

Element 是Shì in the Modern Chinese Language System

Tukhtamishev Abdurasul

Researcher of Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages

Abstract: This article discusses the role of the element 是shì in the modern Chinese language. In particular, the meaning of "affirmation", "existence" and emphasis in the sentence, emphasis as well as the function of a demonstrative pronoun, conjunction and copula are analyzed theoretically and practically

Keywords: demonstrative pronoun, conjunction, copula, construction 是...的.

The word 是shì is found in 判断句pànduàn jù, that is sentence structure, and is used as a means of expressing the speaker's belief and judgment. The word “shìshì” is interesting because it can be used in various syntactic-semantic contexts. In the modern Chinese language corpus (汉语语料库) of Peking University, the conjunction 是shì is recorded as the third most used word after 的de (structural auxiliary) and 一yī "one"¹. The conjunction 是shì in modern Chinese: 1) means "good" or "right"; 2) demonstrative pronoun; 3) modality; 4) connecting link; 5) provider of emphasis; 6) performs additional tasks.

For example, 是啊, 这话没错 [shì a, zhè huà méi cuò] – *true, these words are wrong – not a mistake*; 你别看就是了 [nǐ bié kàn jiùshìle] – *You better not look*; 是, 我一定完成任务 [shì, wǒ yīdìng wánchéng rènwù] – *Well, I will certainly do this task*, the first meaning of the conjunction 是shì is considered as case verbs, equivalent to 好hǎo “good” or 对duì “right” and “good”, meaning “good” or “right”. 是啊, 这话没错 [shì a, zhè huà méi cuò] – *True, these words are used to confirm the opinion, judgment or statement made by the interlocutor in the example of not a mistake*. 你别看就是了 [nǐ bié kàn jiùshìle] – *In the best example of you not looking*, the conjunction 是shì expresses the meaning of the listener who is a dialogue participant obeying the command or assumption given by the speaker. 是, 我一定完成任务 [shì, wǒ yīdìng wánchéng rènwù] – *Well, I will definitely do this task*. 你别看 [nǐ bié kàn] – *as if you don't see* at the end of the subordinate clause, 就jiù is defined by the adverb “just now” and indicates that the speaker is evaluating his judgment.

In the texts, there are cases of its use in the following meanings:

1. “truth”, “truth”; “righteousness” means: 立是废非 [lì shì fèi fēi] – *Confirm the truth and destroy the falsehood*; 贵是而同今古 [guì shì ér tóng jīn gǔ] – *Appreciate the truth and combine the modern and the old*;
2. “compulsory”, “inevitable”, “of course”: 是须休怕怖 [shì xū xiū pà bù] – *Fear should be stopped*; 你是必拴口儿 [nǐ shì bì shuān kǒu er] – *You must keep your mouth shut in any case (don't say anything)*.

¹ http://ccl.pku.edu.cn:8080/ccl_corpus/search

In addition, this element can also be used as a verb in the following meanings:

1. “true that to calculate”, “to approve”; “acceptance do” (for example, advice); “into account to take”: 其所是焉, 诚美[qí suǒ shì yān, chéng mèi] – *Here's what he thinks is really beautiful!*; 王弗是[wáng fú shì] – *Wang didn't consider (didn't think it was right)*.
2. “check”, “edit”: 诏五经博士是正文字 [zhào wǔjīng bóshì shìzhèng wénzì] – *Order the scholars working on the "Five Books" to edit the text*.
3. “movement by doing to see”: 你是猜[nǐ shì cāi] – *try to guess*; 开窗是看时, 果是情人至[kāi chuāng shì kàn shí, guǒ shì qíng rén zhì] – *When I opened the window and wanted to look, my lover really came to me!*
4. “to be must”, “follow”: 天地之经而民是则之 [tiāndì zhī jīng ér mín shì zé zhī] – *There are immutable laws of Heaven and Earth, and the people must accept them as their rule.*²

The conjunction 是shì also functions as a demonstrative pronoun in some sentences. As mentioned earlier, scholars (Wang, Feng, Shi, Li, etc.) have suggested that the modern Chinese conjunction 是shì originates from the Old Chinese demonstrative pronoun, and the analysis of examples shows that in some modern Chinese sentences, the conjunction “shìshì” functions as a demonstrative pronoun signs of use are clearly preserved. For example, 他唯利是图[tā wéi lì shì tú] – *His efforts are only for profit*.

