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BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

The Adverbial Marker *-de* in Chinese
Adverbiální slovice *-de* v čínském jazyce

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Abstract:

This thesis investigates the grammatical properties of the adverbial marker *-de* in Chinese. The adverbial marker *-de* or 地, as it is known in its Chinese character form, appears in phrases that function as adverbial modifiers. The thesis aims to identify the syntactic categories of elements that can appear in the pre *-de* position, check the optionality of *-de* with respect to both grammaticality and interpretation and specify its function. A mini corpus consisting of 500 Chinese example sentences containing *-de* taken from various sources was built. The structures of these sentences were analyzed and their grammaticality in the absence of *-de* was checked with Chinese native speakers in the form of a survey. The survey has revealed patterns of optionality among certain categories of pre *-de* elements. These patterns were confirmed or disproved by review and comparison of additional example sentences. Based on the information acquired in the research, the function of *-de* is speculated.

Key words: adverbs, linguistics, Chinese

Abstrakt:

Tato bakalářská práce zkoumá gramatické vlastnosti adverbiálního slovice *-de* v čínštině. Adverbiální slovice *-de* (v čínštině zapisováno pomocí znaku 地) nacházíme za slovními spojeními, jež vykonávají funkci příslovečného určení. Tato bakalářská práce si dává za cíl zjistit, které slovní druhy či druhy slovních spojení předchází adverbiálnímu slovcu *-de*, prověřit, v jakých případech je možné *-de* vynechat s ohledem na gramatickou správnost a významovou interpretaci a specifikovat jeho funkci. K dosažení těchto cílů byl z různých zdrojů sestaven mini korpus o 500 čínských větách obsahujících adverbiální slovice *-de*. Struktura a gramatická správnost těchto vět byla analyzována a ověřena rodilými mluvčími čínštiny pomocí dotazníku. Tento dotazník odhalil tendence možnosti či nemožnosti vynechání slovice *-de* u některých kategorií prvků předcházejících *-de*. Tyto tendence byly potvrzeny nebo vyvráceny pomocí komparace s příkladovými větami z jiných zdrojů. Na základě informací získaných při této studii byla spekulována konkrétní funkce adverbiálního slovice *-de*.

Klíčová slova: příslovce, lingvistika, čínština

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List of Abbreviations

DE	Adverbial suffix <i>-de</i>
ATT	Attributive suffix <i>-de</i>
COM	Complement suffix <i>-de</i>
CL	Classifier
NEG	Negator
LE	Auxiliary <i>le</i>
SA	Solicit agreement (<i>ba</i>)
BA	Direct object marker <i>ba</i>
BEI	Passive marker <i>bei</i>
ZHE	Auxiliary <i>zhe</i>
SM	Same meaning
DM	Different meaning

Introduction

The adverbial suffix *-de* or 地, as it is known in its Chinese character form, appears in phrases that function as adverbial modifiers. Although *-de* occurs in Chinese very frequently, many of its properties are still mysterious to us. In-depth investigation into the properties of the adverbial suffix *-de* is not only important for linguistic research, but also for Chinese language learners, for whom this particular element might be confusing, as its counterpart might not exist in their native language.

The suffix *-de* is semantically vague and seems to only have the grammatical function of marking a phrase as adverbial. According to Chinese grammar books, various syntactic categories can precede the adverbial *-de*. The most commonly mentioned category is adjectives. It is not entirely clear what the function of *-de* is, other than marking a phrase as adverbial. Certain categories, such as nouns or onomatopoeia, require *-de* in order to acquire the function of an adverbial modifier, whereas for some others, such as adverbs, the addition of *-de* is optional.

The goals of this thesis are to: (i) investigate which categories are allowed to appear in the pre *-de* position; (ii) work out when its addition is optional and when it is compulsory and; (iii) to the extent it is possible, and discover what the function of *-de* is.

The corpus used in this study consists of 500 Chinese example sentences. These sentences were taken from a variety of resources, such as grammar books, Chinese textbooks, famous Chinese literary works, etc., in order to reflect the usage of the suffix *-de* in the Chinese language as accurately as possible. Based on information provided by literature sources, digital and online dictionaries, and our own analysis of the morphological differences between individual pre *-de* elements, a set of word-categories and subcategories preceding *-de* is established (e.g. adjectives, verbs, nouns, etc.). A survey, which targets Chinese native speakers, is used to enquire them about optionality of *-de* in example sentences randomly picked from the corpus. The survey results are further examined by checking them against similar examples in online dictionaries. The thesis provides an overview of the nature of interactions between the adverbial suffix *-de* and the elements that precede it and speculates the function of *-de*.

1 Literature Review

This section provides an overview of the suffix *-de* from different sources (Lü, 1999; Zhu, 1982; Li and Thompson, 1989; Biq, 2015). Unless stated otherwise, examples given in these sections are taken from the work indicated in the sub-section titles.

1.1 Lü (1999)

Lü (1999, p. 160) states that there are five categories of words listed as being able to modify a verb by using the adverbial suffix *-de*. These are adjectives, verbs, nouns, adverbs, and various compounds.

1.1.1 Adjectives

Disyllabic adjectives are presented as only being able to modify verbs in the construction *adjective + de + verb*.

- (1) xingfen-de shuo
excited-DE say
“to say something excitedly”

When modifying verbs, monosyllabic adjectives usually do not need *-de*, whereas disyllabic adjectives usually do, although in frequently used *adjective + de + verb* phrases *-de* can be omitted (2).

- (2) xiangxi-(de) chakan
careful-(DE) examine
“to examine carefully”

Adjectives that are already modified by a degree adverb such as *hen* “very” usually need *-de* in order to modify predicates, (3), only certain monosyllabic adjectives can be an exception to this rule, (4).

- (3) hen-linghuo-de chuli
very-quick-DE deal with
“to deal with something very quickly”

- (4) hen-kuai-(de) jie jue
very-quick-(DE) solve
“to solve [something] quickly”

For reduplicated adjectives modifying predicates, *-de* is optional.

- (5) gao-gao-xing-xing-(de) zou le
happy-(DE) go LE
“to happily walk away”

1.1.2 Verbs

Verbs, unlike adjectives, are able to modify both predicative adjectives (6) and verbs (7) in the construction *verb + de + verb/adjective*.

- (6) shuobuchu-de gaoxing
be unable to say-DE happy
“to be indescribably happy”

- (7) yu buting-de xia
rain not stop-DE fall
“It keeps raining.”

Some verbs can modify the following predicates directly without using the adverbial suffix *-de*, although it is still possible to include it.

- (8) shengli-(de) wancheng renwu
to win-(DE) complete task
“to finish a task victoriously”

1.1.3 Nouns

Most nouns cannot modify verbs, but certain nouns can do so in the construction *noun + de + verb*.

- (9) kexue-de lunzheng
science-DE prove
“to prove scientifically”

- (10) bufen-de jiejie
part-DE solve
“to solve partially”

1.1.4 Adverbs

Adverbs modifying predicates do not use *-de* most of the time (11). For certain disyllabic adverbs *-de* is optional (12).

- (11) *jian-de zou yuan le
gradually-DE go far LE
- (12) jianjian-(de) zou yuan le
gradually-(DE) go far LE
“to gradually walk faraway”

1.1.5 Compounds

Various compounds such as four-character idioms (13), onomatopoeia (14), reduplicated classifier compounds (15), or *xiang/gen... yiyang de* “to be like” construction (16) can be used to modify verbs and adjectives in the construction *compound + de + verb/adjective*.

These compounds can usually become an adverbial modifier directly without using the adverbial suffix *-de*, although it is still possible to include it.

- (13) zi-yan-zi-yu-(de) shuo
to think aloud-(DE) say
“to say something to yourself aloud”
- (14) hualala-(de) xiang
“hualala”-(DE) make noise
“to make a crashing noise”
- (15) yige-zi-yige-zi-(de) shuo
word by word-(DE) say
“to say something word by word”
- (16) xiang nianqingren yiyang-(de) jiaobao
like young person same-(DE) arrogant
“as arrogant as a young person”

1.2 Zhu (1982)

1.2.1 [Noun/Verb + *de*] Adverbial Modifiers¹

Zhu (1982, p. 152) discusses how different word categories become adverbial modifiers by adding the suffix *-de*.

In the following examples, (17) and (18), nouns become adverbial modifiers after the suffix *-de* has been attached to them.

- (17) ta de² shou benneng-de suo le huilai
he ATT hand instinct-DE pull LE back
“He pulled his hand back instinctively.”
- (18) kexue-de zongjie sanshi nian lai de jingyan
science-DE summarize thirty year LAI ATT experience
“to scientifically summarize thirty years of experience”

Unlike *benneng* “instinct” in (17) which is always a noun, *kexue* “science” in (18) can be both a noun, and an adjective. Zhu (1982, p. 152) argues that it would be more accurate to say that *kexue* in (18) is not originally a noun, but an adjective, because it can be modified by the degree adverb *hen*.

¹ The subchapter in the original source is named 副词性状语, which could be translated as “adverbial modifiers”. The naming of 1.2.1 is more specific in order to avoid confusion with 1.2.2.

² This *-de* is not an adverbial marker but an attributive marker. To avoid confusion, it is glossed as “ATT” in this paper.

Certain disyllabic verbs can become adverbial modifiers by attaching *-de*. This is limited to written language only.

- (19) ta tongqing-de xiao le xiao
 he sympathize-DE laugh LE laugh
 “He laughed sympathetically.”

Another construction that can precede the adverbial suffix *-de* is the verb *you* “to have” + object construction. The verb *you* can be replaced with any negated form thereof, such as *meiyou* or *wu*.

- (20) you-tiaojian-de chengdan yiwu
 have condition-DE undertake task
 “to undertake a task on a condition”

It has to be noted that the suffix *-de* can be omitted in (20), but the meaning would change. The meaning of the sentence without *-de* would be “The conditions to undertake the task are fulfilled.” Omission of *-de* would also cause *you-tiaojian* “to have condition” to become a predicate, forming a double predicate construction.

The so-called subject + predicate construction can also be used as an adverbial modifier. The subject and the object in this construction must be the same, (21).

- (21) shou-qian-shou-(de) chuqu le
 hand lead hand-(DE) go out LE
 “[they] were holding hands, when [they] walked out”

When the suffix *-de* is omitted, the sentence will become a sentence with two consecutive predicates, but the meaning would stay the same.

