Chen Lei 陳雷 makes the following point about the connection between particles and what we call force:

To summarize, [*xi*] is sometimes an exclamatory particle, sometimes an interrogative or doubtful particle, sometimes a particle that indicates the boundary of sentences, sometimes an assertive particle, and sometimes just a particle that indicates the completion of sentences. We should not focus on one single word *xi*; instead we should always look at the context of the entire text.⁸⁵

Indeed, there are abundant examples in Classical Chinese texts to confirm Lu Yiwei's and Chen Lei's points.

To conclude, we have examined sentences with particles, as well as sentences without particles or other grammatical or conventional force-indicators. We have seen how Classical scholars are able to make judgments about the force of the utterances of these sentences regardless of whether there are force-indicators. This shows that the grammatical (or any conventional) features of linguistic expressions cannot determine how they can be used pragmatically, even though they may provide useful clues. This suggests that it is not enough to take the logical, grammatical, and semantic approaches when we study Classical Chinese texts. Following Classical Chinese scholars, we should make the "pragmatic turn", which is to focus directly on the communicative practice in early China by articulating the pragmatic aspects of these texts.

ern Antiquities 72 (2000): 98–103, and Carine Defoort, "Ruling the World with Words: The Idea of *Zhengming* in the *Shizi*," *ibid.*, 73 (2001): 217–42.

83 For an analysis of how Classical scholars articulate the purpose of Confucius' utterances in the *Analects*, see Yang Xiao, "How Confucius Does Things with Words."

84 Lu, *Zhuyuci*, 16.

85 Lu, *Zhuyuci*, 17.