Let's list the cases where 是shì is used as a pronoun:

1. “this”; “such”: 是岁[shì suì] – *this age*; 是心[shì xīn] – *such a mood*; 是母是子岂易得者哉[mǔ shì zǐ qǐ yì dé zhě zāi] – *Is it easy to find such a mother and such a son?*
2. “this”; functions as a subordinate clause, often repeating the above topic, expressed by the phrase: 是非君之道[shì fēi jūn zhī dào] – *this is not the way of a perfect person*; 是非尔所知[shì fēi ěr suǒ zhī] – *it is not for you to know.*³

In some cases, the juncture indicates presence. The conjunction 是shì used in such sentences often has the modern Chinese 有yǒu is compared with the verb “to have, there is/are”. In Chinese, the difference between present tense verbs has been widely discussed in Chinese linguistics. Jin says that ⁴有yǒu represents multiple existences in one place and one of them is 有yǒu is defined as the complement of the verb, and thus 我家门前有条河[wǒ jiā mén qián yǒu tiáo hé] – *There is a river in front of my house indicates that there are several things in front of the house and one of them is the river. Here, the modality expressed by the conjunction ‘here’ describes the existence of only one thing at that place.* Therefore, in the following example, the only thing in front of the speaker's house is the river: 我家门前是条河[wǒ jiā mén qián shì tiáo hé] – *There is a river in front of my house* (negates another existence in that space).

The linguistic element that we are analyzing also acts as a connecting verb, that is, in the examples considered in the article, the conjunction forms the relationship between possessor and participle. Various nominal meanings are reflected in the realization of such relations: For example, 她是我妹妹[tā shì wǒ mèimei] – The components of 她是[tā shì] and 我妹妹[wǒ mèimei] in the example of her

²Большой Китайско-Русский словарь.

³Большой Китайско-Русский словарь.

⁴Ji Lixin, “posi.you N” and “posi.shi N”, 语言教学和研究. 第3期:82-84. 1995.

sister are equal to each other. However 拜登是美国总统 [bài dēng shì měiguó] – *Bayden* in the speech of the President of the United States is esamīguózǒngtǒng [měiguó zǒngtǒng] the President of the United States is “拜登”[bài dēng], which means “*Bayden*”. Finally, 玛丽是黄头发 [Mǎlì shì huáng tóufǎ] – In the sentence *with blond hair Mali*, the possessive is introduced by means of the linking verb 黄头发[huáng tóufǎ] “*blond hair*” is interpreted through the object.

Li and Thompson note that the concept of “subject” in Chinese and English does not have the same function, and that the concept of “subject” in Chinese is not structurally defined⁵. Because the subject may not be officially expressed in Chinese. It is also not exactly equal to the subject, because, unlike the subject, it must have a direct semantic relationship with the subject participle as the executor of the action expressed or the subject of the state the verb expresses. In this case, the “subject” in the sentence is determined from a semantic point of view rather than a grammatical analysis, but often the “subject” is caused by the subject of the sentence: 豆腐我吃了[dòufu wǒ chīle] – “*Tofu I was*”. For example, 你吃豆腐了吗? [nǐ chī dòufu le ma] – “*Have you eaten tofu?*” is a sentence with theme-rhema. In this sentence 豆腐 [dòufu] means “*tofu*” and it is 我吃了 [wǒ chīle] – Clarifies the idea based on the part “*My food*”. Therefore, Lee and Thompson proposed the idea of dividing languages into two types: subject-known languages, such as English, and “theme-known” languages, such as Chinese. In both types, it is natural that “subject” and “theme” are involved, but their degree of expression is different. Many scholars, including Comrie, Lee, and Thompson, believe that unlike English, which is composed of the subject-participle relationships, Chinese is a language of the second part of the conjunctive clause, which serves as the subject of the simple clause in the clause and becomes its comment⁶. In our research, we accept the term theme as an informational-structural and pragmatic concept. 我吃了 [wǒ chīle] in the example of “*tofu*” – In a compound sentence with an explanatory adverb “*My food*”, the subject is used before its explanatory adverb. At the same time, it is a conjunction of the previous example. It should be noted that the part before the conjunction is “theme”, and the part after it clarifies the information about it. In this case, the subject usually encodes the previously given information as a theme, but the clause after the conjunction emphasizes the information and shows it in its entirety.

