

Contents

Acknowledgements

Introduction

How to use this book

Glossary of grammatical terms

A note on Chinese characters

xv

xvi

xvii

xviii

xxvi

Part A

Structures

1 Overview of pronunciation and Pinyin romanization 3

- 1.1 The Mandarin syllable 3
- 1.2 Pinyin romanization 4

2 Syllable, meaning, and word 6

- 2.1 The special status of the Mandarin syllable 6
- 2.2 Multi-syllable tendency in Mandarin words 7
- 2.3 Word-specific tone changes 8
- 2.4 Change to neutral tone 9
- 2.5 Incorporating foreign words and naming foreign objects 10

3 The Chinese writing system: an overview 12

- 3.1 Traditional and simplified characters 12
- 3.2 The structure of Chinese characters: the radical and the phonetic 12
- 3.3 The traditional classification of characters 14
- 3.4 Character stroke order: 笔顺/筆順 *bǐshùn* 15

4 Phrase order in the Mandarin sentence 17

- 4.1 Basic phrase order 17
- 4.2 The position of direct and indirect objects 17
- 4.3 The position of prepositional phrases 18
- 4.4 The position of location phrases 18
- 4.5 The position of 'time when' phrases 18
- 4.6 The relative order of the 'time when' phrase and the location phrase 19
- 4.7 The position of adverbs 19
- 4.8 The position of negation 20

4.9	The position of duration phrases	20
4.10	Order within the noun phrase	20
4.11	Phrase order in questions	20
5	Nouns	22
5.1	Common nouns	22
5.2	Pronouns	23
5.3	Proper nouns	26
6	Numbers	28
6.1	Mandarin numbers 0–99	28
6.2	Number 100 and higher	29
6.3	Formal characters for numbers	31
6.4	Ordinal numbers	32
6.5	Estimates and approximations	32
6.6	Fractions, percentages, decimals, half, and multiples	33
6.7	Lucky and unlucky numbers	36
6.8	Numbers used in phrases and expressions	37
6.9	一 yī as a marker of sequence	37
6.10	Numbers that are used as words	38
7	Specifiers and demonstratives	39
7.1	这/這 zhè ‘this’ and 那 nà ‘that’ as demonstratives	39
7.2	这/這 zhè, zhèi ‘this/these’ and 那 nà, nài ‘that/those’ as specifiers	40
7.3	这儿/這兒 zhèr and 这里/這裏 zhèlǐ ‘here,’ 那儿/那兒 nàr and 那里/那裏 nàlǐ ‘there’	40
7.4	Question words that correspond to specifiers	41
8	Classifiers	43
8.1	The structure of phrases involving classifiers	43
8.2	Choosing the classifier	43
8.3	Omission of the head noun	46
8.4	Classifiers that occur without a noun	47
8.5	Money and prices	47
9	Noun phrases	49
9.1	Modifying a noun with a specifier and/or number	49
9.2	Modifying a noun with all other modifiers: modification with 的 de	50
9.3	Omission of the particle 的 de	53
9.4	Noun modifiers in a series	53
9.5	Omission of the head noun	54
9.6	Modification with 之 zhī	55
10	Adjectival verbs	56
10.1	Negation of adjectival verbs	56
10.2	Yes–no questions with adjectival verbs	57
10.3	Modification by intensifiers	57
10.4	Two syllable preference	58
10.5	Comparative meaning	58

10.6	Superlative meaning	59	
10.7	Adjectival verbs and comparison structures	59	
10.8	Linking adjectival verbs	59	
10.9	Adjectival verbs and expressions that indicate change over time	60	
10.10	Adjectival verbs and sentence final 了 le	60	
11	Stative verbs		61
11.1	Negation of stative verbs	61	
11.2	Modification by intensifiers	62	
11.3	Indicating completion, past time, and change of state	62	
11.4	The equational verb 是 shì 'to be'	63	
11.5	The equational verb 姓 xìng 'to be family named'	65	
11.6	The verb of possession and existence: 有 yǒu 'to have,' 'to exist'	66	
11.7	The location verb 在 zài 'to be located at'	67	
12	Modal verbs		69
12.1	Expressing possibility: 会/會 huì	69	
12.2	Expressing ability	69	
12.3	Expressing permission: 可以 kěyǐ	70	
12.4	Expressing obligations	71	
12.5	Expressing prohibitions	72	
12.6	Grammatical properties of modal verbs	73	
13	Action verbs		76
13.1	Indicating that an action is completed or past	76	
13.2	Indicating that an action has been experienced in the past	76	
13.3	Negating actions	77	
13.4	Open-ended action verbs	78	
13.5	Change-of-state action verbs	80	
14	Prepositions and prepositional phrases		82
14.1	The grammar of the prepositional phrase in the Mandarin sentence	82	
14.2	Basic functions of prepositions	83	
14.3	Prepositions that also function as verbs	87	
15	Adverbs		89
15.1	General properties of adverbs	89	
15.2	Adverbs with logical function: 也 yě, 都 dōu, 还/還 hái, 就 jiù, 只 zhǐ, and 才 cái	90	
16	Conjunctions		97
16.1	Conjunctions that indicate an 'additive' or 'and' relationship	97	
16.2	Conjunctions that indicate a disjunctive or 'or' relationship	98	
17	The passive		100
17.1	The structure of the Mandarin passive	100	
17.2	The passive and negation	101	

