

**DERIVING VP-NEG QUESTIONS IN MODERN CHINESE: A UNIFIED  
ANALYSIS OF A-NOT-A SYNTAX\***

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper advocates a unified analysis of various subtypes of A-not-A questions, including VP-neg questions. It is proposed that all A-not-A subtypes are derived from a simplex VP source via morphological reduplication, with certain subtypes undergoing a further process of anaphoric ellipsis. Under this proposal, VP-neg questions are formed by deleting the second VP of a reduplicated VP-not-VP structure. It is argued that the analysis of VP-neg as an A-not-A variant is more desirable than the analysis of VP-neg as being on a par with a particle question (Cheng et al. 1996), because a number of parallelisms are shown to exist between VP-neg and other subtypes of A-not-A questions, but not between VP-neg and typical particle questions.

Key words: VP-neg questions, negative particle questions, A-not-A questions, disjunctive questions, reduplication, ellipsis

**1. INTRODUCTION**

This paper investigates a controversial subtype of A-not-A questions in Modern Chinese, commonly termed “VP-neg questions” (from M.

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Zhang 1990 and Zhu 1991) or “negative particle questions” (abbreviated as NPQs, from Cheng, Huang and Tang 1996, henceforth CHT),<sup>1</sup> which are formed by ending a sentence with a negation marker such as *bu* or *mei(you)*.<sup>2</sup>

- (1) a. Ta mai shu bu?  
s/he buy book not  
‘Does s/he buy books or not?’  
b. Ni chi-le fan mei(you)?  
you eat-PERF<sup>3</sup> rice not have  
‘Did you eat the meal or not?’

As is well known, the selection of a negation marker in a VP-neg question is subject to aspectuality. In principle, *bu* is used to negate states or imperfective events that may be represented by adjectival predicates, bare verbs, and modals, whereas *mei(you)* is used to negate bounded or perfective events that may be represented by aspect markers like *-le* and *-guo*, and telic verbs.<sup>4</sup> While this aspectual requirement is generally agreed-upon,<sup>5</sup> the issue with respect to the derivation of VP-neg questions remains debatable. The debate primarily concerns

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<sup>1</sup> Since this paper argues against a particle analysis, in the following presentation we will not use the term “NPQs” but consistently use “VP-neg questions”.

<sup>2</sup> Although VP-*bu* and VP-*mei(you)* questions are judged well-formed in the majority of the literature we reviewed, there exist some exceptions. For example, in Wang (1965) both VP-*bu* and VP-*mei* are ill-formed; in Hsieh (2001) VP-*bu* is ill-formed. However, since most previous studies accept both types of VP-neg questions, we follow the majority judgment in our analysis. We also consult informants or appeal to the Internet when crucial data are unavailable in the literature we reviewed or need to be confirmed.

<sup>3</sup> The abbreviations used in this paper are glossed as follows: BA: sentence-final particle; BE: linking verb ‘be’; BEI: passive marker; CL: classifier; Comp: sentence-final particle *ne*; EXP: experiential aspect marker; NOM: nominalizer; Op.: operator; PERF: perfective aspect marker; PNM: prenominal modifier marker; Q: question particle.

<sup>4</sup> For detailed discussion on the correlation between negation and aspect in Mandarin Chinese, readers are referred to Huang (1988), Ernst (1995), Lee and Pan (2001), Lin (2003), and the references cited therein.

<sup>5</sup> Notice that some literature (e.g., Shao 1996) does report the existence of VP-neg forms that do not adhere to the aspectual requirement. We take these “non-standard” (a term adopted from Hsieh 2001) cases as being derived in a different way from the “standard” ones being analyzed in this paper. For the relevant data and discussion, see Hsieh’s dissertation.

whether VP-neg questions are reduced forms of A-not-A questions (specifically, VO-not from VO-not-V(O), and V-not from V-not-V). The supporting camp includes Hsieh (2001) and B. Li (2006), both of whom argue for an ellipsis analysis. In contrast, the opposing camp includes CHT (1996), Tang (1999), and Gasde (2004); the former two argue for a question-particle analysis, and the latter for a morpho-syntactic analysis. In this paper, we derive VP-neg questions by means of morphological reduplication and anaphoric ellipsis, in favor of the view that VP-neg questions are reduced from A-not-A questions.