It is observed that the element 是shì acts as an accent mark in some situations. A focus marker is usually an auxiliary word that comes after the focused clause⁷. Because according to the structure of the sentence, the Chinese language belongs to the group of languages in which the verb comes in the middle of the sentence, and the logical emphasis falls on the element that comes after the verb in the sentence, and as a result, it is not distinguished by strong intonation, which represents the basis of information. This element, conventionally known as the accent mark, is a conjunction that comes before the part of the sentence that needs to be emphasized, and increases attention to it. Scholars such as Huang, Teng, Fang, Dong say: the conjunction 是shì in sentence 蛋糕是昨天做的 [dàngāo shì zuótiān zuò de] – *The cake was prepared yesterday* 昨天zuótiān – “*yesterday*” and 我是去年来北京的 [wǒ shì qùnián lái Běijīng de] – *I came to Beijing last year* qùnián – “*last year*” is used as⁸ a time-

⁵ Charles N. Li, Sandra A. Thompson. *Mandarin Chinese: A Functional reference grammar*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1989.

⁶ Bernard Comrie. *Language universals and linguistic typology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1981.; Charles N. Lee, Sandra A. Thompson. *Subject and topic*. New York: Academic Press. 1976. -P 458-489.

⁷ Katharina Hartman and Malte Zimmermann. *Morphological Focus Marking in Guruntum*. – Berlin, 2006.

⁸ C.-T. James Huang. *Logical Relations in Chinese and the Theory of Grammar*. New York: Garland publishing. 1998. – 435 p.; Shou-Hsin Teng. *Remarks on cleft sentences in Chinese*. *Journal of Chinese linguistics*: 7.1:101-114. 1979.; 方梅. 汉语对比焦点的句法表现手段. *中国语文*. 第4期. 1995.; 董秀芳. “是”的进一步语法化: 由虚词到词内成分. *当代语言学*: 6.1:35-44. 2004.

expressing phrase and in the example of 我是去年来北京 [wǒ shì qùnián lái Běijīng] - *I came to Beijing last year*. Even so, the sentences in these examples are interpreted as separate clause constructions, and it should be noted that the conjunction shìshì is a part that increases the emphasis, and it acts as a linking verb rather than a direct participant of the separate clause construction.

蛋糕是昨天做的 [dàngāo shì zuótiān zuò de] – *The cake was prepared yesterday*; 我是去年来北京的 [wǒ shì qùnián lái Běijīng de] – *I came to Beijing last year*; 我是去年来北京 [wǒ shì qùnián lái Běijīng] – Examples like 她是我妹妹 [tā shì wǒ mèimei] – *She is my sister*; 拜登是美国总统 [bàidēng shì měiguó zǒngtǒng] – *Bayden is the president of the United States*; 玛丽是黄头发 [mǎlì shì huáng tóufǎ] – presents a different information structure than examples such as *Mali with blond hair, in which the noun phrase used before the conjunction remains the subject or "topic" of the sentence*. However, the main message is placed directly after the conjunction to confirm the information assumed by the speaker and the listener. When the conjunction 是shì takes the phonetic accent, it imposes an affirmative meaning on the whole sentence, which means that the information expressed by this sentence is correct, 蛋糕是昨天做的 [dàngāo shì zuótiān zuò de] – In the example of the cake was made yesterday, it is true that this cake was made yesterday, as well as 我是去年来北京的 [wǒ shì qùnián lái Běijīng de] – *I came to Peking last year* also shows that the event actually happened.

