

ภาคแสดงในภาษาจีนและภาษาอังกฤษ

Predicates in Chinese and English

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บทคัดย่อ

ภาคแสดงมีบทบาทอย่างมากในโครงสร้างของประโยคหากปราศจากภาคแสดงแล้วผู้อ่านหรือผู้ที่เราสื่อสารด้วยจะไม่เข้าใจว่าประธานทำอะไร ครอบครองอะไรหรืออยู่ในสภาพเช่นไร ในบางภาษา อาทิ ภาษาอังกฤษหากปราศจากภาคแสดงแล้วประโยคที่สมบูรณ์ไม่สามารถก่อบุได้ เพื่อที่จะเห็นภาพกว้างของภาคแสดงในภาษาได้อย่างชัดเจน บทความวิชาการนี้ต้องการศึกษาภาคแสดงในภาษาจีนและภาษาอังกฤษโดยเน้นที่โครงสร้างทางไวยากรณ์มากกว่าในเชิงความหมายหรือการใช้เนื่องจากเมื่อเริ่มเรียนภาษาต่างประเทศผู้เรียนจะเริ่มเรียนภาษาจากโครงสร้างไวยากรณ์ก่อน นอกจากนี้บทความนี้ยังนำเสนอความเหมือนและความต่างของภาคแสดงของทั้งสองภาษา ในส่วนสุดท้ายของบทความมีข้อเสนอแนะแก่ครูผู้สอนในเรื่องการใช้โครงสร้างไวยากรณ์ในภาษาที่สองในห้องเรียนโดยเน้นที่ภาษาจีนสำหรับผู้เริ่มเรียนภาษา

คำสำคัญ: โครงสร้าง, ภาคแสดง, ภาษาจีน, ภาษาอังกฤษ

Abstract

The predicate plays an important role in a sentence structure. Without it, the reader or hearer does not understand what the subject does, possesses, or is. In some languages such as English, without the predicate, a complete sentence cannot be constructed. To draw an overall picture of predicates, this academic paper aims to investigate the predicates in Chinese and English. The main focus is placed on their forms rather than meanings and uses, since when a learner starts learning a new language, s/he is initially introduced to the form before the other two elements are taken into account. Besides the forms of predicates, this academic paper also presents the similarities and differences between the two languages. The final part covers the pedagogical implications to pave the way for teachers to employ the forms of second language predicates (L2), specifically Chinese, to a new language learner.

Keywords: Forms, Predicates, Chinese, English

Introduction

In general, a sentence consists of a subject and a predicate. In many languages, a subject can be omitted for some reasons. To illustrate, it is so common in Chinese to remove the subject. For instance, 你喜欢吃苹果吗? nǐ xǐhuan chī píngguǒ ma? “Do you like to have an apple/apples?” The reply is: 喜欢。xǐhuan. “(I) like to have it/them”. 要不要这个? Yào bu yào zhèi ge? “Do you want this?” The hearer can response: 要。Yào. “(I) want to have it”. In English, a subject can be omitted as well when people give an order or make a request to someone as in, “Do your homework now”, “Call me back, please”. The subject “you” is omitted, particularly in an imperative sentence when the speaker tells the hearer what to do. Thus, a sentence subject in the two languages can be omitted in some cases; in other words, subjectless sentences do exist. However, the predicate is another part of sentence structure. Playing a significant role to tell what subject is, has, or does, the predicate always exists in a sentence. Its elements are different from one language to another. In this paper, the predicates, particularly in simple sentences in Chinese and English are investigated.

The focus is placed on their forms in both languages since understanding basic forms of the language can be a stepping stone for any language learners who start learning one of the two languages as either their second or third language, respectively. It should be noted that when analyzing sentences, linguists focus on the relationship among three dimensions—grammatical or syntactic (expression), pragmatic (context), and semantic (meaning) (Celce–Murcia & Larsen–Freeman, 1999; Finegan, 2008; Larsen–Freeman, 2001). The parallels among the three dimensions, namely given/new and topic/comment, are made. Instead, the focus in this paper is on only a syntactic aspect, particularly, the form of predicates in the two languages. To paint a clear picture of both languages, their forms are summarized to reveal the differences and similarities among them. The final part of the paper covers a pedagogical implication to use the predicates, particularly in teaching Thai students whose majors or minors are Chinese.