- 17.3 Conditions for using the passive in Mandarin 102
- 17.4 Differences between the passive markers 被 *bèi*, 叫 *jiào*, and 让/讓 *ràng* 103
- 17.5 Additional functions of 让/讓 *ràng*, 叫 *jiào*, and 给/給 *gěi* 103
- 17.6 English passives and their Mandarin equivalents 103

Part B Situations and functions

- 18 Names, kinship terms, titles, and terms of address 107
 - 18.1 Names: 姓名 *xìngmíng* 107
 - 18.2 Kinship terms 108
 - 18.3 Titles 109
 - 18.4 Addressing others 111
 - 18.5 Addressing new acquaintances and negotiating terms of address 112
 - 18.6 Name cards and business cards 114
 - 18.7 Addressing letters and envelopes 116
- 19 Introductions 121
 - 19.1 The general format of introductions 121
 - 19.2 Sample introductions 122
 - 19.3 Common occupations and fields of study 123
- 20 Greetings and goodbyes 125
 - 20.1 Greetings in conversations 125
 - 20.2 Saying goodbye in conversations 128
 - 20.3 Greetings and goodbyes in letters 129
- 21 Basic strategies for communication 134
 - 21.1 Attracting someone's attention 134
 - 21.2 Responding to a call for attention 135
 - 21.3 Checking whether people have understood you 135
 - 21.4 Indicating understanding or lack of understanding 135
 - 21.5 Requesting repetition or clarification of spoken language 136
 - 21.6 Asking for assistance in identifying a Chinese character 136
 - 21.7 Providing information about the identification of Chinese characters 136
 - 21.8 Signaling that you are following the speaker 137
 - 21.9 Interrupting a speaker 137
 - 21.10 Using fillers 137
 - 21.11 Formal development of a topic 138
- 22 Telecommunications and e-communications: telephones, the internet, beepers, and faxes 141
 - 22.1 Sending and receiving phone calls, faxes, email, and beeper messages 141
 - 22.2 Dialing a number and entering a number 143
 - 22.3 Using the internet 143
 - 22.4 Telephone etiquette 143

22.5	Writing and reciting phone numbers, fax numbers, and beeper numbers 145	
23	Negating information	146
23.1	Negation of verbs and verb phrases 146	
23.2	The relative order of negation and adverbs 148	
23.3	Words that occur with negation 149	
23.4	不 <i>bù</i> in resultative verb structures 149	
23.5	Literary markers of negation: 無 <i>wú</i> and 非 <i>fēi</i> 150	
24	Asking questions and replying to questions	152
24.1	Yes–no questions 152	
24.2	Asking for agreement 156	
24.3	Choosing between alternatives with either–or questions 157	
24.4	Rhetorical questions 158	
24.5	Follow-up questions with 呢 <i>ne</i> 159	
24.6	Content questions 159	
25	Expressing identification, possession, and existence	165
25.1	Expressing identification 165	
25.2	Expressing possession 166	
25.3	Expressing existence 168	
26	Describing people, places, and things	171
26.1	Equational sentences: identifying or describing the subject with a noun phrase in the predicate 171	
26.2	Describing the subject with a predicate that is an adjectival verb 171	
26.3	Identifying or describing a noun with a modifying phrase 172	
26.4	Asking questions about the attributes of a person, place, or thing 172	
26.5	Describing an item in terms of the material that it is made of 173	
26.6	Describing nouns in terms of attributes that imply comparison 174	
26.7	Describing people in terms of age 175	
26.8	Describing the weather 176	
26.9	Talking about illness and other medical conditions 179	
27	Describing how actions are performed	181
27.1	Describing the general or past performance of an action with a manner adverbial phrase 181	
27.2	Asking about the performance of an action 183	
27.3	Describing the performance of an entire action with an adverbial modifier 184	
28	Indicating result, conclusion, potential, and extent	186
28.1	Indicating the result or conclusion of an action with resultative verbs 186	
28.2	Indicating the ability to reach a conclusion or result: the potential infixes 得 <i>de</i> and 不 <i>bu</i> 191	