1.2.2 [Adjective/Idiom + *de*] Adverbial Modifiers³

Zhu (1982, p. 153) discusses adverbial modifiers that are formed from adjectives of state. Adjectives of state include all reduplicated adjectives, certain disyllabic adjectives, adjectives with a suffix (e.g. so-called ABB form adjectives such as *hei-hu-hu* “black”), as well as adjectives modified by a degree adverb. Adjectives of state can freely become an adverbial modifier with the addition of *-de*. The opposite category to adjectives of state are adjectives of quality, which includes monosyllabic adjectives such as *da* “big” or *hong* “red”, and common disyllabic adjectives such as *ganjing* “clean” or *dafang* “generous”.

³The subchapter in the original source is named *形容词性状语*, which could be translated as “adjectival modifiers”. In this paper it is referred to as “adverbial modifier” as well, because its function is also modifying predicates.

Adjectives of quality cannot always act as adverbial modifiers by themselves.

- (22) *man-de zoulu
slow-DE walk

Only after they become an adjective of state, there is no limit to them being used as an adverbial modifier. This is usually done by reduplication, (23).

- (23) man-man-de zoulu
slow-slow-DE walk
“to walk slowly”

Sometimes the meaning of the adjective in the position of an adverbial modifier has nothing to do with the meaning of the modified verb, but it only refers to the object, as in (24).

- (24) la-la-de zuo yi wan tang
spicy spicy-DE make one bowl soup
“to make a bowl of spicy soup”

Some disyllabic adjectives cannot modify a predicate by themselves. They gain this ability only after they become an adverb through the addition of the adverbial suffix *-de*.

- (25) ta jingyi-de xiao zhe shuo
she surprised-DE laugh ZHE say
“She said, as he laughed surprisedly.”

Certain compounds and idioms can become adverbial modifiers by attaching *-de*.

- (26) lang-tun-hu-yan-de chi le xiaqu
eat like a wolf and tiger-DE eat LE down
“to eat [something] up like a tiger and a wolf”

- (27) san-tian-liang-tou-de wang jia pao
very often-DE towards home run
“to run back home very often”

The idiom *langtunhuyan* “eat like a wolf and tiger” in (26) can also serve both as a predicate and an attribute. On the other hand, the idiom *santianliangtou* “very often” in (27) does not have this function.

The *xiang/gen... yiyang* “to be like” construction is often used as an adverbial modifier. The suffix *-de* can be usually omitted without the meaning of the sentence being affected. If *-de* is omitted, the sentence will have two consecutive predicates. In (28), the first predicate is *yiyang* “same”, the second predicate is *pao* “run”.

- (28) xiang fafeng _____ yiyang-(de) pao le shangqu
 like go mad same-(DE) run LE up
 “to run up like mad”

1.2.3 [Adverb + *de*] Modifiers

When the suffix *-de* is attached to *jianjian* “gradually”, which is an adverb, it will still be an adverbial modifier. The adverbial suffix *-de* can never be attached to monosyllabic adverbs, (29), it can only be attached to certain disyllabic adverbs.

- (29) *jian-de zou yuan le
 gradually-DE walk far LE

There is no clear difference in meaning between disyllabic adjectives with and without *-de*.

- (30) ta huran-de bu name hunhunchenchen de le
 she suddenly-DE not that dizzy ATT LE
 “Suddenly, she stopped being so dizzy.”

- (31) men huran kai le
 door suddenly open LE
 “The door opened suddenly.”

The adverb *huran* “suddenly” can be used both with, (30), and without *-de*, (31).

Some disyllabic adjectives can be directly used as adverbial modifiers without any modifications to itself, (32). Addition of *-de* is optional for this kind of adjectives.

- (32) zixi-(de) kan le yixia
 careful-(DE) look LE once
 “to take a look carefully”

1.3 Li and Thompson (1989)

Li and Thompson (1989, p. 319) define adverbs in Chinese as typically occurring after the subject or after the topic if there is no subject. In sentences containing an auxiliary verb, the adverb always precedes the auxiliary verb.⁴

- (33) Zhangsan yiding neng tiaowu
 Zhangsan definitely can dance
 “Zhangsan definitely can dance”

⁴ This does not seem to apply to adverbial modifiers containing *-de*, as in some sentences in our corpus, adverbial modifiers with *-de* occur after the auxiliary adverb, as in (51).

Li and Thompson (1989, p. 320) classify adverbs in three categories: movable adverbs, nonmovable adverbs, and postverbal adverbials. Words that have acquired the function of an adverb through the suffix *-de* belong to the category of nonmovable adverbs.

Nonmovable adverbs make up the majority of adverbs in Standard Chinese. Unlike movable adverbs, nonmovable adverbs have a fixed position in the sentence, which is immediately following the subject or topic and preceding the verb. They only modify the verb phrase, not the entire sentence. Nonmovable adverbs are divided into two main groups: manner adverbs and nonmanner adverbs.

Although it is not explicitly stated that the adverbial suffix *-de* cannot be attached to nonmanner adverbs, Li and Thompson (1989, p. 322) only mention the adverbial suffix *-de* in the subsection of manner adverbs. Furthermore, not a single example sentence illustrating how nonmanner adverbs are used contains the adverbial suffix *-de*. For this reason, it can be assumed that *-de* indeed cannot be attached to nonmanner adverbs.

Manner adverbs describe the manner in which the action of the verb phrase is carried out. They are usually derived from adjectives, although there are several exceptions, such as *guyi* “on purpose”. The adjective derived adverbs are formed by adding the suffix *-de* and, in many cases, the adjective is reduplicated as well. For example, *xingfen-de* “excitedly” or reduplicated *kuai-kuai-de* “quickly”. When reduplicating disyllabic adjectives, each syllable is reduplicated independently, as in *kuai-le* “happy”, which is reduplicated as *kuai-kuai-le-le-de* “happily”.

- (34) ta kuai-kuai-de zou
 she quick-quick-DE walk
 “She walked quickly.”

In *bei* sentences (noun phrase 1 (direct object) – *bei* (passive marker) – noun phrase 2 (agent) – verb construction), certain manner adverbs can only be placed after the second noun phrase (agent), which is unlike the majority of adverbs, that are placed after the first noun phrase. This is because their meaning can modify an action only regarding the agent, therefore they are referred to as agent-oriented manner adverbs. The manner adverb *gongping-de* “justly” needs to be placed after the second noun phrase (35), because it describes the action of the agent and not that of the direct object.

- (35) Zhangsan bei Lisi gongping-de piping le
 Zhangsan BEI Lisi justly criticize LE

“Zhangsan was justly criticized by Lisi.”

- (36) *Zhangsan gongping-de bei Lisi piping le
Zhangsan justly BEI Lisi criticize LE

If a manner adverb is not agent-oriented, this rule does not apply. It can be placed after the direct object or after the agent. It always comments on the noun phrase it is placed after. There are also manner adverbs that can only comment on the direct object.

Some abstract nouns can also become manner adverbs, for example *kexue* “science” becomes *kexue-de* “scientifically”.

- (37) women kexue-de yanjiu na ge wenti
we science-DE research that CL problem

“We will research that problem scientifically.”

Onomatopoeic adverbs belong to the category of manner adverbs as well. They are mostly formed by adding the suffix *-de*, but the suffix can be omitted in certain cases, (39).

- (38) na ge zhong dingdang-dingdang-de xiang
that CL bell “dingdang-dingdang”-DE make noise

“That bell makes noise in a dingdong-dingdong manner.”

- (39) ta peca die le yi jiao
she “peca” fall LE a fall

“She fell down with a thud.”

1.4 Biq (2015)

Biq (2015, p. 414) states that there are two positions where Chinese adverbs can be placed in a sentence: internally (between subject and predicate) and externally (at the beginning of a sentence). In general, adverbs in the internal position tend to be predicate-oriented and provide details about the predicate, whereas adverbs positioned externally are usually clause-oriented, modifying the entire clause.

The adverbial suffix *-de* does not occur after monosyllabic adverbs. As for disyllabic adverbs, *-de* is either optional or in some cases it is not used. (*jianjian-de* “gradually”, *yongyuan-de* “forever” vs. *pianpian* “unexpectedly”, *jingran* “surprisingly”). When *-de* is optional, there is no semantic difference between having *-de* or without it. For example, *jianjian* “gradually” and *jianjian-de* “gradually” have the same meaning.

- (40) wujia jianjian shangzhang (LINE Dict, 2020)
price gradually rise

“Prices are gradually going up.”

- (41) wo jianjian-de xuehui le gaixie gaozi (LINE Dict, 2020)
 I gradually-DE learn LE rewrite draft

“I was gradually learning to rewrite.”

There are also certain monosyllabic adjectives that can be turned into adverbs by reduplication. Once reduplicated, they can only be used as adverbs.

- (42) ta zao-zao-(de) lai le
 he early-early-(DE) come LE

“He showed up early.”

1.5 Source Comparison

According to the reviewed sources, the following categories of words and compounds can be placed in front of the suffix *-de* to modify predicates: adjectives, verbs, nouns, idioms, adverbs, degree adverb + adjective constructions, verb + object constructions, subject + predicate constructions, *xiang/gen... yiyang de* constructions, reduplicated classifier compounds, and onomatopoeia.

1.5.1 Adjectives

According to Lü (1999, p. 160), unmodified disyllabic adjectives in its original form need *-de* to modify verbs unless they are a part of a frequently used phrase, in that case, *-de* is can be omitted. For reduplicated adjectives *-de* is optional.

Zhu (1982, p. 73) divides adjectives into two groups: adjectives of quality and adjectives of state. The former often cannot become an adverbial modifier by itself, in such a case, it has to be transformed into an adjective of state which can be done by reduplication, for example. In another chapter, it is stated that some disyllabic adjectives need *-de* to modify predicates, while it is optional for others. There is no explanation provided for this phenomenon.

1.5.2 Nouns

Zhu (1982), and Li and Thompson (1989) agree that nouns can modify verbs and adjectives after the addition of *-de*, which means that the suffix is compulsory. Zhu (1982, p. 152) points out that some elements preceding the suffix *-de* that appear to be nouns are in fact adjectives, for example, the word *kexue* can either mean “science” or “scientific”. Li and Thompson (1989, p. 327) assert that nouns preceding adverbial suffix *-de* are abstract nouns.

1.5.3 Idioms

Lü (1999, p. 160) states that idioms can modify predicates through the addition of *-de*, (13). In a following section of Lü (1999), a point is made that four-character idioms do not necessarily need *-de* to modify verbs and adjectives.