The Definition of Predicates

According to Crystal, a predicate refers to “a major constituent of sentence structure” (2008: 318). This part always comes with other obligatory constituents or the subject of the sentence. Below are some examples.

- (1) Somchai **walked**.
- (2) Somchai **is very happy now**.
- (3) Somchai **has many friends**.

In the three sentences, the term “Somchai” functions as the subject. The rest or the bold parts are the predicate. Why do sentences need the predicates? The answer is the predicates tell the reader or speaker what the subject does, what the subject is like, and what the subject has. Thus, the major function of predicates is to complete an idea about the subject. To be more precise, the predicates in (1) describe what the subject (Somchai) does. In (2), the predicate identifies what the subject feels or is like at the moment. Finally, what the subject has is showed in (3). The simplest way to find the predicate is: all other parts of the sentence except the subject. In some languages such as English, the predicates are marked clearly. In other words, the English predicates must begin with a verb (see the three sentences above).

However, in many languages, the predicates have many forms. Thus, the next part explores the predicates in Chinese and English.

Forms of Predicates in Chinese and English

In this part, predicates in Chinese, and English are investigated, respectively. To draw a clearer picture of predicates, related examples in the two languages are provided.

Predicates in Chinese

Most Chinese sentences are constructed in a linear pattern (Academic Division, Mandarin Press, 2015). The most basic sentence structure consists of a subject, a verb, and an object. If a standard sentence pattern is applied, a sentence includes a subject and a predicate. The Chinese predicate covers five elements, namely an adverbial adjunct (or a verb modifier), a verb, a complement, an attributive (or a noun modifier), and a noun. Specific terms in parenthesis are used to simplify the linguistic terms. Below is an example. The predicates are in bold letters.

- (4) 我 妹妹 去年 爱 上了 他 哥哥
 wǒ mèimei qùnián ài shàng le tā gēge
 my sister last year love his brother

My younger sister fell in love with his elder brother last year.

去年 (qùnián last year) functions as an adverbial adjunct. 爱 (ài love) is the main verb. 上了 (shàng le) is a complement which 了 signifies the past complete event particle. 他 (tā his) is an attributive; 哥哥 (gēge elder brother) is a noun. This sentence structure can be applied to a more complex structure as in TABLE 2.

Table 2 A Chinese sample sentence

Subject				Predicate		
attributive (a noun modifier)	noun	adverbial adjunct (a verb modifier)	verb	complement	attributive (a noun modifier)	noun
我 (wǒ)	朋友 (péngyou)	三年前 (sān nián qián)	来了 (lái le)	一次 (yí cì)	他向往已久 的 (tā xiàngwǎng yǐjiǔ de)	泰国 (Tàiguó)
I	friend	three years ago	come + past particle	one time	he dreams of visiting	Thailan d

Three years ago my friend first came to Thailand where he had dreamed of visiting. (2015:120)

Nonetheless, Shei (2014) goes slightly beyond other scholars. That is, besides the structure above, he additionally identifies that the Chinese predicates can have either an adjective/adverb phrase or a nominal phrase. This type of sentence is called a verbless sentence. Below are some sample sentences.

- (5) 这个 话题 很 热
 Zhège huàtí hě rè
 this topic very hot
 This topic is very hot. (2014: 107)

The sentence in (5) represents a verbless sentence. Yang (2006 a) posits that a sentence with an adjective as the predicate is used to describe or evaluate someone, something, or a state of affairs. A predicate adjective phrase always comes with an intensifier (很 in this case); the predicate adjective is also regarded as the primary form of a verbless sentence in Chinese. Ross (2009) claims that even though adjective stative

verbs are not preceded by a helping verb like the verb “to be” in English, the verb shì (是) may precede an adjective stative verb in some situations, particularly for contrastive emphasis. Besides adjective phrases, nominal phrases related to location and time and prepositional phrases related to numbers share the same category of verbless sentence, as in (6) and (7).