Note in passing that VP-*mei-you* may not equal VP-*mei* syntactically. Traditionally, it has been assumed that *mei* is a reduced form of *mei-you*, with *you* 'have' optionally omitted. This assumption implies that *mei* and *mei-you* can be used interchangeably, as shown above in (1b) and below in (2).

- (2) a. Ta mei(you) henduo qian  
s/he not have much money  
'S/he does not have much money.'  
b. Ta mei(you) he niunai  
s/he not have drink milk  
'S/he did not drink milk.'

In view of (1b) and (2), one may be tempted to make a unified reduction analysis of *mei* and *mei-you*. However, this unified analysis runs into difficulties for data like (3) and (4) below.

- (3) a. Ta you henduo qian, keshi wo mei\*(you)  
s/he have much money but I not have  
'S/he has much money, but I don't.'  
b. Ta you he niunai, keshi wo mei\*(you)  
s/he have drink milk but I not have  
'S/he drank milk, but I didn't.'  
(4) A: Ni you sha-ren ma?  
you have kill-person Q  
'Did you kill a person?'  
B: Wo mei\*(you)  
I not have  
'I didn't.'

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These examples clearly show that *you* cannot be freely deleted from *mei-you*. In reverse, the allegedly deleted *you* cannot be freely recovered to form its source *mei-you*, as shown in the following example, cited from CHT (1996:65).

- (5) Ta lai mei(\*you) lai?  
s/he come not have come  
'Did s/he come or not come?'

All the evidence above points to the same conclusion: on syntactic grounds, *mei* cannot be simply analyzed as being equivalent to *mei-you*. Following Wang (1965), we assume that *mei-you* is morphemically complex, made up of the negation marker *mei* and the aspect marker (or the verb) *you*.<sup>6</sup> In terms of VP-neg questions, a sentence ending with

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<sup>6</sup> Following Wang (1965), we assume that aspect markers *-le* and *you* are allomorphs of the same perfective morpheme. This may explain why they are in complementary distribution and unable to co-exist (also see Lin 2003).

- (i) \*Ta you he-le niunai  
s/he have(PERF) drink-PERF milk  
'S/he drank milk.'

In Wang's theory, *bu* changes to *mei* before perfective *you* through a special morphological rule. Radically, Tang (1994:105) proposes the following rule, which he claims is obligatory.

- (ii) *bu* → *mei* / \_\_\_ *you*

The proposal of such a rule is indeed necessary for a case like (iii) below.

- (iii) Ta mei you henduo qian  
s/he not have much money  
'S/he does not have much money.'

Without the rule in (ii), we would have to use *bu* to negate the unbounded event represented by verbal *you* 'have/possess', resulting in an ungrammatical *bu-you* sequence, as in (iv).

- (iv) a. \*Ta bu you henduo qian  
s/he not have much money  
'S/he does not have much money.'  
b. \*Ta shuo de hua bu you-yisi  
s/he say PNM words not have-meaning  
'His/Her words are not interesting.'

However, it still leaves mysterious why Tang's rule does not work for cases like (v).

- (v) a. Zhe-ge gushi bu you-qu  
this-CL story not have-fun  
'This story is not interesting.'

*mei-you* may alternate with its counterpart ending with *mei* without a difference in meaning, so that in most previous studies, *VP-mei-you* is not differentiated from *VP-mei*. In our view, nevertheless, only the form of *VP-mei* is a *bona fide* VP-neg question, while *VP-mei-you* questions are actually in a particular form of VP-not-V, with *you* retained after the neg.<sup>7</sup> This view is also shared in Tang (1999:61), who groups *AB-mei-you* as AB-not-A.<sup>8</sup>

In what follows, Section 2 lays out the affinity between VP-neg questions and A-not-A questions. Section 3 reviews three distinct approaches to deriving VP-neg questions: the NEG<sup>0</sup> raising approach (CHT 1996), the anaphoric ellipsis approach (Hsieh 2001), and the morpho-syntactic approach (Gasde 2004). Section 4 houses our unified analysis with respect to morphological reduplication and anaphoric ellipsis. Section 5 concludes the paper.