According to Zhu (1982, p. 154), certain idioms can become adverbial modifiers. Some idioms have the characteristics of adjectives of state and can function as predicates, or attributes as well, whereas other idioms can only function as adverbial modifiers.

2 Methodology

2.1 Data Collection

Data used in the research consist of 500⁵ examples including sentences and verb phrases containing the adverbial marker *-de*. In order to reflect the usage of the suffix *-de* in Chinese as accurately as possible, a special emphasis was placed on the diversity of resources that the example sentences were taken from. A set of examples was collected from grammar books, mainly those used for literature review. More example sentences were taken from Chinese language textbooks, such as the Standard Course HSK 6 textbook (Jiang, 2015), as their content is usually written or reviewed by professionals. A significant number of example sentences was taken from works by famous authors of modern Chinese literature, such as *Border Town* by Shen Congwen (Shen, 2010), *To Live* by Yu Hua (Yu, 2015), or *My Memories of Old Beijing* by Lin Haiyin (Lin, 2015), and various works by Lu Xun (Lu, 2014)⁶. Since these works are quite famous throughout the Chinese speaking world, it can be assumed that it provides a realistic representation of general language use. Another set of example sentences came from a translation of a Sherlock Holmes story into Chinese, and a political commentary. To diversify the data even more, several examples from subtitle transcripts of the popular Chinese TV show *Home with Kids* (Lin, 2005) were included.

Two problems had been encountered in the process of data collection.

Some pre *-de* elements appear more frequently than others (e. g. *manman-de* “slowly”) and that would result in a collection of more or less uniform data. To prevent this from happening, the majority of example sentences with identical pre *-de* element was excluded. Several of the recurring examples remained, though, as we believe that the inclusion of more example sentences with a frequently occurring pre *-de* element can yield useful information, and at the same time, does not affect the diversity of the corpus. These example sentences only have the element preceding *-de* in common, the rest of the sentence is always different. Other than that, most of the examples do not contain identical pre *-de* elements in the collected data.

⁵ 5 example sentences were later excluded from the research, as they were incorrectly judged to contain the adverbial marker *-de*. 3 of these sentences were also included in the survey.

⁶ 《坟》 (*Grave*) and 《呐喊》 (*Call to Arms*)

Another problem is that there are two characters in Chinese that are used as the adverbial marker *-de*: 的 and 地, both of which are ambiguous. The former has multiple usages and meanings, but it's mostly used as an attributive marker. Its use as an adverbial marker only appears in older sources. In more recent texts, the adverbial marker is 地. 地 is also ambiguous, it can be an adverbial marker or a noun meaning "ground". Their differentiation is obvious as they appear in different syntactic environments (Lü, 1999). For this reason, examples have to be gathered manually as attention needed to be paid to the sentence structure, rather than just to the character.

2.2 Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted in three steps: (i) classification, (ii) survey, and (iii) verification. First, the category of the element preceding the adverbial marker *-de* in each sentence was determined, through various means. In most cases, the categories of the pre *-de* elements were determined by information provided by digital or online dictionaries (Pleco, 2020; Wenlin, 2002; Line Dict, 2020; Baidu, 2015). Example sentences taken from grammar books were usually listed according to word categories, in these cases, the information was taken directly from there. Where it was possible, the categories of the pre *-de* elements are reconfirmed by placing them in various sentences as their original categories.

Based on information provided by literature sources, digital and online dictionaries, and personal analysis of the morphological differences between individual pre *-de* elements, a set of syntactic categories and subcategories preceding *-de* was established, as listed below:

List 1

- adjectives (disyllabic adjectives, monosyllabic adjectives, reduplicated monosyllabic adjectives, reduplicated disyllabic adjectives, degree adverb + adjective construction, and ABB form adjectives)
- verbs
- verb + object construction
- subject + predicate construction
- nouns
- adverbs
- idioms
- onomatopoeia
- *xiang/gen... yiyang* "to be like" construction
- reduplicated classifier compounds

Second, after the example sentences were divided into different categories according to their respective pre *-de* elements, several example sentences were randomly picked from each category. Then, a survey on the website www.wenjuan.com was designed, including all of the randomly picked examples. In total, 83 example sentences were included in the survey. The survey targeted native speakers of the Chinese language. The question “Can 地 (adverbial marker *-de*) in this example sentence be omitted?” was asked about every example sentence. Respondents could choose from four options (see appendix for the design of the survey):

- *de* cannot be omitted, otherwise the sentence would be ungrammatical.
- *de* can be omitted. Omission does not affect the meaning of the sentence.
- *de* can be omitted. Omission affects the meaning of the sentence. I am unable to explain the difference.
- *de* can be omitted. Omission affects the meaning of the sentence. Please explain the difference in meaning after *-de* has been omitted.

In total, 30 respondents handed in their answers. Although due to the design of the survey, which did not make it compulsory to answer questions for the questionnaire to be handed in, not every question was answered as many as 30 times. In fact, the largest amount of answers on one question was 29 with the number of respondents steadily decreasing with each question (presumably due to the high number of questions), although the smallest number of answers did not go below 23 answers per question. Every question in the survey is voluntary to answer due to our fear that respondents might give up halfway, as filling the survey can be lengthy and might take up to 20 minutes to finish. No personal questions, such as age or area of origin were enquired. The differences between written and spoken Chinese were not taken into consideration either.

It is understood that a low number of respondents and a lack of information about them might skew the results, therefore another method was used to assess pre *-de* elements in the example sentences. The third step of the data analysis involves looking up more example sentences for every pre *-de* element that was included in the survey and comparing the newly found examples to the sentences from the survey. In these sentences, the words need to function as adverbial modifiers, both with and/or without *-de*, or otherwise modify predicates, in order to be relevant for the research. Examples with similar sentence structure as the one included in the survey are preferred, as they can reveal, whether particular syntactical features might affect the addition of *-de*. The source of the example sentences used in this method were taken online and digital dictionaries,

most notably, LINE Dict (2020). The additionally reviewed example sentences are listed in Appendix 2.

3 Discussion

This section discusses the interaction between the adverbial suffix *-de* and the different categories of elements that precede it. Categories of pre *-de* elements are divided into two major groups, predicative and non-predicative, based on whether they have the ability to function as predicates or not. Each category is introduced, defined, and analyzed in its own subsection. At the end of this section, related phenomena, such as the adverbial suffix *-de* in the external position, and replacement of *-de* with the adverb *jiu* “just”, are discussed.

3.1 Predicative Pre *-de* Elements

Li and Thompson (1989, p. 594) define serial verb construction as a construction consisting of two or more verb phrases or clauses occurring in one sentence without any marker connecting them to one another, however, it is evident that a relationship exists between them. In total, there are four kinds of serial verb constructions, divided according to the type of relationship between the two verb phrases, but only one type is relevant in this study, which is what Li and Thompson (1989, p. 595) call “two or more separate events” serial verb construction. One way two verb phrases convey the relationship of two separate events is that “the first verb phrase describes the circumstances under which the event in the second verb phrase occurs”, as in (43), where the first event is *zuo huoche* “lit. sit train” and the second event is *qu* “go”.

- (43) women zuo huoche qu hao ba?
we sit train go good SA
(Li & Thompson, 1989, p. 596)

“Let’s go by train, shall we?”

The way this construction might be related to the adverbial marker *-de* is that some pre *-de* elements can be predicates (e. g. verbs, adjectives, subject + predicate construction, etc.). When the adverbial suffix *-de* is attached to a predicative word or phrase, it becomes an adverbial modifier. In some cases, omission of *-de* causes that the pre *-de* element becomes a predicate again, (44), therefore, this structure becomes so-called double predicate construction (Zhu, 1982, p. 153).

- (44) shou-qian-shou-(de) chuqu le (Zhu, 1982, p. 153)
hand lead hand-(DE) go out LE

“[they] were holding hands, when [they] walked out”⁷

⁷ The translation is the same regardless of the inclusion of *-de*.

As there is a predicate already placed in front of another predicate, a similarity with the serial verb construction discussed by Li and Thompson (1989) can be inferred. The term “double predicate construction” will be used in the following discussion, because it better reflects this phenomenon than the term “serial verb construction”, as it encompasses the entire category of predicates, rather than verbs only. In this section, different predicative pre *-de* elements are analyzed. Information acquired through the survey and through the review of example sentences will be used to assess the relationship between the double predicate construction and omission of the adverbial suffix *-de*. It is possible that the double predicate construction enables omission of *-de* without the sentence becoming ungrammatical, because, according to Li and Thompson (1989, p. 595), when there are two consecutive predicates, the first can describe the other.

In the following subsections, pre *-de* elements, which can function as predicates are discussed. These are predicative adjectives (disyllabic adjectives, degree adverb + adjective construction), verbs, the verb + object construction, the subject + predicate construction, and the *xiang/gen... yiyang* construction.

3.1.1 Predicative Adjectives

Among the 500 example sentences in the corpus, adjectives are the most common category that takes the adverbial suffix *-de*. The semantic function of adjectives is to describe the properties of an entity. Same as verbs, adjectives can serve as the predicate in a clause, however unlike verbs, adjectives in the predicative position are typically modified by a degree adverb, (45), or a negator, (46) (Huang & Shi, 2016, p. 277).

(45) ta hen congming (Huang & Shi, 2016, p. 277)
 he very smart

“He is very smart.”

(46) ta bu gao (Huang & Shi, 2016, p. 277)
 he NEG tall

“He is not tall.”

The defining characteristics differentiating predicative adjectives from verbs are that they can be modified by the degree adjective *hen* and, at the same time, they cannot take an object (Zhu, 1982, p. 55). Adjectives can function as attributes as well, typically by attaching the attributive suffix *-de* (Huang & Shi, 2016, p. 277). Adjectives that usually function as attributes only are further discussed in 3.2.1.

3.1.1.1 Disyllabic Adjectives

Disyllabic adjectives are the most common category of adjectives preceding *-de* in the corpus. They occur in 127 example sentences. Several of the pre *-de* disyllabic adjectives appear in more than one sentence, but in no more than four. As the name of the category suggests, these adjectives consist of two syllables. The syllables are never the same.

Survey analysis:

The survey reveals a pattern among the 9 surveyed disyllabic adjectives, which is that these disyllabic adjectives tend to require the adverbial suffix *-de* to modify predicates. Two adjectives (Table 1, 8. and 9.) do not fit in this pattern.

