

# Grammar of Classical Chinese between Philology and Typology

Measuring degree of nominalisation  
in Classical Chinese (part II)

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## Consultation of examples in TLS:

for possible good examples of nominalised verbs:  
syntactic category *nab* @ semantic category *act*

for possible good examples of nominalised clauses:  
syntactic category NPab{S}

for subject and object coded explicitly as possessors:  
之: GENITIVE PARTICLES, various lexemes with syntactic category *npropostN1.adN2*



*syntax-like=*  
*inflexion:*

*lexicon-like=*  
*word formation:*

balanced  
=  
**balanced**

deranked (“weak” nominalisation)  
=  
**subordination**

“strong” nominalisation  
=  
**nominalisation**  
- action nouns  
- modal nouns (行)  
- agent (尹), patient (傳), instrument (度)

they hunt

that they hunt    them hunting

their hunting    a hunt

balanced  
王行政  
行 \*g<sup>ʃ</sup>raŋ  
The king enacts policies.

deranked-subordinated  
王之行政也善矣  
行 \*g<sup>ʃ</sup>raŋ  
The way the king enacts policies is fine.

nominalised-lexicalised  
王之行善  
行 \*g<sup>ʃ</sup>raŋ-s  
The king’s behaviour is fine.

王行善  
行 \*g<sup>ʃ</sup>raŋ-s  
The behaviour of kings is fine.  
Kingly behaviour is fine.

## Universal effects of subordination + nominalisation:

1) different coding of participants

2) reduction of participants

	<b>they</b> hunt <i>hares</i>	<b>them</b> to hunt <i>hares</i> <b>them</b> hunting <i>hares</i>	<b>their</b> hunting <i>hares</i>	<b>their</b> hunting of <i>hares</i>	<b>their</b> hare-hunt
agent	S=nominative	O=dative	genitive	genitive <sub>1</sub>	genitive
patient	O=accusative	O=accusative	O=accusative	genitive <sub>2</sub>	incorporation
	<b>(is)</b> <i>leporēs vēnātur</i>	<b>(eum)</b> <i>leporēs vēnārī</i>		<b>(eius?)</b> <i>leporum vēnātiō</i> <b>(eius?)</b> <i>leporum vēnātus</i>	
agent	S=nominative	O=accusative		genitive <sub>1</sub> (?)	
patient	O=accusative	O=accusative		genitive <sub>2</sub>	
	<b>(∅)</b> liè tù 獵兔	<b>(qí)</b> liè tù (其) 獵兔		<b>(qí)</b> liè tù (其) 獵兔	<b>(qí)</b> tùliè 兔獵
agent	S	genitive		genitive	genitive
patient	O	O		O	incorporation

†王	以	兵	殺	犬	於	廟
wáng	yǐ	bīng	shā	quǎn	yú	miào
king	INSTR	weapon	kill	dog	LOC	ancestral temple

The king killed a/the dog with a/the weapon in the ancestral temple.

†吾	知	[王	之	以兵殺犬於廟]	也。
wú	zhī		zhī		yě
1	know		GEN/DEP		PTCL

†犬	見	殺	於	王
wáng	jiàn	shā	yú	wáng
dog	PASS	kill	by	king

The dog was killed by the king.

†吾	知	[犬	之	見	殺	於	王]	也。
wú	zhī		zhī					yě
1	know		GEN/DEP					PTCL

I know that the dog was killed by the king. =  
I know about the dog's having been killed by the king.

tù(-)liè 兔獵 'hare hunt'

quǎn(-)shā 犬殺, 'dog massacre'

miào(-)shā 廟殺 'the killing in the ancestral temple'

bīng(-)shā 兵殺 'the killing with a weapon'

王之獵

王獵

兔之獵

兔獵

王之兔獵

兔之王獵

## Criteria of lexicalisation:

a) morphology

b) frequency

c) lexical semantics

d) distributional properties

a) morphology

It may offer, if present, a very compelling proof of lexicalisation (main source: *Jīngdiǎn shìwén* 經典釋文, ca. 580 AD).

exceptional for action/property nouns, but typically not pure ones (“modal action nouns”):