## 2. AFFINITY BETWEEN VP-NEG QUESTIONS AND A-NOT-A QUESTIONS

In order to prove that VP-neg questions are yes-no questions of a different type from A-not-A questions, CHT (1996) have demonstrated four pieces of evidence in support of their view. In the following, we examine all the pieces of their evidence in turn, show that they do not go through, and then provide other empirical data indicating that VP-neg and A-not-A questions do behave alike on a number of fronts.

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b. Na-wei yisheng bu you-ming  
that-CL doctor not have-fame  
'That doctor is not famous.'

We will not pursue this issue further since it is beyond the scope of this paper.

<sup>7</sup> According to Tang (1994:105) and Chu and Chi (1999:143), the form of *VP-mei-you* is predominantly used in Mainland Mandarin and Taiwan Mandarin, while the form of *VP-mei* is increasingly found in Taiwan Mandarin.

<sup>8</sup> Notice that in reviewing the literature such as CHT (1996) and Hsieh (2001), we simply follow their treatment and notation of *meiyou* as neg under their systems. However, in conducting our own analysis, we use the notation of *mei-you* and treat it as neg-V.

## 2.1 CHT's Only-apparent Evidence Against A-not-A Derivation

In this subsection, we point out the problems with the four pieces of evidence supplied by CHT in support of their argument that VP-neg and A-not-A questions do not pattern on a par and thus resist the derivational relationship.

### 2.1.1 Preverbal adjuncts

As shown below in (6) and (7) (cited from CHT 1996:43-44), preverbal adjuncts such as *chang* 'often' can appear in VP-neg questions but not in either V-not-V or VO-not-V questions.

- (6) a. Ta chang qu bu? (V-not)  
s/he often go not  
'Does s/he often go or not?'  
b. \*Ta chang qu bu qu? (V-not-V)  
s/he often go not go  
'Does s/he often go or not go?'
- (7) a. Ta chang pian ni bu? (VO-not)  
s/he often cheat you not  
'Does s/he often cheat you?'  
b. \*Ta chang pian ni bu pian? (VO-not-V)  
s/he often cheat you not cheat  
'Does s/he often cheat you or not cheat (you)?'

If the VP-neg questions in (6a) and (7a) were respectively derived from the ungrammatical A-not-A questions in (6b) and (7b), then (6a) and (7a) should also be ungrammatical. However, this is contrary to fact. CHT thus claim that VP-neg questions are not derived from A-not-A questions.

Against CHT, B. Li (2006) argues that (6a) may be reduced from (8a), with the post-neg VP *chang qu* 'often go' elided. By the same token, (7a) may be reduced from (8b), with the post-neg VP *chang pian (ni)* 'often cheat (you)' elided. Since both (8a) and (8b) are A-not-A questions, it raises no problem to argue that the VP-neg questions in (6a) and (7a) are actually derived via ellipsis from the A-not-A sources in (8a) and (8b), respectively.

- (8) a. Ta chang qu bu chang qu?<sup>9</sup>  
s/he often go not often go  
'Does s/he often go or not often go?'  
b. Ta chang pian ni bu chang pian (ni)?  
s/he often cheat you not often cheat (you)  
'Does s/he often cheat you or not often cheat (you)?'

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<sup>9</sup> An interesting question may arise as to why (8a) is well-formed but (i) below is not, given that they look parallel in syntactic structure.

- (i) \*Ta youshijou qu bu youshijou qu?  
s/he sometimes go not sometimes go  
'Does s/he sometimes go or not sometimes go?'

This question can be answered by resorting to McCawley (1994), who observes that a predicate which is unable to be negated (e.g., *weijue* 'unresolved') is also unable to appear in A-not-A forms, as shown below.

- (ii) a. \*Na-ge wenti bu/mei weijue  
that-CL problem not unresolved  
'That problem is not unresolved.'  
b. \*Na-ge wenti weijue bu/mei weijue?  
that-CL problem unresolved not unresolved  
'Is that problem unresolved or not unresolved?'

We find McCawley's account tenable because it can also be extended to certain preverbal adjuncts in addition to predicates. Consider (iii) and (iv).

- (iii) a. Ta bu jingchang kan shu  
s/he not usually read book  
'S/he does not usually read books.'  
b. Ta jingchang bu jingchang kan shu?  
s/he usually not usually read book  
'Does s/he usually or not usually read books?'
- (iv) a. \*Ta bu feichang keai  
s/he not very lovely  
'S/he is not very lovely.'  
b. \*Ta feichang bu feichang keai?  
s/he very not very lovely  
'Is s/he very or not very lovely?'