Survey results are shown in the following order: *-de* cannot be omitted, otherwise the sentence becomes ungrammatical (Not opt.); *-de* can be omitted. Omission does not affect the meaning of the sentence (Opt., SM); *-de* can be omitted. Omission affects the meaning of the sentence (Opt., DM). This applies to all of the tables in the discussion section.

Example word	English	Not opt.	Opt., SM	Opt., DM
1. <i>shuangkuai</i>	straight-forward	46%	39%	15%
2. <i>shenmi</i>	mysterious	81%	12%	7%
3. <i>gongjing</i>	respectful	77%	12%	11%
4. <i>yukuai</i>	happy	68%	28%	4%
5. <i>haobu-keqi</i>	unrestrained (politeness)	50%	42%	8%
6. <i>cangcu</i>	hurried	63%	29%	8%
7. <i>tongyang</i>	same	54%	38%	8%
8. <i>tebie</i>	especially	22%	67%	11%
9. <i>chongfen</i>	fully	30%	61%	9%

Table 1

Only in the case of *shuangkuai* “straight-forward” (Table 1, 1.) less than 50% respondents thought that *-de* cannot be omitted, (47). The review of 85 more example sentences from online dictionaries does not confirm the survey results, as no instances of *shuangkuai* functioning as an adverbial modifier without *-de* have been found.

- (47) wo he laogong shuangkuai-de daying
 I and husband readily-DE agree
 xialai (Jiang, 2015, p. 3)
 (down)

“My husband and I readily agreed.”

For *shenmi* “mysterious” (Table 1, 2.) and *yukuai* “happy” (Table 1, 4.), 100 and 350 example sentences were reviewed respectively, and none were found to contain these adjectives functioning as an adverbial modifier without *-de*, which supports the survey results. Similarly, *qingxi* “clear” and *jingqi* “surprised” have not been found to modify predicates without *-de* in any of the additionally reviewed example sentences.

Respondents did not agree on optionality of *-de* attached to *haobu-keqi* “unrestrained” (Table 1, 5.). Despite the relatively high percentage of respondents claiming that *-de* can be omitted, no sentences without *-de* have been found. Additional review of example sentences with *bu-zijue* “unaware” (also a negated disyllabic adjective) in the pre *-de* position has been conducted. Similarly, no sentences with *bu-zijue* modifying a predicate without *-de* have been found.

Despite the fact that 77% of respondents claim that omission of *-de* after *gongjing* “respectful” modifying a predicate would be ungrammatical (Table 1, 3.), *gongjing* has been found to modify a predicate without *-de* in one sentence, (48).

- (48) women yinggai gongjing zhan zai yipang
 we should respectful stand at one side
 dengdai (LINE Dict, 2020)
 wait

“We should stand aside and wait respectfully.”

Contrary to the tendency among the other surveyed disyllabic adjectives, the survey result show that *-de* can be omitted after *cangcu* “hurried, hastily”, *tongyang* “same, equally”, *tebie* “special, especially” (Table 1, 8.) and *chongfen* “full, fully” (Table 1, 9.). According to some digital and online dictionaries, they are often classified as adverbs and frequently modify predicates without attaching *-de*, (49). Despite that, they were ultimately placed in the category of disyllabic adjectives, along with other disyllabic adjectives that possess such features. The reason for *cangcu*, *tongyang*, *tebie* and *chongfen* to be placed in this category is that they can function as predicates as well, e.g. (50).

- (49) ta chongfen mingbai le mingling (LINE Dict, 2020)
 he fully understand LE order

“He had his orders down.”

- (50) sanshi fenzhong yijing hen chongfen le (LINE Dict, 2020)
 thirty minute already very full LE

“Thirty minutes is sufficient for you.”

3.1.1.2 Degree Adverb + Adjective Construction

29 example sentences contain the degree adverb + adjective construction as the pre *-de* element. Three examples of degree adverb + verb + object construction were included in this category for a similar nature of adjectives and the verb + object construction (see 3.1.3). The degree adverb + adjective construction typically consists of an adjective modified by a degree adverb such as *hen* “very”, or *feichang* “very much, extremely” (Lü, 1999, p. 161).

Survey analysis:

Overall, respondents agree with Lü (1999) on that *-de* is compulsory when a degree adverb + adjective construction modifies a predicate, although there are three examples which stand out.

Example word	English	Not opt.	Opt., SM	Opt., DM
1. <i>hen-hao</i>	(very) good	79%	4%	17%
2. <i>hen-rongyi</i>	(very) easy	23%	69%	8%
3. <i>feichang-jianding</i>	extremely firm	63%	29%	8%
4. <i>hen-minjie</i>	(very) nimble	80%	16%	4%
5. <i>hen-youzhuyi</i>	(very) attentive	70%	14%	16%
6. <i>ban-shengqi</i>	half angry	70%	25%	5%
7. <i>hen-reqing</i>	(very) warm-hearted	54%	33%	13%
8. <i>wanquan-xietiao</i>	absolutely balanced	56%	34%	10%
9. <i>jiao-zao</i>	quite early	34%	47%	19%

Table 2

Lü (1999, p. 161) states that certain monosyllabic adjectives which are modified by a degree adverb do not need *-de* when functioning as an adverbial modifier. One such example sentence, (51), found in Lü (1999, p. 161) was also included in the survey. Despite the claim that *-de* is optional in this sentence, 79% of respondents disagreed, choosing the option “*-de* cannot be omitted”, as seen in Table 2, 1.

- (51) yao hen-hao-(de) xuexi (Lü, 1999, p. 161)
 need very-good-(DE) study
 “to need to study well”

The survey results of *hen-rongyi* “(very) easy” (Table 2, 2.) are contrary to both literature sources and the overall outcome of the survey for the category of degree adverb + adjective construction. The review of more example sentences reveals that *hen-rongyi* is

commonly used as an adverbial modifier without *-de* (52). The other possible reason for such results is discussed in 3.6.

- (52) ta hen-rongyi bei gandong (LINE Dict, 2020)
 he (very) easy BEI move (emotionally)
 “He’s very easily moved.”

Relatively high percentage of respondents also believe that *-de* after *jiao-zao* “quite early” (Table 2, 9.) can be omitted, (53). No relevant sentences with *jiao-zao* in this particular form have been found, although the few sentences, in which *hen-zao* “(very) early” (also a degree adverb + adjective construction) modifies a predicate without *-de*, (54), indicate that *-de* is actually optional for *jiao-zao*.

- (53) meiguo que jiao-zao-de dui yeliqin zhengquan
 The USA but quite early-DE to Yeltsin regime
 de qiangying zhengce biaoshi lijie (Bond & Tan, 2012)
 ATT tough policy express understanding

“But the U.S. showed its understanding of the Yeltsin government's high-handed military intervention.”

- (54) ta tongchang hen-zao qichuang (LINE Dict, 2020)
 he usually (very) early get up
 “He usually gets up very early.”

3.1.1.3 Unspecified Adjectives

Two adjectives from the corpus, the monosyllabic *meng* “fierce” and the trisyllabic *nanweiqing* “embarrassing”, do not fit into the preceding categories for their morphological features.

Survey analysis:

Example word	English	Not opt.	Opt., SM	Opt., DM
1. <i>meng</i>	fierce	63%	25%	12%
2. <i>nanweiqing</i>	embarrassing	71%	8%	21%

Table 3

Meng “furious” (Table 3, 1.) is the only monosyllabic pre *-de* element in the corpus. 63% of respondents believe that *-de* cannot be omitted after *meng* in (55), however sentences where *meng* modifies predicates without *-de* do exist, e.g. (56).

- (55) xiuzhen meng-de huizhuan shen lai “yo” de
 Xiuzhen furious-DE turn body LAI “yo” ATT
 han le yi sheng (Lin, 2015, ch. 4)
 shout LE one sound

“Xiuzhen turned around furiously and shouted with surprise.”

(56) ta meng ti le yi xia men (LINE Dict, 2020)
 he furiouskick LE one CL door

“He gave the door a hefty kick.”

Nanweiqing “embarrassing” has not been found to modify predicates without attaching *-de*. The survey results (Table 3, 2.) also support the claim that omission of *-de* after *nanweiqing* is ungrammatical.

3.1.2 Verbs

A verb appears in the pre *-de* position in 37 example sentences. One verb appears in three separate example-sentences, two verbs appears in two separate sentences, while the rest is unique. The principal defining property of a verb is that it can function as a predicate in a clause. Unlike adjectives which can function as the predicate as well, verbs in the position of a predicate do not need to be modified by a degree adverb and can take an object (Zhu, 1982). Based on their morphological properties, these verbs have been further divided into four categories (disyllabic verbs, negated verbs, verb + complement, and reduplicated verbs). 22 of them are disyllabic verbs. 7 of them are negated verbs. These verbs are modified by a negation adverb. Since most of these verbs are monosyllabic (e.g. *buting* “to not stop”), they are considered a separate category. 1 of the verbs is modified by a complement, which is a significant morphological difference. 7 of them are reduplicated verbs. 1 of the reduplicated verbs originates from a monosyllabic verb and 6 of them from a disyllabic verb. It is important to point out that all of the reduplicated disyllabic verbs take the AABB reduplication form, which is unlike the reduplication form for verbs described by most sources (e.g. Huang & Shi, 2016, p. 83), the ABAB form.

Survey analysis:

The survey results do not show any pattern between the surveyed verbs, as each of those verbs has different grammatical qualities.

Example word	English	Not opt.	Opt., SM	Opt., DM
1. <i>pinming</i>	go all out	32%	52%	16%
2. <i>budong</i>	not move	52%	40%	8%
3. <i>kending</i>	confirm	58%	33%	9%

Table 4

After examining several example-sentences using online and digital dictionaries (e. g. LINE Dict, 2020, etc.), in which the disyllabic verbs *pinming* “to go all out”, (57), *zhuozhong* “to emphasize”, (58), *lunliu* “to take turns”, and *kuxiao* “to force a smile” do not occur in the pre *-de* position, it has been found that they mostly appear before other verbs, seemingly modifying these verbs semantically. This is a quality typical of the double predicate construction.

- (57) ta pinming xiang jijin shangceng
 she go all out want break into upper levels
 shehui (LINE Dict, 2020)
 society

“She worked hard to push her way into top society.”

- (58) benwen zhuozhong jieshao le yanshui
 this article emphasize introduce LE salt solution
 zhushuji de anzhuang (LINE Dict, 2020)
 injection machine ATT installation

“The installation of injection machine is briefly discussed in this article.”

