This talk deals with the Contrastive Predicate Topic construction V-\textit{shi}-V in Chinese and its equivalents (with the marker \textit{–nun}, as in V-Nmlzer-\textit{nun-V/h}\textit{a}- or \textit{–wa}, as in V-\textit{wa-V/suru}) in Korean, Japanese and other languages to explore the relation between information structure and invoked scalar implicatures, i.e., denials of a stronger or higher value, via contrastive connectives (C. Lee 2002)

The markers in these languages including \textit{shi} behave as Contrastive Topic (CT) markers in the sense that they are partially linked to their respective potential Topic in the previous discourse context. If an utterance ends in the Contrastive Predicate Topic construction, it generates a PA (\textit{pero/aber}) connective-led implicature, which is scalar in information strength, rank, generic inferences and speech act/utterance preconditions in accordance with argumentative orientation. Consider:

(1) a. Ta lao \textit{shi} lao (le). (他老是老(了)。

\begin{quote}
he old CT old ‘He got old’
\end{quote}

b. Implicature: (Ta lao \textit{shi} lao (le)), \textit{buguo shenti hen jiankang}.

\begin{quote}
(他老是老(了),不过身体很健康。) but body very healthy
\end{quote}

The consequent of a generic entailment, i.e., ‘If one gets old, one’s body gets weak/not healthy,’ invoked by the Contrastive Predicate Topic in (1a) is denied to become an implicature. The uttered part is concessively admitted (thus equivalent to a concessive adverbial construction, ‘although he got old,’ and the PA \textit{buguo} conjunct is what the speaker intends to convey in his/her argumentative goal. This unuttered communication is ascertained by \textit{shi}, \textit{–nun} or \textit{–wa}, or a CT contour L+H*LH\% in English or C accent in French (Marindin 2002) (cf. Pitch track (1a) on p.2) and may be called a conventional implicature, though scalar basically. Even if (1a) is connected to the PA \textit{buguo} conjunct literally, still the PA connective, not an SN (\textit{sino/sondern}) connective is required

As indicated, CT is required for PA, but I argue that Contrastive Focus (marked by focal \textit{shi} here), with SN, is required for Metalinguistic Negation (MN), as in (2):

(2) Wo \underline{bu shi} xihuan ta, \underline{er shi} ai ta. (我不是喜欢他, 而是爱他。)

\begin{quote}
I not COP like(CF) him but COP love(CF) him ‘I do not LIKE him; I LOVE him.’
\end{quote}
MN is echoic and some rectification in linguistic form or non-assertive proposition arises in MN, unlike in Descriptive or Denotational Negation (DS). Most languages have a SN connective for MN different in form from PA, unlike English and French.

(1) a. Ta lao shi lao, buguo shenti hen jiankang.

(1) b. Ta lao, buguo shenti hen jiankang.

(3) Wo bu xihuan ta, er shi ai ta.
REFERENCES


Huang, James (19__) -----on copula shi