By the same line of reasoning, the A-not-A form in (i) is ruled out due to the fact that the adjunct *youshijou* 'sometimes' cannot be negated by *bu*, as in (v).

- (v) \*Ta bu youshijou qu  
s/he not sometimes go  
'S/he does not sometimes go.'

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We concur with B. Li's argument here.

Nevertheless, an immediate question that we may ask is why (6b) and (7b) are ill-formed. We contend that this question has to do with intervention effects (cf. Beck 1996, Beck and Kim 1997). This intervention issue is also addressed in Tsai (2005) and further explored in Yang (2007) by considering Chinese data as below.

(9) Reason-*why*

- a. Ta renwei Lisi weishenme xihuan Wangwu?  
s/he think Lisi why like Wangwu  
'Why does s/he think Lisi likes Wangwu?'
- b. \*Ta bu/zhi/zongshi renwei Lisi weishenme xihuan Wangwu?  
s/he not/only/always think Lisi why like Wangwu  
'Why does s/he not/only/always think Lisi likes Wangwu?'

(10) Manner-*how*

- a. Ta renwei jingfang zhenme(yang) chuli zhe-ge anzi?  
s/he think police how handle this-CL case  
'How does s/he think the police would handle this case?'
- b. \*Ta bu/zhi/zongshi renwei jingfang zhenme(yang) chuli  
s/he not/only/always think police how handle  
zhe-ge anzi?<sup>10</sup>  
this-CL case  
'How does s/he not/only/always think the police would handle this case?'

(11) A-not-A Op.

- a. Ta chi bu chi yu?  
s/he eat not eat fish  
'Does s/he eat or not eat fish?'
- b. \*Ta bu/zhi/zongshi chi bu chi yu?  
s/he not/only/always eat not eat fish  
'Does s/he not/only/always eat or not eat fish?'

Yang, following Pesetsky (2000) and Starke (2001), indicates that intervention effects result from the feature intervention, which in turn violates Rizzi's (2004) revised Relativized Minimality requiring that a

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<sup>10</sup> Yang (p.c.) pointed out to us that (10b) can only be acceptable with the instrumental reading, but not with the manner reading. Also see Tsai (2005) for differentiating instrumental *how* from manner *how*.

feature  $[\alpha]$  of Z should block the checking of the same feature of Y from the probe X if Z is closer to X, as illustrated below.

(12) \*[[... X $_{[\alpha]}$  ... [... Z $_{[\alpha]}$  ... [... Y $_{[\alpha]}$  ...]]]

In this sense, (9b), (10b), and (11b) are ungrammatical because the covert feature-movement of adverbial *wh*-phrases and A-not-A operator is blocked by preverbal interveners like *bu* ‘not’, *zhi* ‘only’, and *zongshi* ‘always’. We suggest that the same account can be carried over to (6b) and (7b), where the preverbal adjunct *chang* ‘often’ plays a blocking role (also see Soh 2005:145 for the same treatment of *chang* ‘often’ as an intervener),<sup>11</sup> thus resulting in ungrammaticality.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Note additionally that Law (2006) distinguishes between two types of adjuncts in Mandarin Chinese. One type may intervene between an A-not-A operator and its trace, while the other type cannot. Adjuncts characteristic of manner, degree, ordinal, agent-oriented, aspectual, and reason display the blocking effect due to Relativized Minimality and thus cannot appear to the left of an A-not-A predicate. In contrast, temporal, locative, and domain adjuncts do not exhibit the intervention effect and may appear preverbally in A-not-A questions. For the exact analysis, refer to Law’s paper.

<sup>12</sup> Alternatively, we may deal with the problem by adopting a pragmatic constraint suggested by Z. Zhang (1997), which requires that the V of A-not-A questions should not be presupposed. According to Z. Zhang’s analysis, the frequency adjunct *chang* ‘often’ acts as a “presupposition generating element”. That is, this adjunct has the ability to presuppose the realization of the action following it. For example, the question ‘Do you often go?’ presupposes the proposition ‘you go’, and the question is about the frequency of going rather than the actualization of going. In (6b) and (7b), the A-not-A actions of going and cheating, respectively, are preceded by the adjunct *chang* ‘often’ and therefore presupposed. This turns out to violate Z. Zhang’s pragmatic constraint and the sentences are thus ungrammatical. To substantiate the pragmatic account, consider an exchange as below.