- (6) 台湾 在 太平洋 西方
 Táiwān zài Tàipíngyáng xīfāng
 Taiwan at Pacific west-side
 Taiwan (is located) at the west side of the Pacific Ocean. (2014: 108)

In (6), Shei treats zài (在) as a noun phrase Tàipíngyáng xīfāng (太平洋西方) as a prepositional phrase. As a result, no verb exists in this sentence. However, (6) might not draw a clear-cut picture of a verbless sentence since the term “在 (zài)” can function as a verb (Ren, 2015; Yang, 2006). Below is a dialogue from Yang (2006: 76).

- A: 王老师在吗? 我是他的学生。
 (Wáng lǎo shī zài ma?) (Wǒ shì tā de xuéshēng.)
 Where is Teacher Wang? I am his student.
- B: 他不在。 他在家呢。
 (Tā bú zài.) (Tā zài jiā ne.)
 He is not here. He is at home.

Another verbless sentence is showed in (7), which only a nominal phrase exists in the predicate.

- (7) 我的 生日 一九九七 年 六月 三十 日
 wǒde shēngrì yījiǔjīqī nián liù yuè sānshí rì
 my birthday 1997 year 6 month 30 day
 My birthdate (is) June 30, 1997. (2014: 108)

We do not completely agree with Shei in the birthday case. His sample sentence in (7) is possible but it is very rare in everyday conversation. It is so acceptable to have the “shì” here. In fact, Yang (2006 b) seems to provide a more tangible form of verbless sentence in that a sentence with a nominal predicate is employed to express time, price, date, amount, weather, age, or one’s native place. For example, if someone asks about Helen’s age, the answer can have no verb in a complete sentence, as in **海伦十七岁**。(Helen is seventeen years old).

A subjectless sentence is also found in Chinese, as in (8). In English, imperative sentences has no subjects since the subject “you” is omitted. Chinese seems to share the same feature as English in this case.

- (8) **不要 说话**
 búyào shuōhuà
 not-want say-words
 Do not speak. (2014: 110)

However, Chinese also goes far beyond English in that the first pronominal subject “I” and “we” can be omitted. English might have this type of sentence but it is very informal such as “*need to grab some beers real quick*”. Below are more related Chinese examples.

- (9) **干杯**
 gān bēi
 dry glass
 (We) Bottoms up! (2014: 111)

- (10) **好 久 没 来 了**
 hǎo jiǔ méi lái le
 very-long not come past particle
 (I) have not come here for a long time. (2014: 111)

In (9) and (10), the first subject pronouns, *we* and *I*, are omitted, respectively. The first personal pronoun omission is widely found and very common in Chinese. Shei claims that the hidden subjects in subjectless sentences can be any type of pronouns; they can be first, second, or even third pronominal pronouns. When compared to other Chinese scholars, Shei has extensive studies on both verbless and subjectless sentences. Other Chinese scholars who classify predicates in Chinese are Li & Cheng (1994). They state that the predicate in Chinese can be classified into ten types, namely verbs, adjectives, nouns, numerals, pronouns, coordinative phrases, subject–predicate phrases, endocentric phrases, numeral–measure word phrases, and set phrases. Here are some examples from Dejin & Meizhen's (1994) work.