行	<i>xíng xìng</i>	*g <sup>1</sup> raŋ	*g <sup>1</sup> raŋ-s	‘to act’	‘a kind of acting’ > ‘behaviour’
深	<i>shēn [shēn]</i>	*l <sub>o</sub> m	*l <sub>o</sub> m-s	‘deep’	‘depth’

cf. also:

王	<i>wáng wàng</i>	*G <sup>w</sup> aŋ	*G <sup>w</sup> aŋ-s	‘king’	‘become the true king; (to rule)’
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common for other types of nominalisation (agent/subject/patient/instrument):

乘	<i>chéng shèng</i>	*Cə.ləŋ	*Cə.ləŋ-s	‘to ride’	‘carriage’
傳	<i>chuán zhuàn</i>	*m-tron	*N-tron-s	‘to transmit’	‘document’
度	<i>dú duò</i>	*d <sup>1</sup> ak	*d <sup>1</sup> ak-s	‘to measure’	‘measure’
量	<i>liáng liàng</i>	*raŋ	*raŋ-s	‘to measure’	‘measure’
使	<i>shǐ [shǐ]</i>	*s-rəʔ	*s-rəʔ	‘to send’	‘envoy’
難	<i>nán nàn</i>	*n <sup>1</sup> ar	*n <sup>1</sup> ar-s	‘difficult’	‘difficulty’

知

\*tre  
to understand

智

\*tre-s  
intelligent  
intelligence

智

\*tre-s  
intelligence  
intelligent

?  
?

## **b) frequency**

If a deverbal noun occurs frequently enough in the extant corpus, it signals that it is very probably lexicalised. The major difficulty with this criterion is that it can be applied only on a small part of the expressions under scrutiny. The statistics for the much larger part cannot serve as decisive evidence, since the occurrence frequency of those words in general is far too low.

## **c) lexical semantics**

Traditionally and quite appropriately, if a morphological product exhibits a semantic aberration that is not perfectly transparent, that is, it cannot be computed on the basis of syntactic or at least other highly productive rules, it is deemed a coinage of a word-formational type.

(NB racing ≠ race(s), loving ≠ love, teaching ≠ education, producing ≠ production etc.)

## **d) distributional properties**

If a word is frequent enough, it is possible to analyse its distributional paradigm. It is self-evident that well-entrenched nouns manifest very different distributional patterns from that of verbs or *ad hoc* nominalisations. This is moreover valid for their compositional properties, i.e. their behaviour in the most common type of word formation in Classical Chinese. For instance, if a deverbal noun commonly features as let us say the head modified by another noun or by adjective in compounds, one can be quite sure that it is lexicalised. Thus, *xìng* 行 – which is clearly lexicalised already by a derivational suffix from *xíng* – appears 366 times in 127 compounds of this kind, according to Academia Sinica corpus restricted to more or less purely Warring States texts.



## AS Corpus query for actants coded as possessors:

though there is the category  $N_V$ , there is no  $V_N$

→ semimanual searching:

- 1) selected characters known to record verbs & nominal POS label
- 2a) instances with a nominal expression before the nominalised verb
- 3a) discard cases with pronouns in this position
- 2b) instances with 之 before the nominalised verb
- 3b) sort out only cases with a noun before that 之
- 4) manual processing of the results

Verbs:

1	syntactical	∅	
2	syntactical	<i>zhī/qí</i>	
3	lexical	<i>zhī/qí</i>	WOC (> affixal derivation)

Adjectives

1	syntactical	∅
2	syntactical	<i>zhī/qí</i>

*liè* 獵 'to hunt' → 'that they hunt'  
'hunting'  
'hunt (*n.*)'  
\*'hunting one, hunter': only in individual lexicalised cases  
\*'hunted one': only in individual lexicalised cases  
\*'hunting instrument': only in individual lexicalised cases

*zǒu* 走 'to run' → 'that they run'  
'running'  
'run (*n.*)?'  
\*'running one, runner': only in individual lexicalised cases

*ài* 愛 'to love' → 'that they love'  
'loving'  
'love (*n.*)'  
\*'loving one, lover': only in individual lexicalised cases

*āi* 哀 '(to be) sad' → 'that they are sad'  
'being sad'  
'sadness'  
NB 'sad one'