28.3	Summary of the functions of resultative verbs	192
28.4	Indicating the ability to perform the verb: the potential suffixes 得了 deliǎo and 不了 buliǎo	192
28.5	Indicating the extent or result of a situation	196
29	Making comparisons	198
29.1	Similarity	198
29.2	Difference	203
29.3	More than	204
29.4	Less than	210
29.5	Comparative degree	213
29.6	Superlative degree	213
29.7	Relative degree	214
30	Talking about the present	215
30.1	Time expressions that indicate present time	215
30.2	Using 在 zài and 正在 zhèngzài to indicate ongoing actions in present time	216
30.3	Using the final particle 呢 ne to indicate ongoing situations in present time	216
30.4	Using 着/著 zhe to emphasize ongoing duration or an ongoing state in the present time	217
30.5	Indicating present time by context	218
30.6	Negation in present time situations	218
30.7	Talking about actions that begin in the past and continue to the present	218
30.8	Describing situations that are generally true	219
31	Talking about habitual actions	220
31.1	Expressing habitual time with the word 每 měi 'every/each'	220
31.2	Expressing habitual time with 天天 tiāntiān and 年年 niánnián	221
31.3	Adverbs that describe habitual action	221
32	Talking about the future	223
32.1	Time words that refer to future time	223
32.2	Adverbs that refer to future time	223
32.3	Indicating future time with the modal verb 会/會 huì	224
32.4	Verbs that refer to the future	225
33	Indicating completion and talking about the past	226
33.1	Completion: V-了 le	226
33.2	Talking about sequence in the past	227
33.3	Indicating that an action did not occur in the past	228
33.4	Asking whether an action has occurred	228
33.5	Indicating that an action occurred again in the past: 又 yòu verb 了 le	229
33.6	Talking about past experience: verb suffix -过/過 guo	230
33.7	Comparing the verb suffixes 过/過 guo and 了 le	231
33.8	Adverbs that indicate past time	232

33.9	Focusing on a detail of a past event with 是...的 shì...de 233	
34	Talking about change, new situations, and changing situations	236
34.1	Indicating that a situation represents a change 236	
34.2	Comparing sentences with and without sentence final -了 le 238	
34.3	Indicating change over time 238	
34.4	Nouns and verbs that express change 240	
35	Talking about duration and frequency	243
35.1	Specifying the length of an action with a duration phrase 243	
35.2	Emphasizing ongoing duration 246	
35.3	Indicating the ongoing duration of a background event 248	
35.4	Indicating frequency 249	
36	Expressing additional information	251
36.1	也 yě 'also' 251	
36.2	还/還 hái 'in addition, also' 251	
36.3	还有/還有 hái yǒu 'in addition' 252	
36.4	并且/並且 bìngqiě 'moreover' 252	
36.5	再说/再說 zài shuō 'besides, moreover, to put it another way' 252	
36.6	而 ér 'and, but' 253	
36.7	和 hé and 跟 gēn 'and' 253	
36.8	不但...而且... bùdàn...érqiě... 'not only... but also...' 253	
36.9	又...又... yòu...yòu... 'both...and...' 254	
36.10	除了...以外 chúle...yǐwài 'besides...' 254	
36.11	另外 língwài 'in addition,' '(an)other' 255	
37	Expressing contrast	256
37.1	Expressing contrast with paired connecting words 256	
37.2	Adverbs that indicate contrast 258	
37.3	Qualifying a statement with an adjectival verb or stative verb 259	
38	Expressing sequence	260
38.1	Expressing the relationship 'before' 260	
38.2	Expressing the relationship 'after' in a single sentence 261	
38.3	Indicating that one event happens first and another event happens afterwards 265	
38.4	Indicating 'afterwards' in a separate sentence 266	
38.5	Comparing 以前 yǐqián 'before' with 以后/以後 yǐhòu 'after' 267	
39	Expressing simultaneous situations	268
39.1	Indicating that one situation is the background for another situation 268	
39.2	Indicating that two actions occur at the same time 269	