Verb:

- (11) 老师 教 学生 学
 lǎoshī jiāo xuéshēng xué
 teacher teach student learn
 The teacher teaches. The student learns. (1994: 242)

Adjective:

- (12) 那个 故事 很 可笑
 nàge gùshi hě kěxiào
 that story very funny
 That story is very funny. (1994: 242)

Noun:

- (13) 明天 新年
 míngtiān xīnnián
 tomorrow new year
 Tomorrow is New Year's Day. (1994: 242)

Numerals:

- (14) 他 三十
tā sānshí
he 30
He is 30 years old. (1994: 242)

Pronouns:

- (15) 他 的 发音 怎么样?
tā de fāyīn zěnmeyàng
he possessive marker pronunciation question pronoun
How is his pronunciation? (1994: 243)

Coordinative phrases:

- (16) 那个 孩子 活泼 可爱
nàge háizi huópō kě'ài
that kid active adorable
That kid is active and adorable. (1994: 243)

Coordinative phrases refer to a sequence of two words that share the same part of speech. If the first word is an adjective, the second word must be an adjective as in (16). If the first word is a verb, the second word must be a verb as in (17).

- (17) 我们 已经 复习 预习 了
wǒmen yǐjīng fùxí yùxí le
we already review preview past tense marker
We already reviewed it and previewed it. (1994: 243)

Subject–predicate phrases:

A predicate consists of a subject–predicate structure. Some scholars call it a topic–comment structure.

(18)	她	眼睛	很	大
	tā	yǎnjīng	hě	dà
	she	eye	very	big

Her eyes are very big. (1994: 243)

她 (tā) is a subject. 眼睛很大 (yǎnjīng hě dà) alone can function as a sentence.

Endocentric phrases:

The linguistic term ‘endocentric’ refers to a compound term in which the head is the major element and another term is an optional element. The former is a required part and can stand alone. The latter is a subordinate element. For example, in the English sentence “There is *wet paint* on the bench”, the term *paint* is the head; the term *wet* is an optional part. Here is a Chinese sentence related to an endocentric phrase.

(19)	他	北京	人
	tā	Běijīng	rén
	he	Beijing	people

He is Beijing people. (1994: 243)

Numeral–measure word phrases:

It is very straight–forward as its name. A predicate consists of a number and a measure word or classifier, as in (20).

(20)	这件	毛衣	三十	块
	zhèjiàn	máoyī	sānshí	kuài
	this	sweater	30	Yuan.

This sweater is 30 Yuan. (1994: 243)

Set phrases:

A set phrase refers to a phrase that is used in a certain order. It is a culturally accepted phrase. A set phrase can function as an idiom or a sequence of words with a unique meaning. For example, the phrase “cross the line” means to behave or act in an unacceptable manner.

- (21) 他 对 朋友 一视同仁
tā duì péngyou yíshìtóng rén
he toward friend one-respect-same-person

He treats his friends equally. (1994: 243)

一视同仁 (yíshìtóng rén) is not only a set phrase but also a Chinese idiom, meaning to treat everyone equally favorably or not to discriminate between people.

Predicates in English

Unlike the other two languages, the English language reveals some obvious elements in its predicate. That is, the English predicate must have a verb as a major requirement. In other words, the most important constituent of the predicate is the verb which describes the subject or tells what the subject does, has, is like. The verb can be in many forms: regular verbs (play, want, etc), irregular verbs (go, speak, etc), or auxiliary /helping verbs (will, would, can, could, etc). In general, the predicates are always preceded by the sentence subjects. However, English inversion structures turn things around. In other words, the predicates come before the subjects. This type of structure is call a non-canonical structure. Here is an example.

- (22) Fred entered the kitchen and looked around. *On the top of the refrigerator was a potted plant.* (Birner, 2004, 59).