*dà* 大 '(to be) big' → 'that they are big'  
'being big'  
'bigness' (only exceptionally 'size': normally 大小)  
NB 'big one'

## Sample: Xúnzǐ 1.1

君子曰：學不可以已。

青、取之於藍，而青於藍；

冰、水為之，而寒於水。

木直中繩，輮以為輪，其曲中規，雖有槁暴，不復挺者，輮使之然也。

故 木受繩則直，

金就礪則利，

君子博學而日參省乎己，則智明而行無過矣。

故 不登高山，不知天之高也；

不臨深谿，不知地之厚也；

不聞先王之遺言，不知學問之大也。

干、越、夷、貉之子，生而同聲，長而異俗，教使之然也。

君子曰：		
學不可以已。	to study > studying/studies <i>n.</i>	v.1/3
青，取之於藍，而青於藍；	blue > blue colour/blue dye	a.3
冰，水為之，而寒於水。		
木直中繩，	straight > straightness	a.1
輮以為輪，		
其曲中規，	curved > curvedness	a.2
雖有槁暴不復挺者	even when sun-dried, it does not stretch again > that it doesn't stretch again, though sun-dried	v.1
	to bend > bending	v.1
輮使之然也。		
故木受繩則直，		
金就礪則利，		
君子博學而日參省乎己，		
則智明而行無過矣。	intelligent > intelligence	a.3
	to behave > behaviour	v.3
	to make mistake > mistake	v.3
故不登高山，		
不知天之高也；	tall > how tall they are, them/their being tall, their tallness	a.2
不臨深谿，		
不知地之厚也；	thick > how thick it is, it/its being thick its thickness	a.2
不聞先王之遺言，	to speak > speech	v.3
不知學問之大也。	study + ask > learning	v.3
	great > how great it is, it/its being great, its greatness	a.2
干、越、夷、貉之子		
生而同聲，長而異俗，		
教使之然也。	to educate > education	v.1/3

富	在	知足，	貴	在	求退。
S	V	O	S	V	O
ADJ <sub>N</sub>		{V O}	ADJ <sub>N</sub>		{V O}
		ADJ <sub>N</sub>			V <sub>N</sub>

人(之)(不)富	在	人(之)(不)知(不)足
人(之)(不)貴	在	人(之)(不)求(不)退

不能      不穀      不祥

- 不足 (bù zú) **DISSATISFIED** **SYN** 2
  - NPab psych: feeling of dissatisfaction SWL: 1
  - VPi : feel (still) unsatisfied SWL: 1
- 不足 (bù zú) **HUNGRY** **SYN** 1
- 不足 (bù zú) **INSUFFICIENT** 3
  - NPab feature: insufficiency (of resources) SWL: 4
  - VPi : be insufficient; suffer insufficiency of resources; suffer famine SWL: 1
  - VPt+V[0] : =不足以 not qualified to V SWL: 0
- 不足 (bù zú) **LACK** **SYN** 1
- 盈不足術 (yíng bù zú shù) **MATHEMATICAL METHOD** 1
- 不足 (bù zú) **POOR** **SYN** 1
  - NP{vt{NEG}+V(.adN)} plur: those, who are short of means for living or production SWL: 2

此 言 聖 之 不 失 以 尚 賢 使 能 為 政 也。

S V [ 0 ]

S V [ 0 ]

ADJ<sub>N</sub> prep [ 0 ] V 0

V 0 V 0

ADJ<sub>N</sub> ADJ<sub>N</sub>

This applies to

the fact that the wisest ones do not fail in

making their policy of

showing respect to the competent ones and

employing the able ones.



其爭也君子 (LY 3.7)

\*such is the competition of gentleman (君子之爭若是 *vel sim.*)

the way he competes is gentlemanly

夫尹公之他端人也，其取友必端矣 (MZ 4B.24)

?Yingong zhi Tuo is a principled person and the friends whom he chooses must be principled as well.

其所取之友 *vel sim.*

其取友也必端矣

The way he chooses friends is surely principled.

Gassmann: Der werte Tā aus dem Stamm der Yin-gōng ist eine korrekte Persönlichkeit. Wenn *er* jemanden Juniorfreundschaft anbot, dann wird dieser bestimmt korrekt sein.'

When he chooses a friend, that friend will surely be principled.