

August 24, 2022

Re: Response to Reviewer(s)

Dear Editor(s) and Reviewer(s),

Thank you very much for your careful reading and constructive suggestions. In this revision, we have incorporated nearly all of the suggestions, and we hope that the revision has addressed your concerns adequately. Needless to say, we are eager to hear any further feedback you may have.

Due to the large number of reviews we have received (5) and the overlapping result from multiple reviewers, we have decided to mark out all of the issues pointed out by the referees in a single table below and respond in one single letter.

Table 1. Summary of Main Issues Raised by Reviewers (R1-5) and Author(s)' Responses

Issues/Reviewers	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	Revision/Response
Inadequate Lit Review	X	X	X	X		Yes, improved.
Nature of epistemic modality involved	X					Yes, discussion provided.
Issues in affective modality and its exclusion from discussion	X	X				Yes, discussion provided.
Status and understanding of fixed/formulaic expressions	X		X		X	Yes, revised.
Relation to Chang's (2016) work; why Chang? Elaboration on Chang's categories among them	X	X	X	X	X	Yes, justification provided.
Selection of subjects (children at this stage)			X			Yes, justification provided.
Negotiative			X			See description between Tables 2 and 3.
Prompts used in elicitation			X			See a sample in paper, Table 3
Coding decision; indeterminate cases?		X		X		Discussed in paper
Types of <i>Wo Juede</i> (e.g., structural differences)	X					See Table 4
Statistics: Is X^2 meaningless for the data?					X	Explained below.
Implications of the findings for language acquisition/contributions of this study	X	X	X		X	Added to the relevant sections.
Cohesive device vs. discourse organization	X					Yes, discussion provided.
Crosslinguistic implications	X					Yes, added to the relevant sections.

Any cognitive psychology issues / Piaget's theory	X		X			Yes, added to the relevant sections.
Relevance to Chinese morphology			X	X	X	Yes, added to the relevant sections.
Subjective/Subjectification			X			Yes, discussion provided.
Construction, TCU etc.			X			Yes, discussion provided.
Limitations of this study			X			Yes, discussion provided.
Deductive logic				X		Yes, discussion provided.
English language issues	X	X	X	X		Native speaker checked.

Re: statistics (an issue raised by R5),

1. While the sample sizes are small and there is only one cell in G1, which is under 5, the other cells are all above 5.
2. In Table 8 (i.e., Figure 2 in the original manuscript), though we have more cells under 5 when we examine the functions of *WJ*, our purpose is to conduct a within-group comparison to investigate the function variation in each age group, and a between-group comparison to look at the age factor affecting the use of each function type. As thus, we believe that the current method remains applicable and effective.
3. The same reason stated in 2 also applies to the first research question. Our design is to examine the genre effect and the age factor.

In sum, a *chi*-squared test, though very basic in nature, meets the need of our research.

Thank you again for your feedback.

The author(s)