

## Research on Typical Chinese Modal Particles for Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages

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**Abstract:** Modal particles are a vital part of the Chinese function word system. They are also widely used in daily life, and are widely distributed and have complex meanings. Therefore, typical modal particles in modern Chinese language have certain practical needs in the teaching, and the typical modal particles in teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages are the object of continuous research of the predecessors. There are certain differences between the functions of typical modal particles, but they also have certain commonalities. It is important to use and master these modal particles proficiently. And this paper studies the six typical Chinese modal particles of "Ma", "Ba", "Ne", "Ah", "De", and "Le".

In actual daily communication, the Chinese people are proficient in the application of typical Chinese modal particles. However, in teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages, the Chinese culture is extensive and profound, and foreign students studying in China may have certain difficulties in the application of typical modal particles. Chinese modal particles have no practical meaning, but they can express specific actual emotions to a certain extent, and their pragmatic functions are more complicated. This paper analyzes and researches the differences in functions of the six typical Chinese modal particles of "Ma", "Ba", "Ne", "Ah", "De", and "Le", as well as reflections and suggestions in classroom teaching of these modal particles.

### 1. An Overview of the Six Typical Modal Particles

"Ma" is an interrogative particle, which has a fixed position, that is, the end of the interrogative sentence. When the interrogative mood is expressed, it is loaded with interrogative information, but when the interrogative mood is not expressed, it is likely to indicate the strong meaning of interrogation and condemnation.

The grammatical meaning of the typical modal particle "Ba" is more diversified. It usually means that the speaker is not clear about a certain known problem in his/her semantic expression, and needs to be asked and confirmed by the others. If it is used at the end of a question, the meaning expressed is not just a simple question, but a certain intriguing tone; and it is usually a response language after words such as "good", "yes", "can", and "all right" [1].

The most basic semantics of "Ne" is to express interrogative tone and controversy and doubts. At certain times, it can also play an emphatic role and is used to remind the others to pay special attention to a certain point in the expression of his/her own speech.

"Ah" has various functions, which can express doubts, commands, exclamations, reminders, warnings, pauses and enumerations, etc. In daily applications, it can strengthen or soothe the tone, and even serve as a reminder and cautioner [2].

"De" can be used as a modal particle, and even as an auxiliary word. When it is a modal auxiliary word, it often expresses a subjective affirmation or confirmation attitude, such as "yes", "ok".

"Le" is used frequently in our daily lives. It can express multiple meanings, such as the beginning of an event or the emergence of a new situation, the command to adapt to a new situation, and an event or action that has been completed by the deadline for speaking [3].

## **2. The Multifunctionality of Modal Particles and the Difference of Each Function**

### **2.1 Particle of "Ma"**

The particle of "Ma" is used at the end of right or wrong questions. When questions are asked in the affirmative form, it usually simply expresses the interrogative mood. The interrogative meaning and interrogative information in the whole sentence are usually carried by the particle of "Ma" at the end of the sentence. In this kind of dialogue, the listener usually needs to make the corresponding judgmental answer [4]. For example: "Did you see my laptop this morning?" When the question is expressed in a negative form, in addition to the meaning of expressing the question itself, it also contains a little meaning such as shock, indicating that the facts reflected are not consistent with the speaker's subjective judgment. For instance, "Don't you want to attend that famous lecture?" The purpose of the speaker to ask questions is usually to imply that the speaker accepts his own views, opinions or ideas, and there is usually a response and interaction [5].

### **2.2 Particle of "Ba"**

The particle of "Ba", first of all, can be used at the end of imperative sentence, which may have a little blunt and imperative meaning, such as "We can't spit everywhere". It may also mean asking or persuading to stop, such as "It's only ten minutes away from the appointed time, let's start quickly". In addition, the particle of "Ba" can be used at the end of a question, which usually expresses some speculation. The purpose of asking a question is to seek a response and a positive answer, to ask the others to confirm the relevant event or opinion, such as "It seems that it's not good for us to speak ill of others behind their back?". Furthermore, it can also be used at the end of a declarative sentence to express judgment and speculation, such as "He may feel sorry for you in the future".