Two sentences are presented in (22). In the first sentence, the subject is *Fred*; the predicate is *entered the kitchen and looked around*. Obviously, the predicate, specifically the verb, is preceded by the subject. In the second one, the subject is *a potted plant*; the predicate is the rest. In this case, the predicate appears before the subject. It can be the other way around or in a canonical structure where the subject come first—*A potted plant was on the top of the refrigerator*. For a pragmatic reason, an inversion

structure is better in this case. It will be beyond the focus of this study to explore why the non-canonical type is better. However, no matter what English word order is, the verb in the predicate part must exist. It is noted that the English predicates can have a verb with one of these: adjectives, adverb, prepositional phrases, and clauses to enlarge them. Based on a phrase structure rule, Celce–Murcia & Larsen–Freeman (1999: 98) treat the predicate as a verb phrase. The phrase structure rule also classifies other types of syntactic categories such as a noun phrase, a verb phrase, a prepositional phrase, and the like in human mind. Both scholars provide structural possibilities of the predicate or a verb phrase as in Figure 1.

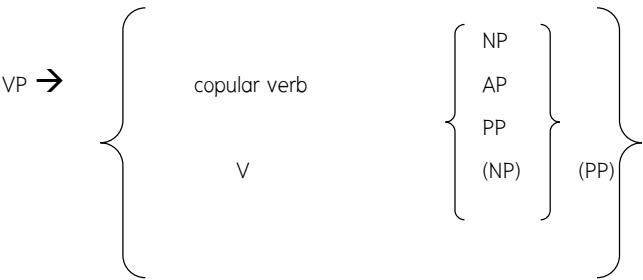


Figure 1 Structural possibilities of English predicates

A copular verb refers to a “be” verb (is, am, are, was, were); NP refers to a noun phrase; AP means an adjective phrase; PP represents a prepositional phrase. Related sentences are below.

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| (23) John is a teacher . | (copular verb + NP) |
| (24) Alice is very pretty . | (copular verb + AP) |
| (25) The students are in the room . | (copular verb + PP) |
| (26) Steve snores . | (Verb) |
| (27) He gave the money to Sally . | (Verb + NP + PP) |

(1999, 98)

However, interestingly their framework can be applied to some complex sentences. To illustrate, Azar (2002) posits that the predicate can be in a clausal structure as in the underlined part in (28)–(31).

(28) I know where Sue lives. (2002, 239)

(29) Please tell me what happened. (2002, 239)

(30) I wonder if she needs help. (2002, 243)

(31) I like the people who live next to me. (2002, 270)

According to the sentences above, (28)–(30) refer to a noun clause structure; it can function as a noun. Put simply, this dependent clause can be a subject or object of the sentence. They are treated as a noun phrase (NP). Nonetheless, sentence (31) is in the form of an adjective clause; it modifies the term “people”. In this case, the structure of predicate is still V+ NP. So far, Celce–Murcia & Larsen–Freeman’s framework in FIGURE 1 has still been compatible with examples (28)–(30)

The predicates can have gerunds and infinitives as in the underlined part in (32) and (33). We might come across both in our everyday conversations. Some of them are: *Seeing is believing*; *To love is to share*; *Love is sharing*. The two examples below are from Schmidt (2015) to confirm that gerunds and infinitives function as a noun.

(32) Tight collars restrict breathing.

(33) Workers need to breathe easily.

Again, (32) and (33) reflect that the predicate consists of a verb and either a gerund or an infinitive. In sum, to see English predicates in a clear picture, applying a verb phrase based on phrase structure rules seems practical to novice language learners. From the sentence samples, we can see that a predicate in the form of a verb phrase can consists of a verb alone or a verb followed by a noun phrase, and some other possibilities. To draw a conclusion as to the predicates in the two languages, see TABLE 3 below.

Table 3 A Comparison between the two languages

Similarities	Differences
Both languages share the same basic sentence structure (S + V)	English does not have verbless sentences, but Chinese does.
Subjectless sentences do exist in both languages.	English adjectives cannot function as a verb, however; some Chinese adjectives can.
The predicate can have only either a verb or other elements such as an object, a complement, etc.	