39.3	Indicating that two actions occur in the same time frame	269
39.4	Describing a subject in terms of two qualities that exist at the same time	270
39.5	Indicating that a situation is reached at a specific point in time	270
39.6	Presenting simultaneous situations	271
40	Expressing cause and effect or reason and result	272
40.1	Expressing cause and effect or reason and result in a single sentence	272
40.2	Introducing the cause or reason	273
40.3	Introducing the effect or result	275
40.4	Inquiring about cause or reason	275
41	Expressing conditions	278
41.1	'If . . . then' conditional sentences	278
41.2	'even if'	280
41.3	'as long as'	280
41.4	'only if', 'unless'	280
41.5	'otherwise'	281
42	Expressing 'both,' 'all,' 'every,' 'any,' 'none,' 'not any,' and 'no matter how'	282
42.1	Expressing 'both' and 'all'	282
42.2	Expressing 'none'	284
42.3	Expressing 'every'	284
42.4	Expressing 'every,' 'any,' 'not any,' and 'no matter how' with question words	286
43	Expressing location and distance	291
43.1	Location	291
43.2	Indicating that an object exists or does not exist at a location	295
43.3	Using location as a description	297
43.4	Talking about distance	298
43.5	Asking about distance	300
44	Talking about movement, directions, and means of transportation	302
44.1	Talking about 'going' and 'coming'	302
44.2	Talking about turning	304
44.3	Talking about crossing	304
44.4	Talking about arriving	304
44.5	Talking about means of transportation	305
44.6	Asking about locations and asking for directions	306
44.7	Asking for and giving directions: sample conversations	307
44.8	Talking about directional movement	308
45	Talking about clock time and calendar time	310
45.1	Clock time	310
45.2	Calendar time	315

46	Expressing obligations and prohibitions	322
46.1	Expressing obligations 322	
46.2	Expressing prohibitions: must not, should not 325	
47	Expressing commands and permission	328
47.1	Commands 328	
47.2	Permission 330	
48	Expressing ability and possibility	332
48.1	Expressing ability 332	
48.2	Expressing possibility 333	
49	Expressing desires, needs, preferences, and willingness	335
49.1	Expressing desires 335	
49.2	Expressing needs 336	
49.3	Expressing preferences 337	
49.4	Expressing willingness 337	
50	Expressing knowledge, advice, and opinions	338
50.1	Expressing knowledge 338	
50.2	Advice and opinions 340	
51	Expressing fear, worry, and anxiety	344
51.1	Expressing fear of something 344	
51.2	Expressing nervousness or anxiety 345	
51.3	Indicating that something is scary 346	
51.4	Indicating that something scares someone 347	
52	Expressing speaker attitudes and perspectives	348
52.1	Interjections 348	
52.2	Sentence final particles 350	
53	Topic, focus, and emphasis	352
53.1	Introducing a topic 352	
53.2	Focus 354	
53.3	Emphasis 359	
54	Guest and host	361
54.1	Welcoming the guest 361	
54.2	Offering food and drink 362	
54.3	Inviting the guest to get comfortable 362	
54.4	Saying goodbye and seeing the guest off 362	
54.5	Additional expressions involving guest and host 363	
55	Giving and responding to compliments	364
55.1	Cultural conventions regarding praise 364	
55.2	Expressions used in deflecting praise 364	
55.3	Compliments and appropriate responses 365	

CONTENTS

56	Expressing satisfaction and dissatisfaction	366
56.1	Expressing satisfaction	366
56.2	Expressing dissatisfaction	368
57	Expressing gratitude and responding to expressions of gratitude	370
57.1	Expressing gratitude	370
57.2	Replying to expressions of gratitude	371
58	Invitations, requests, and refusals	372
58.1	Invitations	373
58.2	Requests	376
58.3	Refusals	377
58.4	Abandoning a request	379
59	Expressing apologies, regrets, sympathy, and bad news	380
59.1	Apologies and regrets	380
59.2	Expressing sympathy	382
59.3	Conveying bad news	382
60	Expressing congratulations and good wishes	384
60.1	General expressions of congratulations and good wishes	384
60.2	Fixed phrases of congratulations and good wishes for special events	385
60.3	Replying to expressions of congratulations and good wishes	387
Index		388