As expected, a large percentage of respondents believe that *-de* after *pinming* (Table 4, 1.) can be omitted in (59). Omission of *-de* causes *pinming* to become another predicate of the sentence, but the meaning of the sentence can stay the same.

- (59) shi lai ge nianqingren pinming-de qiaoxiang le
 ten about CL young person go all out-DE sound a bell LE
 luogu (Yu, 2015)
 gong and drum

“About ten youngsters sounded the gongs and drums with utmost strength.”

It is possible that the meaning of (59) can actually change, because *pinming* does not only mean “to go all out”, sometimes it can also mean “to risk one’s life”. According to one respondent’s explanation, “when *-de* is omitted the meaning of the sentence would be ‘About ten youngsters risked their lives and sounded the gongs and drums’”. Adding *-de* to *pinming* in (59) is practical, as it helps the reader to understand the meaning of the sentence without relying solely on the context.

52% of respondents believe that *-de* attached to *budong* “to not move”, which is a negated monosyllabic verb, cannot be omitted (Table 4, 2.). One respondent explained that *-de* can be omitted in (60), but the meaning would be affected.

- (60) ta yanzhu budong-de ding zhe wo (Lin, 2015, ch. 1)
 she eyeball not move-DE stare ZHE I

“She kept staring at me blankly.”

The adverb *kending* “certainly” commonly functions as an adverbial modifier without attaching *-de*, (61).

(61) zhe kending shi meiqi (LINE Dict, 2020)
 this certainly is gas

“It's gas sure enough.”

It is clear from the context that *kending* “to confirm” in the pre *-de* position of the surveyed example sentence is not an adverb, because its meaning does not correspond to that of the adverbial *kending*.

(62) tamen kending-de shuo suoyou de men dou cong limian
 they confirm-DE say all ATT door all from inside
 shuanhao le (Bond & Tan, 2012)
 bolt LE

“They were clear that every door was fastened upon the inside.”

In total, 58% of respondents think that *-de* attached to *kending* (Table 4, 3.) in (62) is compulsory. Such a ratio is relatively high for an adverb; therefore, the results support the claim that *kending* in (62) is not an adverb. On the other hand, omission of *-de* most likely would not be ungrammatical, but it would be uncertain, whether *kending* is an adverb, as seen in (61), or whether it is a part of a double predicate construction. If *kending* were an adverb, the meaning of the sentence would change to “They certainly say that every door was fastened upon the inside”, whereas in the case of *kending* becoming a part of a double predicate construction, the meaning would not be affected.

3.1.3 Verb + Object Construction

The verb + object construction appears in the pre *-de* position of 17 example sentences of the corpus. In 13 cases, the object is preceded by the verb *you* “to have” or its variations, in 3 cases it is *chongman* “to be filled with”, and in one case it is *yong* “to use”.

Survey analysis:

Overall, a low number of respondents think that omission of *-de* after a verb + object construction would be ungrammatical.

Example word	English	Not opt.	Opt., SM	Opt., DM
1. <i>you-tiaojian</i>	have conditions/conditional	34%	47%	19%
2. <i>haowu-guji</i>	without scruple	46%	38%	16%

3. <i>chongman-xinxin</i>	be filled with confidence	52%	43%	5%
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Table 5

Omission of *-de* would cause that the verb + object construction and the following predicate to form a double predicate construction. Respondents claim that omission of *-de* in (63) and (64) (Table 5, 1. and 2.) would not be ungrammatical, however it would change the meaning of the sentence. According to respondents' explanation, the meaning of (63) would change to "The conditions to undertake the task are fulfilled.", which confirms the point made in Zhu (1982, p. 153), while in the case of (64), omission of *-de* would cause *haowu-guji* "without scruples" to describe the state of mind of the subject instead of describing the manner in which the predicate *naqi* "to pick up" takes place.

- (63) you-tiaojian-de chengdan yiwu (Zhu, 1982, p. 153)
have condition undertake task

"to undertake an task on a condition"

- (64) wo haowu-guji-de naqi ji man chagou de
I without scruple-DE pick up amass full tea stain ATT
chawan yaoshui he (Yu, 2015)
teacup ladle water drink

"Without scruples, I picked up a teacup full of tea stains, filled it with water and drank it."

200 example sentences containing *chongman* "to be filled with" have been reviewed. Although the *chongman* + object construction can function as a predicate by itself, (65), no sentence with it appearing in a double predicate construction have been found and no *chongman* + object constructions modifying predicates without adding *-de* have been found, either.

- (65) ta chongman xinxin (LINE Dict, 2020)
he be filled with confidence

"He is instinct with confidence."

In (66), there are no grammatical obstructions for *-de* to be omitted, as omission would cause *chongman* to become a predicate, and form a double predicate construction with *shuo* "say".

- (66) ta chongman-xinxin-de shuo (Bond & Tan, 2012)
he be filled with confidence-DE say

"He says with confidence."

43% of respondents believe that *-de* can be omitted without affecting the meaning of the sentence, which indicates that omission is not ungrammatical. To the 52% of respondents saying that omission is not possible, the sentence without *-de* might only appear very unfamiliar.

3.1.4 Subject + Predicate Construction

The corpus includes 6 example sentences with the subject + predicate construction in the pre *-de* position, all of which are unique. This construction involves the subject (in the available example sentences it is either a noun or a numeral preceding a classifier) followed by the predicate (a verb or a preposition) followed by the object, which is identical to the subject, (Zhu, 1982, p. 153). The subject + predicate construction has the ability to function as a predicate, as in (67).

- (67) qilai fayan de ren yi-ge jie
 start to speak ATT people one-CL take one's turn
yi-ge (LINE Dict, 2020)
 one-CL

“One after another, people got up to speak.”

Survey analysis:

One example of a subject + predicate construction was included in the survey. In total, 71% of respondents believe that *-de* can be omitted in the surveyed example sentence, (68). This result is supported by Zhu (1982, p. 153).

Example word	English	Not opt.	Opt., SM	Opt., DM
1. yizhang-jie-yizhang	one by one	29%	46%	25%

Table 6

The surveyed pre *-de* subject + predicate construction consists of a numeral preceding a classifier (subject), which is followed by the verb *jie* “take one’s turn” (predicate), which is followed by an object identical to the subject, (68).

- (68) yi-zhang jie yi-zhang-de laihui
 one-CL take one's turn one-CL-DE travel back and forth
 diaohuan (Bond & Tan, 2012)
 exchange

“to swap paper sheet after sheet”

The meaning of (69) and (70) is practically identical, even though the subject + predicate construction in (69) is followed by *-de*, whereas in (70), it is directly followed by a predicate.

- (69) deng yi-ge jie yi-ge-de ximie le
 lamp one-CL take one's turn one-CL-DE go out LE
 (LINE Dict, 2020)

“One by one the lights went out.”

- (70) diandeng yi-ge jie yi-ge mie le
 electric lamp one-CL take one's turn one-CL go out LE
 (LINE Dict, 2020)

“The lights went out one after another.”⁸

Review of example sentences reveal that adverbial *-de* following *mian-dui-mian* “face to face” can be omitted, while the meaning of the sentence will remain the same (compare (71) and (72)).

- (71) wo he ta mian-dui-mian zuo zhe (LINE Dict, 2020)
 I and she face to face sit ZHE

“I sat face to face with her.”

- (72) ta he wo mian-dui-mian-de zuo zhe (LINE Dict, 2020)
 he and I face to face-DE sit ZHE

“He sat face to face with me.”

3.1.5 *Xiang/gen... yiyang* “to be like” Construction

8 example sentences have been placed in this category. All the pre *-de* elements are unique in that there is no repetition. The criteria for identification of the *xiang/gen... yiyang* construction is very straightforward. It begins with the preposition *xiang* “towards” or the preposition *gen* “with” and ends with the adjective *yiyang* “same”. There is always a word or an entire phrase in between. The meaning can be roughly translated as “to be like”. Out of the 8 example-sentences, two contain a morphologically different construction which has been placed in this category for its semantic similarities with the aforementioned construction. This construction involves a word, or a phrase followed by the auxiliary word *ban* “as, like”.

Survey analysis:

According to Zhu (1982, p. 155), the adverbial suffix *-de* following *xiang/gen... yiyang* construction can be always omitted without affecting the meaning of the sentence.

Example word	English	Not opt.	Opt., SM	Opt., DM
1. <i>zhicuo-ban</i>	as if to know one's mistake	50%	34%	16%

⁸ The structural dissimilarity of the translations is unrelated to the structure dissimilarity of the example sentences in Chinese.

2. <i>gen-wo-yiyang</i>	same as me	25%	58%	17%
3. <i>xiang-zai wo mianqian-yiyang</i>	as if [you] were in front of me	52%	34%	14%

Table 7

It is therefore not clear, why more than a half of respondents believe that *-de* cannot be omitted in (73) (Table 7, 3.), whereas the survey results of a similar example (74) (Table 7, 2.) indicate that *-de* is optional.

(73) ni keyi xiang zai wo mianqian yiyang-de tanhua
you can like in I in front of same-DE talk
(Bond & Tan, 2012)

“You can talk, as if you were in front of me.”

(74) xiuzhen gen wo yiyang-de suan bu qingchu
Xiuzhen with I same-DE count NEG clear
(Lin, 2015, ch. 3)

“Just like me, Xiuzhen cannot count it accurately.”

Despite 52% of respondents’ claim about *-de* being compulsory in (73) (Table 7, 3.), it is possible that omission of *-de* is not ungrammatical. According to Zhu (1982, p. 155), when a *xiang/gen... yiyang* construction precedes another predicate without having *-de* attached to itself, it becomes a double predicate construction. This double predicate construction describes two separate events, where the former event specifies the circumstances, under which the latter event takes place.

(75) ta xiang shengdanshu yiyang faguang (LINE Dict, 2020)
it like Christmas tree same sparkle
“‘It sparkled like a Christmas tree.”

In (75), the *xiang... yiyang* construction acts as the first predicate, while *faguang* “sparkle” as the second. It is evident that the first predicate describes the manner in which the action of the second predicate takes place. The same logic can be applied to (76), as well. When *-de* is omitted, the adverbial modifier becomes another predicate.

(76) ni keyi xiang zai wo mianqian yiyang tanhua
you can like in I in front of same talk

“You can talk, as if you were in front of me.”