### **2.3 Particles of "Ne"**

When the particle of "Ne" is used at the end of a question sentence, it may contain the meaning of asking, and it carries certain interrogative information, such as "Why didn't you go to work on vacation?" At the same time, it may also express a certain sense of inquiry and censure, such as "Why didn't you call me when you got up in the morning?". In addition, it can also be used at the end of declarative sentences to state facts, emphasize the correctness of the information expressed, or express exclamations, such as "It's really hot today". It can also be used in sentences to indicate pause or emphasis [6].

### **2.4 Particle of "Ah"**

The particle of "Ah" can be used at the end of an interrogative sentence. When it is used at the end of a sentence, it is optional. Deleting the particle of "Ah" does not change the meaning of the whole sentence. It contains the meaning of asking and carries certain interrogative information, such as "Why is that old lady wearing rainbow colored clothes". In addition, the particle of "Ah" can also be used at the end of the statement to answer the speaker's question, such as "Because I am the monitor". Or it is used to express exclamation, such as "That little rabbit is so cute". And it can also be used in sentences to pause and increase emotional color, such as "Yuan Longping, what a great man of a generation!". "That little rabbit is so cute," he said. "Ah" can also be used in sentences, pauses and emotions, such as "Yuan Longping is a great man".

### **2.5 Particle of "De"**

The particle of "De" is usually used in declarative sentences. When it is used in declarative sentences, the speaker is usually positive or sure of the opinions expressed, such as "You will definitely get wet if you go out without an umbrella". This kind of expression is usually to make the others pay attention to and adopt and agree with their own opinions [7]. In addition, the particle of "De" can also be used in exclamatory sentences to express exclamation, such as "it's really cold this day".

### **2.6 Particle of "Le"**

The particle of "De" expresses the statement after the declarative sentence, and its function is to state a fact, such as "winter is coming." It is used to express a strong exclamation at the end of the exclamatory sentence, such as "He did this too much". And it express a command after used in imperative sentences, such as "Stop talking".

### 3. Reflections and Suggestions for Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages

These typical Chinese modal particles have ethereal meaning and complex usage for international students. Teachers for modern Chinese teaching need to pay attention to the modal particles in the process of teaching foreigners. Especially when the annotations of modal particles in the textbooks are scattered and unsystematic, the foreign students will not be able to master the usage of the modal particles systematically if the teacher explains completely along with the text. Therefore, we must give full play to the leading role of teachers. First of all, teachers must fully grasp the different usages, common collocations and basic functions of various modal particles. When explaining modal particles, they must especially grasp the basic functions of each modal particle. After all, the differences between the functions of modal particles are limited, which can be generated by increasing or decreasing the limited features on the basis of their basic functions. Secondly, in the teaching process, teachers can strengthen comparative analysis, guide foreign students to produce positive transfer of their mother tongue, and reduce the impact of negative transfer. For example, for European and American students who do not have modal particles in their mother tongue, teachers should prevent them from directly replacing them with words similar to but not completely corresponding to Chinese modal particles in their mother tongue. For Thai, Korean and Vietnamese students who have modal particles in their mother tongue, teachers can guide them to connect the modal particles in their mother tongue with those in Chinese to help them quickly learn the usage of each modal particle. At the same time, they should be careful to guide them that Chinese modal particles do not all correspond to one word in their mother tongue. Sometimes a Chinese modal particle needs to correspond to several words in their mother tongue. In the process of acquisition, we should remind them to avoid the negative transfer of mother tongue. Finally, teachers can use certain teaching strategies scientifically and rationally to help foreign students master modal particles, such as intensively speaking and practicing more, paying attention to collecting students' common mistakes, focusing on explanations and exercises. And we can also use a variety of teaching methods to help students acquire modal particles, such as contacting life situations and setting game situations to guide students to use modal particles. It is necessary to encourage students to recite passages containing modal particles to cultivate their sense of language, instruct students to dub some classic movies or animations, and remind students to pay attention to the use of modal particles and deepen their understanding of modal particles [8-12].

### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, for foreign students, there are some difficulties in the typical modal words in Chinese. In teaching Chinese as a foreign language, teachers need to understand the multi-function of each modal word, and follow the principle of "simple to difficult" in combination with the actual situation of the acquisition of modal words by international students according to the order of difficulty in modal acquisition. At the same time, we must teach students in accordance with their aptitude according to individual differences, and adopt correct and scientific teaching methods and guidance strategies to help students in international Chinese education improve their Chinese proficiency.

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