In such examples, the device 是...的shì...de is treated as a detached clause construction⁹. If we dwell more fully on separate clauses, it is manifested in its comparison of uniqueness and completeness¹⁰. For example, in the sentence 蛋糕是昨天做的 [dàngāo shì zuótiān zuò de] - *The cake was made yesterday, when the word "yesterday" is used, we understand the exact day the cake was baked, the meaning of these sentences is related to a certain presupposition, that is, it is considered that "the cake was made exactly that day". and it appears as a clear answer to the question 蛋糕什么时候做的 [dàngāo shì shénme shíhòu zuò de?], that is, "when was the cake made?"*

Also, it is noted in other sources that the conjunction 是shì is used at the beginning of the sentence and emphasizes (emphasizes) the subject of the sentence; “well”, “after all”, “exactly”, “precisely”: 是谁告诉你? [shì shéi gàosù nǐ?] – *Who told you?*; 是我疏忽了, 请你原谅! [shì wǒ shūhūle, qǐng nǐ yuánliàng!] – *I was careless, forgive me!*; 是国防战士日日夜夜地保卫着祖国, 咱们才能过幸福的日子 [shì guófáng zhànshì rì rì yè yè dì bǎowèizhe zǔguó, zánmen cǎinénngguò xìngfú de rìzi] – *Defenders of the Motherland who protect the Motherland day and night, the reason for our happy life*.

It is recommended to translate the negative form (不是bùshì) as “not” before the subject: 不是不想来, 是事情多, 分不开身啊 [bùshì bùxiǎng lái, shì shìqíng duō, fēn bù kāi shēn a] – *Sentence It's not that I don't want to come, I have a lot of work to do, I can't be divided*.

Before the predicate 是shì emphasizes the affirmative (before negative - negative) sign of the sentence: 酒是喝够了 [jiǔ shì hē gòule] – *Enough wine was drunk*; 东西是好, 价钱也不贵 [dōngxī shì hǎo, jiàqián yě bù guì] – *Things are good, the price is not expensive*; 毛病是找出来了, 现在的问题是怎

⁹ 赵元任. A Grammar of Spoken Chinese. 北京: 商务印馆出版. 2017; Charles N. Li, Sandra A. Thompson. Mandarin Chinese: A Functional reference grammar. – Berkeley: University Of California Press. 1989; Marie Claude Paris, Nominalization in Mandarin chinese. Paris: Département de Recherches Linguistiques, Université Paris 1979.; Anne Yue Hashimoto, The verb “to be” in Modern Chinese. USA: University of Washington. 1969.; 邓守信. 有关汉语分裂句的一些问题. Journal of Chinese linguistics 7.1 1979.

¹⁰ Katalin Kiss, Identificational focus versus information focus. Languages 74. 1998. – p 245-273.

样来改正 [máobìng shì zhǎo chūláile, xiànzài de wèntí shì zěnyàng lái gǎizhèng] – *Error detected, now how to fix it* ¹¹.

我虽然很穷，可是很有志气 [wǒ suīrán hěn qióng, kěshì hěn yǒu zhìqì] – *Although he is very poor, but he is very eager* and 你要喝咖啡，还是喝茶？ [nǐ yào hē kāfēi, háishì hē chá] *Would you like coffee or tea?* in the examples, the element shìshì is an auxiliary morpheme that forms a connection with previous lexemes. 我虽然很穷，可是很有志气 [wǒ suīrán hěn qióng, kěshì hěn yǒu zhìqì] – *Although he is very poor, he is very eager* in the example, it is used together with the ancient Chinese 可kě, forming a modal modal and expressing a sentence with the opposite meaning to the previous sentence, together forming a two-syllable conjunction 可是kěshì. 你要喝咖啡，还是喝茶？ [nǐ yào hē kāfēi, háishì hē chá] *Would you like coffee or tea?* for example, the adverb 还hái "still" and the conjunction 是shì together 还是háishì "or" forms an auxiliary used in an alternative interrogative sentence.