Pedagogical Implication on Predicates

To teach language grammar to beginners or adult learners can bring us back to a traditional style, namely “Focus on Forms”. One of its positive sides is that the teachers do not need to worry much about learners’ background knowledge, needs, communicative competence, and the like. It is a one-size-fits-all approach. A question is: how do teachers make “Focus on Forms” more applicable? To teach predicates effectively, we believe in deductive instruction, in which the presentation of rules is firstly introduced and how the rules are applied with related examples comes later. We argue that this type of instruction is suitable for a few reasons. For one, language learners are able to see the grammatical structures with their basic rules directly and obviously to acquire the predicates. For another, the deductive instruction reduces some pressure when new things are introduced to the students. They do not have to find out the grammatical structures during the activities. For the last reason, it is a more teacher-centered approach since the teachers, before taking on a facilitator role, are mainly a primary information giver who is adept in the field. The next question is: how do the teachers make the deductive instruction tangible? In principle, stages in grammar teaching can be divided into four parts: presentation, production, communicative practice, and teacher feedback (Celce-Murcia and Hilles, 1988). We modify and simplify their principles to have simply three major stages of teaching predicates: presentation, practice, and production.

Assume that we are teaching native Thai English major students or Thai university students in an international college who learn Chinese as a foreign language. In this case, Chinese is either their minor or elective course.

Presentation

The presentation part deals with what teachers will lecture in class. Clear rules and related examples are presented. The teacher can start with the structure of Thai predicates to make the learners understand basic structure of predicates in their own language. Begin with basic Thai predicates, which consist of either intransitive or transitive one. Choose related sample sentences from Thai grammar textbooks. Here we chose some from Ministry of Education. For examples, วิทยุเสีย (the radio was broken); แมวตะครุบหนู (a cat catches a mouse) (2009:13). The predicates are obviously located after the subjects. One is without an object; the other has the object. Then, make a connection to the English sentences. Show both languages on the board to ensure that the students do follow the class lesson plan. Based on our teaching experience, Thai adult learners are familiar with their own language and English predicates whose verbs must appear in sentences. Then, move on to the Chinese sentences with sharing the same feature as both Thai and English. After students are familiar with sentences with predicates. It is about time to introduce some unique aspect of Chinese. To illustrate, 今天我四岁. “jīntiān wǒ sì suì le” (Today I am four years old). In this case, a verb phrase does not exist, but it is regarded as a complete sentence. However, the teachers need to emphasize that not all type of nouns can function as a predicate. Only a nominal phrase with time, price, date, amount, weather, age, or one’s native place does the trick. In the introduction part or the presentation step, the teacher should focus on form and explain or demonstrate how predicate structures are formed in both languages. To ensure that students stay on track or follow the class lessons well, the teacher show written models on the board or in distributed handouts.

Practice

In the practice stage, teachers should lead the students to put what they have learned in the presentation part into action. Start simple but interesting as in the following dialogue.

Teacher: 你的午饭怎么样? (How is your lunch?)

Nǐde wǔ fàn zěnmeyàng?

Student: 很好吃。 /还可以。 (It is delicious; it is ok)

hěnhǎochī / hái kěyǐ.

Then, the teachers gradually step up the level of difficulty. That is, the students might be asked by a teacher to tell the time.

Teacher: 现在几点? (What time is it now?)

Xiànzài jǐ diǎn?

Students: 现在三点。 (It is 3 o'clock now.)

Xiànzài sāndiǎn.

Besides the dialogue between a teacher and a students. A translation task is highly recommended to launch in the class. Have students translate from English to Chinese to elicit their production skill to reflect how much they understand this type of sentence. We have found that Thai students always make a mistake. Do not be surprised if some students say: 现在是三点。 “Xiànzài shì sāndiǎn” In the beginning step, learners might be familiar with having a ‘be’ verb in a sentence. The teachers might go back to the previous lesson what they have to be aware of in Chinese. In other words, a Chinese sentence might not have a verb phrase, but it is still treated as a complete sentences. In addition, the teacher might add some extra explanation about how to use it properly in that “shì (是)” is used when people talk about someone’s profession, identity or nationality. The key part in this stage is that the students make use of the knowledge presented in the first stage. To remind them this type of mistake, introduce a clip from YouTube (under the topic of ‘common mistakes in Chinese’) to the students to be aware of it.