Although *ban* “as, like” is semantically very similar to the *xiang/gen... yiyang* construction, which is the reason for it to be discussed in this subsection, its grammatical properties are different, as it does not function as a predicate. Despite that, only fifty 50% of respondents believe that *-de* cannot be omitted, (77), (Table 7, 1.).

- (77) fangfu zhicuo ban-de taiqi le tou (Yu, 2015)
 seemingly know one's mistake as-DE lift up LE head

“[It] lifted its head as if it knew, what it had done wrong.”

Furthermore, more sentences with *ban* “as, like” modifying a predicate without attaching *-de* have been found, (78), (79). In these sentences, *ban* appears together with *xiang* “like”, in the *xiang... ban* construction, reminding of the *xiang/gen... yiyang* construction even more.

- (78) xiang nuli ban gongzuo (LINE Dict, 2020)
 like slave as work

“to work like a slave”

- (79) ta xiang shaonü ban haixiu (LINE Dict, 2020)
 she like young girl as shy

“She was girlishly shy.”

3.2 Non-Predicative Pre *-de* Elements

This section discusses pre *-de* elements whose original function is not predicative, namely, attributive adjectives (reduplicated and ABB form adjectives), nouns, adverbs, onomatopoeia, and reduplicated classifier compounds.

3.2.1 Attributive Adjectives

Adjectives can function as attributes as well. Attributive adjectives typically precede the noun they modify and take the attributive suffix *-de*. Furthermore, adjectives that are fully or partially reduplicated predominantly function as attributes (Huang & Shi, 2016, p. 288).

3.2.1.1 Reduplicated Adjectives (Monosyllabic AA Form and Disyllabic AABB Form)

64 pre *-de* adjectives in the corpus are reduplicated. 17 of those are reduplicated disyllabic adjectives, while the remaining 47 are reduplicated monosyllabic adjectives. One reduplicated adjective appears in three separate example-sentences and two reduplicated adjectives each appear in two separate sentences. A reduplicated word is considered reduplicated adjective if it possesses the characteristics of an adjective in its original form.

Survey analysis:

4 reduplicated adjectives in the AA form and 4 reduplicated adjectives in the AABB form have been surveyed. The survey results for the entire group of reduplicated adjectives quite vary. No pattern has been observed among AA form reduplicated adjectives. On the other hand, large portion of respondents believe that AABB form reduplicated adjectives do not need *-de*.

Example word	English	Not opt.	Opt., SM	Opt., DM
1. <i>lala</i>	spicy	74%	11%	15%
2. <i>manman</i>	slow	79%	13%	8%
3. <i>manman</i>	full	43%	48%	12%
4. <i>yaoyao</i>	far away	61%	30%	9%
5. <i>jujucucu</i>	embarrassed	58%	31%	11%
6. <i>shishizaizai</i>	true, real	48%	44%	8%
7. <i>mimihuhu</i>	bewildered	36%	44%	20%

Table 8

According to Lü (1999, p. 161), it is optional to attach *-de* to reduplicated adjectives when modifying predicates. The survey shows that omission of *-de* after *lala* “spicy”, (80), (Table 8, 1.), is most likely ungrammatical, but one respondent explains that omission of *-de* would cause *lala* to become the subject of the sentence, as *lala* would be considered a personal name by some. In this sentence *-de* clarifies the message of the sentence by explicitly revealing the function of the pre *-de* element.

- (80) lala-de zuo yi wan tang (Zhu, 1982, p. 154)
 spicy-DE make one bowl soup
 “to make a spicy bowl of soup”

Unlike *lala*, the remaining three AA form reduplicated adjectives have been found to function as adverbial modifiers without the addition of *-de*. The high ratio of respondents claiming that *manman* “slow” (Table 8, 2.) requires *-de* can almost certainly be explained by the fact that *manman* is in the external position of the surveyed sentence (further discussed in 3.5). Otherwise, it is very common for *manman* “slow” to modify predicates in the internal position without attaching *-de*, (81). Similarly, the remaining two AA form reduplicated adjectives have been found to modify predicates without *-de*.

- (81) ta manman ba qiang fangxia (LINE Dict, 2020)
 he slow BA gun lay down
 “He lowered his gun slowly.”

With the exception of *jujucucu* “embarrassed” (Table 8, 5.), the survey results indicate that omission of *-de* following an AABB reduplicated adjective is possible without affecting the meaning of the sentence. This tendency is further supported by the review of other example sentences, in which these adjectives function as adverbial modifiers without attaching *-de*, as seen in (82) and (83)(83).

(82) wo nenggou shishizaizai chidao yi xiao kuai
 I can actually eat up one little piece
 binggan (LINE Dict, 2020)
 biscuit

“I can actually eat a little bit of a biscuit.”

(83) wo kaishi mimihuhu shui qu le (LINE Dict, 2020)
 I begin bewildered sleep go LE

“I began to doze off.”

3.2.1.2 ABB Form Adjectives

The so-called ABB form adjective occurs the pre *-de* position in 9 example sentences of the corpus. None of these ABB adjectives is identical as any other in the corpus. They consist of three syllables. The second syllable is always identical to the third, but unlike the first (e.g. *manyouyou* “unhurried”). Same as reduplicated adjectives, ABB adjectives cannot be modified by degree adverbs, as their form itself indicates degree (Huang & Shi, 2016, p. 288).

Survey analysis:

In all of the 3 surveyed cases, slightly more than a half of the respondents believe that *-de* cannot be omitted.

Example word	English	Not opt.	Opt., SM	Opt., DM
1. <i>qifenfen</i>	furious	54%	35%	11%
2. <i>mantuntun</i>	very slow	52%	32%	16%
3. <i>xiaomimi</i>	smiling	60%	28%	12%

Table 9

Despite the fact that more respondents claim omission of *-de* after *mantuntun* “very slow” (Table 9, 2.) and *xiaomimi* “smiling” (Table 9, 3.) would be ungrammatical, sentences where these ABB adjectives function as adverbial modifiers without *-de* have been found (see (84) and (85)). No such example sentences with *qifenfen* “furious” (Table 9, 1.) have been found.

(84) nanhai mantuntun hui dao bangongshi (LINE Dict, 2020)
 boy very slow return to office

“The messenger boy jogged back to the office.”

(85) tangmu xiaomimi zuo zai na'er (LINE Dict, 2020)
 Tom smiling sit at there

“Tom sat there smiling.”

3.2.2 Nouns

19 sentences in the corpus contain a noun occurring in the position preceding the adverbial suffix *-de*. One noun appears in three separate example-sentences and two nouns each appear in two separate sentences, while the rest is unique. 17 of them are abstract nouns, 1 of them is a countable noun, and 1 is a noun of locality (*mandi* “everywhere”). Words that can be modified by a classifier and cannot be modified by adverbs are classified as nouns. This is the criteria for a pre *-de* word to be included in the noun category used in the research. 8 of the abstract nouns included can also be used as adjectives (e.g. *kexue* “science, scientific”) (Zhu, 1982, p. 152). These words were ultimately placed in the noun category for convenience reasons, as many more example-sentences with disyllabic adverbs have been collected.

Survey analysis:

5 example sentences with a noun in the pre *-de* position have been surveyed to find out, whether nouns can function as an adverbial modifier without the addition of *-de*. In each of all the 5 cases, more than a half of respondents answered that *-de* cannot be omitted to fulfill the function of an adverbial modifier.

Example word	English	Not opt.	Opt., SM	Opt., DM
1. <i>xingshizhuyi</i>	formalism	66%	24%	10%
2. <i>chuangxinshi</i>	innovative style	70%	18%	12%
3. <i>xijuxing</i>	dramatic nature	65%	22%	13%
4. <i>xingfu</i>	happiness/happy	90%	0%	10%
5. <i>jixie</i>	machine/rigid	56%	26%	18%

Table 10

One respondent explained that *-de* can actually be omitted after *chuangxinshi* “innovative style”, but it would result in *chuangxinshi* becoming the subject of the sentence instead of an adverbial modifier, (86). Although this sentence without *-de* would not be ungrammatical, *-de* still must be included, for the intended meaning to be conveyed.

- (86) chuangxinshi-de ba wailai shiwu gaibianwei zhongguo
 innovative style-DE BA external food change to China
 yinshi chengfen (Jiang, 2015, p. 97)
 diet ingredient

“to innovatively use foreign food as Chinese ingredients”

Among all the reviewed sentences with *xingshizhuyi* “formalism” and *xijuxing* “dramatic nature”, not a single example of these nouns functioning as an adverbial modifier without *-de* has been found.

One example sentence with *jixie* “machine/rigid” functioning as an adverbial modifier without *-de* has been found, (87), however, there is no way of ruling out the possibility that *jixie* is actually the subject of the sentence. It is only the context that hints that *jixie* is actually an adverbial modifier.

- (87) jixie zhaoban taren de zuofa
 machine/exactly copy someone else ATT method
 (LINE Dict, 2020)
 “to copy someone else’s method exactly”

3.2.3 Adverbs

In 34 example sentences it has been determined that the pre *-de* element is an adverb. One adverb appears in three separate example-sentences, and two adverbs each appear in two separate sentences, while the rest is unique. Adverbs are always placed before a predicate (verb, adjective, preposition), or before another adverb, directly modifying the predicate (Švarný & Uher, 2014, p. 70). Digital and online dictionaries were also consulted in the process of determining whether a pre *-de* word is an adverb. Adverbs in the corpus were not divided into any more categories, as they all belong in the subcategory of the so-called manner adverbs, adverbs that describe the manner in which the action of the verb phrase is carried out. (Li & Thompson, 1989, p. 322)

Literature sources (Biq, 2015; Li & Thompson, 1989; Lü, 1999; Zhu, 1982) agree that *-de* attached to adverbs is optional and does not change the meaning of the sentence. In 5 of the example-sentences taken from grammar books that include a pre *-de* adverb, it is stated that the adverbial suffix *-de* is optional.

Survey analysis:

In total, 7 sentences with an adverb in the pre *-de* position were included in the survey. The majority of answers on average suggested that the suffix *-de* attached to adverbs is optional.