Almost any Chinese language textbook contains information about the use of the verb 是shì as a participle. This is grammar and communication requirements to each other right coming rarely occurring condition 是shì conjunction participation reached sentences to a simple grammatical structure have is China language again to learners this about skill harvest to do enable gives.

Connection 是shì participation reached structures participle sentences although it is considered a grammatical structure and components of semantic relations between to himself characteristic come out, they are "special to structure have has been sentences" (特殊句型tèshū jù xíng) that is conducted. This attitude with in Chinese Grammars their description simple to the point of the dedicated grammar section to the end verb 有yǒu, preposition 把bǎ functional word 被bèi with participation sentences with one to the line placed. 是shì connection with participation the "basic" of sentences is grammatical, methodological and communicative situation account received without, about them information simple in the sentence word of order common from the description after immediately will be placed.

是shì connection participle sentences contained word order the following in the table reflection finds:

Table 1. Verb participle in sentences word order

The subject (主语)	Well (状语)	是	The object (宾语)	Additional (助词)
1) 张老师 teacher Jang		是	我们的汉语老师. My Chinese teacher	
2) 我们we are	都 everyone	是	留学生 foreign student	
3) 你们公司的总经理		是	张大鹏	huh?
4) 这this	不 not	是	我的手机. my phone	
5) 这部手机 this is the phone	不 not	是	我的 mine	
6) 这this		是不是 isn't it	你的手机? your phone	

¹¹ Большой Китайско-Русский словарь.

7) 这this	不 not	是	你的手机 your phone	吗? is it?
8) 右边 on the right		是	宿舍楼dormitory building	
9) 前边 On the left	不 not	是	银行 bank	吗? is it?

Participial sentences with the conjunction 是shì have the following characteristics:

1. in such sentences, the structure of the sentence is unchanged, and 是shì cannot be moved forward from the complement;
2. connection 是shì only 不bù can be used with a negative verb, but it is 没 méi or 没有 méiyǒu cannot be used with negative verbs;
3. 是shì conjunction 了le, 着zhe, 过guò section pointers and cannot be used with auxiliary verb elements. But the connection of shìshì in existing sentences, the final modal suffix 了le can be used to change the state: 现在是吃午饭的时间了, 我们一起去吃饭吧 [xiànzài shì chī wǔfàn de shíjiānle, wǒmen yī yīn qù chīfàn ba] - *It's lunch time, let's eat together*; 他已经是大学生了 [tā yǐjīng shì dàxuéshēngle] - *He is already a university student*.

是shì in sentences with the meaning of a message is pronounced without stress, that is, in an almost neutral tone.

Connection of 是shì when separated by a special accent means "yes, indeed, very true, indeed." This pronunciation is used to confirm the correctness of the interlocutor's assumption (for example, when answering a question) or to refute the interlocutor's doubts about the information given to him: 张老师是中国人 [Zhāng lǎoshī shì zhōngguó rén] - *Teacher Zhang is Chinese/actually Chinese* (the interlocutor says that doubt).

是 shì before the verb 不bù the element of negation is always pronounced with the second tone -, and the negation, which is the center of meaning of the sentence, is stressed.¹²

Is expressed by the conjunction 是shì in the sense of existence or its synonyms, the adverb of space is placed before it, and the subject is at the end of the sentence, that is, the reverse word order is used, as in the case of 有yǒu: 小吃店对面是我的家 [xiǎochīdiàn duìmiàn shì wǒ de jiā] - *My house is located opposite the hotel*. 2) 门那儿是狗 [mén nàr shì gǒu] - *The dog is at the door*.

With 有yǒu is that in the sentences with 有yǒu, the interlocutor is informed about something he does not know, while in the sentences with the conjunction 是shì, the speaker confirms or rejects the information given by the interlocutor, this information is known to the interlocutor¹³.

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¹² Ивченко Т.В., Китайский язык. Полная грамматика в схемах и таблицах. – М: Издательство «АСТ», 2020.

¹³ 邢福义. Modern Chinese Grammar: A Clause-Pivot Approach / Translated by Wang Yong and Dong Fangfeng. – London, New York: Routledge, 2017. – p. 191-194.

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