Production

This final stage focuses on having learners use the predicates in a less controlled way with the help of less controlled activities. The teachers can have students perform role-playing to prepare learners for real-life communication, apply what they learn into action, and boost self-confidence. Allow students to find a partner and come up with a dialogue between two people talking about certain things such as checking into a hotel, giving directions to a taxi driver, ordering a meal, and the like. Inform each student to have 5–6 of his or her own lines. It is acceptable to use index cards with written cues; this helps learners know what and when to speak. This type of activity stimulates involvement in a relatively risk-free environment. Another way to see production is to have students write an email to their friends, family members, and a beloved one. To be more precise, it can be a quick message containing a few sentences to a friend asking about lunch. Try to have learners use the language in a less formal situation or casual setting rather than business or university setting. It is true that a message to a teacher is different from a message to a friend or family member in terms of level of formality, different vocabularies, as well as different attention to the grammar. Since writing is a difficult skill and learners are in the beginning steps of learning a new language, they can get upset or discouraged easily. Do remind them that this is a learning exercise to reduce the pressure on them. The other activity can be a translation task (from English to Chinese) to allow them use the target language (Chinese in this case) correctly. It can be in the form of homework or a classroom activity. The instructor have the students do the task either in classroom or at home. The product will reflect how much English influences their target language. Then, the instructor can raise their awareness of the differences between the two languages in order to overcome the problem of misuse of the predicates (see a sample of translation task in appendix).

Finally, teaching predicates is a part of grammar teaching. Focusing on grammar rules or linguistic forms does help students. The researchers do agree with Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999)'s idea in that grammar teaching consists of three dimensions, namely form, function, and meaning, as in FIGURE 2 below.

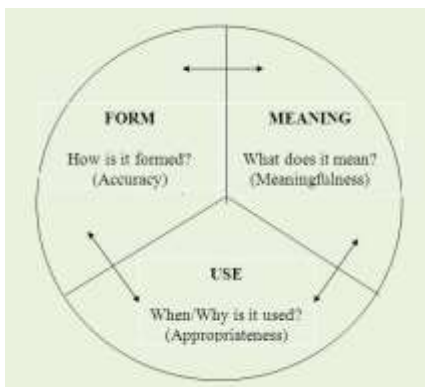


Figure 2 Three dimensions of grammar teaching

Celce–Murcia and Larsen–Freeman (1999, 4)

It is true that language is much more than form or grammar rules. The teaching can be not only boring, but also ill-served if only grammar rules are taught in class. We believe that form, meaning, and use should go hand in hand. As a result, after learning the forms of predicates, the teacher should introduce the other two dimensions (meaning and use) to the learners.

Conclusions

Understanding forms of predicates in Chinese and English is very helpful and useful. For one important reason, it can raise awareness of both teachers and students to see some similarities and differences among the two languages. For another reason, it can be a significant challenge for a teacher to make a connection between one and another language when the teacher has his/her students exposed to the predicates in a new language. However, try to begin with predicates in the students' mother tongue or something the learners are familiar with before the teacher introduces the learners to a new language or a second language. Students tend to do well and have less pressure when dealing with the forms which share the same feature as those in their native language. In other words, one (or a native language) facilitates a learning and teaching process of the other (a new language). Nonetheless, encourage them to pay extra

attention to or work harder on the forms that are different from those of their mother tongue since the forms that are relatively or entirely different will cause some learning difficulties and take longer time and more patience. Once students or learners either do well or are familiar with the forms of L2 predicates, it is time to bring them to the meaning and use aspects. Last but not least, our final thoughts are even though Thai and Chinese are tone languages, we are surprised that basic sentence structures (in terms of subject and predicate) in both languages are different in many aspects. Thai and English seem to share the more common features than the Chinese in that a verb phrase in Thai and English is a required part of a sentence.

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