Example word	English	Not opt.	Opt., SM	Opt., DM
1. <i>zhaoli</i>	as a rule	27%	54%	19%
2. <i>yigejin</i>	continuously	36%	56%	8%

3. <i>lianye</i>	that very night	39%	52%	9%
4. <i>qingyi</i>	easily	39%	47%	14%
5. <i>databu</i>	in big strides	54%	30%	16%
6. <i>jianjian</i>	gradually	35%	54%	11%
7. <i>anan</i>	secretly	19%	65%	16%

Table 11

The survey results reveal a pattern among the adverbs *zhaoli*, *lianye*, *jianjian*, and *anan* (Table 11, 1., 3., 6., 7.). For each of these adverbs, respondents largely agreed that the adverbial *-de* can be omitted in the sentences these adverbs appeared in. This claim is also supported by the fact that when these adverbs function as adverbial modifiers in other example sentences, they often appear without *-de* attached. (88) and (89) illustrate how *anan* “secretly” can appear in two structurally almost identical sentences, once with *-de*, and once without it.

(88) xinli anan-de xiang (Lu, 2014, p. 231)
in the heart secretly-DE think

“to think to oneself”

(89) ta xinli anan qidai (LINE Dict, 2020)
she in the heart secretly hope

“She hopes inwardly.”

According to more than half of respondents’ answer, *databu* “in big strides” (Table 11, 5.) requires *-de* to function as an adverbial modifier. On the other hand, many other example sentences contain *databu* in the adverbial function without the need of *-de*, including sentences of similar structure (compare (90) and (91)).

(90) databu-de zou chuqu le fangjian (Bond & Tan, 2012)
in big strides-DE walk out LE room

“walked out in big strides”

(91) databu zou chu le guoyuan (LINE Dict, 2020)
in big strides walk out LE orchard

“walked out of the orchard in big strides”

Relatively low percentage of respondents think that *-de* after *qingyi* “easily” can be omitted. Numerous example sentences in which *qingyi* functions as an adverbial modifier without *-de* have been found. The example included in the survey is specific in that its predicate is followed by the auxiliary *le* (92). In total, 942 example sentences reviewed

containing *qingyi* were reviewed to find out whether there is a correlation between a predicate followed by the auxiliary *le* and addition of *-de* to *qingyi* modifying the predicate. 30 example sentences with a verb followed by *le* were found. In 19 out of the 30 sentences *qingyi* was followed by *-de*, whereas in 11 sentences *-de* was not added to *qingyi*. Sentences missing *-de* but otherwise structurally similar to (92) have also been found, (93).

(92) ba yinjiang qingyi-de fangqi le (Bond & Tan, 2012)
 BA Silver General easily-DE give up LE
 “He's throwing away his Silver General!”

(93) wo dui bei duifang qingyi dabai le (LINE Dict, 2020)
 our team BEI opponent easily defeat LE
 “Our team was easily beaten.”

Although examples of *yigejin* “continuously” modifying a predicate without *-de* have been found, but whenever *-de* is omitted, *erhua* (儿化) is attached instead, (94).

(94) zhuren yigejinr cui women chi (LINE Dict, 2020)
 host continuously urge we eat
 “The host kept pressing us to eat.”

3.2.4 Onomatopoeia

23 sentences in the corpus have been found to contain an onomatopoeia in the pre *-de* position. Two onomatopoeia appear in two separate sentences, the remaining pre *-de* elements in this category are unique. There are no grammatical criteria for a word to be placed in this category due to the fact that the onomatopoeia group does not possess grammatical properties in the same way other categories of words do (Švarný & Uher, 2014, p. 102). For this reason, whether a pre *-de* word is an onomatopoeia was determined based on the information provided by digital and online dictionaries. For examples taken from a grammar book, this information was acquired from the given grammar book directly.

Survey analysis:

4 of the 5 pre *-de* onomatopoeia included in the survey have had similar results. In 4 of these cases, more than 70% of respondents believe that omitting *-de* would be ungrammatical.

Example word	English	Not opt.	Opt., SM	Opt., DM
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1. <i>longlong</i>	rumble	75%	17%	8%
2. <i>gulugulu</i>	rumble	71%	21%	8%
3. <i>pipipapa</i>	sound of crackling	46%	38%	16%
4. <i>shuashua</i>	scrub	84%	8%	8%
5. “ <i>zhiliaozhiliao</i> ”	sound of a cicada	75%	8%	17%

Table 12

In the case of *pipipapa* “sound of crackling” (Table 12, 3.), the results were more nuanced, as slightly more than a half of the respondents think that omission of *-de* would not be ungrammatical. One respondent also explained the semantic difference between this sentence, (95), with and without *-de*. According to their explanation, “*pipipapa-de* describes the action, whereas *pipipapa* without *-de* describes the sound”.

- (95) pipipapa-de daluo zai zhuandi shang
“pipipapa”-DE knock down on brick floor on top
(Lin, 2015, ch. 4)

“to knock on the brick floor in a crackling manner”

3.2.5 Reduplicated Classifier Compound

14 example sentences in the corpus contain the so-called reduplicated classifier compound. Only one of the compounds appears in two separate sentences, the remaining pre *-de* elements in this category are unique. As the name implies, reduplicated classifier compounds consist of two classifiers and one or two numerals (e. g. *yi-bu-yi-bu* “step by step”, *yi-ci-ci* “time and again). In one case, a noun follows each classifier within the reduplicated classifier compound, (96).

- (96) yi-ge-zi-yi-ge-zi-de nian (Lü, 1999, p. 160)
one-CL-character-one-CL-character read aloud

“to read word by word”

Survey analysis:

The survey results suggest that the adverbial suffix *-de* attached to a reduplicated classifier compound can be omitted, as a relatively low number of respondents claim that omission of *-de* would be ungrammatical.

Example word	English	Not opt.	Opt., SM	Opt., DM
1. <i>yi-bu-yi-bu</i>	step by step	44%	40%	16%
2. <i>yi-shao-shao</i>	spoon by spoon	52%	36%	12%

3. <i>yi-zi-zi</i> ⁹	word by word	29%	54%	17%
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Table 13

There is a disagreement among respondents on whether *-de* attached to *yi-bu-yi-bu* “step by step” (Table 13, 1.) in (97) can be omitted. In total, 56% of respondents think that *-de* is not compulsory, out of which 16% think that omission would affect the meaning of the sentence. According to one respondent’s explanation, “when *-de* is attached, *yi-bu-yi-bu* suggests that the action takes place in a very slow manner, whereas *yi-bu-yi-bu* without *-de* suggest the action takes place in the literal ‘step by step’ manner”. This difference in meaning might be also caused by the modified predicate *zoukai* “to walk away”, as it can be done in both of the ways described by the respondent. In (98), *yi-bu-yi-bu* modifies *yingde* “to gain”. In this case, the meaning of *yi-bu-yi-bu* is most likely figurative, because the action does not involve the walking movement, but despite that, it is not followed by *-de*.

- (97) yi-bu-yi-bu-de zoukai qu (Yu, 2015)
step by step-DE walk away go
“to walk away, step by step”

- (98) ta yi-bu-yi-bu yingde le zhe ge haizi de xinren
he step by step gain LE this CL child ATT trust
(LINE Dict, 2020)

“Step by step, he gained the child's trust.”

The survey results of *yi-shao-shao* “spoon by spoon” (Table 13, 2.) and *yi-zi-zi* “word by word” (Table 13, 3.), both of which consist of one numeral and two classifiers, differ slightly, but overall hint the survey results at the likelihood of *-de* not being compulsory. This is further supported by sentences containing reduplicated classifier compounds of the same form modifying predicates without *-de*, (101). A possible reason for the discrepancy in survey results between (99) (Table 13, 2.) and (100) (Table 13, 3.) is that *-de* in (99) is followed by a preposition, whereas *-de* in (100) is followed by a verb.

- (99) yi-shao-shao-de wang lianpen li yaoshui (Lin, 2015, ch. 2)
spoon by spoon-DE to washbasin in ladle water
“to scoop up water into the washbasin spoon by spoon”

- (100) buyoude yi-zi-zi-de nian chulai (Lin, 2015, ch. 3)
can't help word by word-DE read aloud (out)

⁹ The word *zi* “word, character” is not usually used as a classifier, however the structure and usage of the phrase *yi-zi-zi* “word by word”, which *zi* is a part of is identical to other reduplicated classifier compounds.

“cannot help but read [it] out loud”

- (101) keren yi-ge-ge san le (LINE Dict, 2020)
 guest one by one disperse LE

“The guests walked away one by one.”

3.3 Idioms

Based on the information provided by digital and online dictionaries, 69 example sentences in the corpus contain an idiom. Out of these idioms, only 2 are not four-character idioms, but six-character idioms. Idioms are a very diverse category. Every idiom has its own grammatical properties, for example, some idioms can function as a predicate, an attribute, or an adverbial modifier, whereas some idioms are always adverbial modifiers, therefore, every idiom needs to be analyzed individually (Zhu, 1982, p. 154).

Survey analysis:

Supporting the statement that idioms are very diverse category, the survey results are very inconsistent. This thesis only lists the survey results of the pre *-de* idioms, as the data collected is insufficient to conduct more in-depth analysis.

Example word	English	Not opt.	Opt., SM	Opt., DM
1. <i>xinggaocailie</i>	be on top of the world	57%	36%	7%
2. <i>zhengxiankonghou</i>	strive to be the first	38%	48%	14%
3. <i>bushishiji</i>	not let the opportunity slip	44%	48%	8%
4. <i>yiranjueran</i>	resolutely	57%	30%	13%
5. <i>yidongbudong</i>	without movement	64%	16%	20%
6. <i>qingshouqingjiao</i>	gently	63%	25%	12%
7. <i>angshoukuobu</i>	stride proudly ahead	43%	39%	18%
8. <i>yierzai, zaiersan</i>	time and again	43%	34%	23%
9. <i>qiongxiangji'e</i>	diabolical	83%	8%	9%
10. <i>tanxiaoziru</i>	remain cheerful	58%	25%	17%
11. <i>qingeryiju</i>	without effort	42%	38%	20%

Table 14

3.4 Unspecified Pre *-de* Elements

30 pre *-de* elements from the corpus were not categorized, as there is very little information about them, or they did not fit into any of the categories listed above. The unspecified pre *-de* elements that were included in the survey are listed in Table 15.

Example word	English	Not opt.	Opt., SM	Opt., DM
1. <i>gen wo ni ya wo</i>		66%	17%	17%
2. <i>pinghe er meiyou chongtu</i>		50%	31%	19%
3. <i>zizijiji</i>		73%	12%	15%
4. <i>yijingyizha</i>	frightened	56%	28%	16%
5. <i>man shi name hui shi</i>		68%	16%	16%
6. <i>zheyang</i>	so	33%	58%	9%
7. <i>shuangbijiaocha</i>		42%	42%	16%
8. <i>youdian kunhuobujie</i>	feel puzzled a little	50%	25%	25%

Table 15

3.5 Internal vs. External Position

Adverbs can appear in a sentence either internally or externally (Biq, 2015, p. 414, see 1.4). Li and Thompson (1989, p. 322) classify adverbial phrases with the suffix *-de* as nonmovable manner adverbs, by which they suggest that these phrases can only appear in a fixed position of the sentence: after the subject or topic.

Although in the overwhelming majority of example sentences reviewed for this paper, the adverbial phrases with *-de* occurs in the internal position, isolated instances of a *-de* phrase appearing in an external position have also been encountered.

- (102) *zhaoli-de*, dang tamen yishidao yiqie dou wan le
as a rule-DE, as they realize everything all finish LE
de shihou, geng yanjun de qingkuang zai dengdai-ZHE
ATT time more severe ATT situation ZAI await-ZHE
dangju (LINE Dict, 2020)
authorities

“As a rule, even the more hardened cases respond to authority when they realize the game is up.”

Based on the survey results (Table 11, 1.) and review of more example sentences, it can be inferred that the adverb *zhaoli* “as a rule” can usually function as an adverbial modifier without *-de*. Out of the 83 example sentences with *zhaoli* provided by LINE Dict (2020), only one sentence contained *zhaoli* with *-de* attached (102). This sentence is specific in that *zhaoli-de* appears in external position.

Another example sentence (103) containing a word with the adverbial suffix *-de* in the external position has been found in Lin (2015). This example has also been included in

the survey, in which 79% of respondents answered that *-de* cannot be omitted (Table 8, 2.), otherwise it would be ungrammatical.

- (103) manman-de, manman-de, ce-zhe tou xiang wo shen hou
 slow-DE, slow-DE, incline-ZHE head to I body behind
 kan (Lin, 2015, ch. 4)
 look

“Slowly, slowly, [he] inclined his head to a side to look behind me.”

The adverb *jianjian* “gradually” has also been found to appear in the external position with *-de* attached (104). In total, *jianjian* occurs in the external position in 79 out of 1410 reviewed example sentences provided by LINE Dict (2020). Out of the 79 examples, only two have no *-de* attached, while the rest does. Although *jianjian* does appear in the external position without *-de*, (105), it seems to attach *-de* more commonly.

- (104) jianjian-de, kerenmen quan zou le (LINE Dict, 2020)
 gradually-DE guests full go LE

“Gradually, all of the guests left.”

- (105) jianjian, wo faxian wo ba wenti kan de tai
 gradually I realize I BA problem look COM¹⁰too
 yanzhong le (LINE Dict, 2020)
 serious LE

“Gradually, I found out the problem was not as serious as I thought.”

The adjective *tongyang* “same” often occurs in the external position followed by the adverbial suffix *-de*. Review of numerous example sentences reveals that *tongyang* can appear in the external position both with and without *-de*, (106) and (107).

- (106) tongyang-de, women ying shefa bimian shengqi
 same-DE we should try avoid get angry
 (LINE Dict, 2020)

“Likewise, we should try to avoid being angry.”

- (107) tongyang, zhe ye bu shi huyu shili (LINE Dict, 2020)
 same, this too NEG is appeal snobbish

“Also, this is not an appeal to snobbery.”

3.6 Adverb *jiu* “just”

As mentioned in 3.1.1.2, almost 70% of respondents believe that *-de* following the degree adverb + adjective construction *hen-rongyi* “(very) easy” (Table 2, 2.) can be omitted.

¹⁰ This is the complement marker *-de*, not the adverbial marker *-de*.

The possible reason for such an outcome is that *hen-rongyi-de* is immediately followed by the adverb *jiu* “just”, as seen in (108).

- (108) ta hen-rongyi-de jiu ba pinyin xuehui le (Švarný, 2002)
 he (very) easy-DE just BA pinyin learn LE
 “He learned pinyin very easily.”

More instances of *jiu* following words or phrases which are commonly attach the adverbial suffix *-de* have been found, for example, *shuangkuai* “straight-forward”, which commonly does not appear as an adverbial modifier without *-de*, does not take *-de* in (109) where it precedes *jiu*.

- (109) mei xiangdao ni zheme-shuangkuai jiu rencuo
 not have expect you so outright just admit a fault
 le (LINE Dict, 2020)
 LE
 “I didn't expect you to cop to it.”

3.7 Summary

All in all, the survey results have been largely inconsistent, however patterns have been found among some of the categories. On average, highest ratio of respondents think that omission of *-de* would be ungrammatical, when it follows disyllabic adjectives, nouns, degree adverb + adjective constructions, and onomatopoeia. On the other hand, adverbs, verb + object constructions, *xiang/gen... yiyang* constructions, and reduplicated classifier compounds show results that suggest that *-de* is usually optional, when it is attached to these categories.

Pre <i>-de</i> category	Average percentage		
	Not opt.	Opt., SM	Opt., DM
1. Disyllabic adjectives	55%	36%	9%
2. Nouns	69%	18%	13%
3. Degree adverb + adjective	59%	30%	11%
4. Onomatopoeia	70%	18%	12%
5. Adverbs	36%	51%	13%
6. Verb + object	44%	43%	13%
7. <i>Xiang/gen... yiyang</i>	42%	42%	16%
8. Reduplicated classifier	42%	43%	15%

Table 16

The survey results of the remaining categories, comprising of verbs, reduplicated adjectives, ABB form adjectives, subject + predicate constructions, idioms, and unspecified adjectives are either too inconsistent to reveal any pattern, and/or lack a sufficient number of surveyed examples.

Conclusion

This thesis investigated the categories of elements preceding the adverbial marker *-de*. It attempted to find a connection between the pre *-de* elements and the optionality of *-de*. Furthermore, it also aimed at specifying the function of the adverbial marker *-de*.

Categories of pre *-de* elements were divided into two larger groups, predicative pre *-de* elements and non-predicative pre *-de* elements, based on the hypothesis that the ability of a pre *-de* element to function as a predicate affects the optionality of the addition of *-de*. Each category of pre *-de* elements was defined and analyzed separately based on information provided by literature sources, data collected through a survey, which enquired Chinese native speakers about their judgement on the optionality of *-de*, and comparison of example sentences. Although the survey has shown some patterns regarding the optionality of *-de*, it could not be considered completely reliable for two reasons. The first reason is that insufficient amount of data was collected due to the tediousness of the survey itself and also the small number of respondents. The other reason is that in many cases the respondents gave conflicting answers, which could be caused by various factors, such as dialectical background, age, education background, etc. Because of these problems, example sentences provided by online dictionaries, which contain the pre *-de* elements included in the survey were reviewed additionally. This method has proven to be a reliable way to confirm that *-de* is not necessary after certain pre *-de* elements, because it can show a concrete example of a pre *-de* element modifying a predicate without attaching *-de*. On the other hand, although not finding the *de*-less version of a particular adverbial modifier does not prove that *-de* is obligatory in that case, such results were still used in the thesis to support the claim that *-de* is necessary when literature sources and the survey results showed similar tendencies.

The adverbial marker *-de* has been found to serve various functions. When *-de* is attached to a noun that precedes the predicate, it indicates that the noun is not the subject of the sentence, but an adverbial modifier. Placing *-de* after the first predicate in a double predicate construction causes this predicate to become an adverbial modifier. Inclusion of *-de* may or may not affect the meaning of the sentence, depending on the category of the pre *-de* element. The function of *-de* is not entirely clear with all of the pre *-de* elements, especially adverbs, as they usually do not need *-de* to modify predicates. One

possible reason is that attaching *-de* can help a reader or listener identify adverbial modifiers more easily. This might also explain the tendency of adverbial modifiers in the external position to attach *-de* more often than their internal counterparts. Attaching the adverbial marker *-de* clarifies that a standalone word is an adverbial modifier.

This thesis did not investigate how different words or phrases that follow the adverbial marker *-de* affect its optionality. Adverbs are known to precede verbs, adjectives, prepositions, and other adverbs (Švarný & Uher, 2014, p. 70). It is possible that *-de* might be more or less likely to be omitted depending on the element that follows it. Another future study could explore the history of the adverbial marker *-de*. Li and Thompson (1989, p. 323) claim that numerous adverbs have been derived by attaching the adverbial marker *-de* as a result of the influence of Indo-European languages. Such a study might reveal a direct link of the adverbial marker *-de* to Indo-European languages. It also has a potential to clarify the function of *-de* in more detail.

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývala kategoriemi slov a slovních spojení (prvků), které se vyskytují před adverbialním slovcem *-de* v čínštině a snažila se najít souvislost určitých kategorií prvků předcházejících *-de* s jeho vynecháním. Jejím dalším cílem bylo specifikovat funkci adverbialního slovece *-de* do většího detailu.

Zjištěné kategorie prvků předcházejících *-de* byly dále rozděleny do dvou větších skupin, predikativních a nepredikativních, na základě hypotézy o tom, že schopnost prvku vykonávat funkci přísudku může ovlivnit nutnost použití adverbialního slovece *-de*. Jednotlivé kategorie prvků předcházejících *-de* byly analyzovány na základě literárních pramenů, dotazníku, v němž rodilí mluvčí čínštiny určovali, zda adverbialní slovece *-de* může či nemůže být vynecháno, a zda jeho vynechání nebude mít vliv na význam věty. I přes poměrně nízký počet respondentů dotazník odhalil tendence možnosti či nemožnosti vynechání slovece *-de* u některých kategorií předcházejících prvků, například vynechání *-de*, které následuje podstatná jména a onomatopoická slova není podle dotazníku ve většině případů možné, zatímco například u příslovcí se respondenti většinou domnívají, že *-de* může být vynecháno. Z důvodu nedostatečné spolehlivosti dotazníku, výsledky dotazníku byly dále ověřeny pomocí komparace s příkladovými větami z jiných zdrojů.

Při této studii bylo vyzorováno že adverbialní slovece *-de* hraje důležitou roli při rozlišování větných členů vyskytujících se před přísudky. Například podstatná jména se běžně vyskytují před přísudky jako podmět, stejně jako určení způsobu. Adverbialní slovece *-de* pomáhá rozlišit funkci podstatného jména, zejména v případech, kdy je podmět nevyjádřený. Podobnou funkci má *-de* ve větách, v nichž se vyskytuje po predikativním prvku (např. sloveso či přídavné jméno).

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Example Sentences Containing Pre *-de* Elements – Corpus (CD-ROM)

Appendix 2: Survey Results (CD-ROM)