(i) A: Zhangsan shi yi-ge hui/you qu tushuguan de ren  
 Zhangsan BE one-CL be-used-to/have go library PNM person  
 ‘Zhangsan is a person who goes to the library.’

B: a. Name, ta chang qu bu chang qu?  
 then he often go not often go  
 ‘Then, does he often go or not often go?’

b. Name, ta chang qu bu [e] ?  
 then he often go bu  
 ‘Then, does he often go or not?’

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2.1.2 Co-occurrence with *ne*

The second piece of evidence shown by CHT in opposition to the derivational relationship between VP-neg and A-not-A questions comes from the observation that the former cannot co-occur with the sentence-final particle *ne* but the latter can.<sup>13</sup> Consider (13).

- (13) a. \*Ta qu bu ne? (CHT 1996:45)  
s/he go not Comp  
'Will s/he go or not?'  
b. Ta qu bu qu ne?  
s/he go not go Comp  
'Will s/he go or not go?'

Since an ungrammatical sentence like (13a) is unlikely to be derived from a grammatical one like (13b), CHT claim that VP-neg and A-not-A questions do not bear the derivational relationship.

However, B. Li (2006:146) points out that according to her informants, VP-*bu-ne* forms like (13a) are acceptable.<sup>14</sup> Moreover,

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- c. \*Name, ta chang qu bu qu?  
then he often go not go  
'Then, does he often go or not go?'

The statement in (iA) presupposes that Zhangsan goes to the library. Only when this presupposition is made can we further ask about the frequency of his going to the library, as shown in (iB-a) and (iB-b). On the other hand, in (iB-c), the A-not-A constituent *qu bu qu* 'go or not go' in its own right asks about whether Zhangsan goes to the library or not. This leads to two problems, however. First, the information that Zhangsan goes to the library is already presupposed in (iA); thus, it is redundant to ask again. Second, the preverbal adjunct *chang* 'often' can only be used when the following action is presupposed. Nevertheless, as already known, the A-not-A form does not presuppose the action represented by A. With these two problems, (iB-c) is thus out. Another pragmatic account which is close in spirit to Z. Zhang's has to do with Discourse-Linking (Pesetsky 1987). The adjunct *chang* 'often' can be taken as a D-linked phrase. In contrast, an A-not-A question is non-D-linked by nature in the sense that the speaker assumes no knowledge of the action represented by A from the previous discourse. In this light, (6b) and (7b) are ruled out due to the conflict in D-linkedness.

<sup>13</sup> See the discussion in Subsection 3.1.1 for an account suggested by CHT for why the particle *ne* cannot be attached to VP-neg questions.

<sup>14</sup> Especially worth mentioning here is that searching China websites may give rise to many actual instances of VP-*bu-ne* questions. It is thus unquestionable that the form of

VP-*meiyou-ne* forms are also acceptable in Beijing Mandarin, according to N. Zhang (1997:135-136).<sup>15</sup>

- (14) a. Ta chi-guo fan meiyou ne?  
s/he eat-EXP rice not Comp  
'Has s/he eaten the meal or not?'
- b. Ta xi-guo shou meiyou ne?  
s/he wash-EXP hand not Comp  
'Has s/he washed his/her hands or not?'
- c. Ta jiao-le zuoye meiyou ne?  
s/he hand-in-PERF homework not Comp  
'Did s/he hand in the homework or not?'
- d. Ta kan-le nei-ben shu meiyou ne ?  
s/he read-PERF that-CL book not Comp  
'Did s/he read the book or not?'

Given that A-not-A-*ne* and certain VP-neg-*ne* questions are acceptable in Beijing Mandarin, N. Zhang thus concludes that from this particle co-occurrence perspective, the purported separation of A-not-A questions from VP-neg questions does not hold. Here we concur with her view.

### 2.1.3 Co-occurrence with aspect markers

CHT (1996:70-71) claim that aspect markers like *-guo* and *-le* can appear in VP-neg questions but not in A-not-A questions, as demonstrated in the following contrast.

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VP-*bu-ne* is currently in use, as least in some varieties.

<sup>15</sup> The judgment on the case of VP-*mei-ne* is also controversial. A number of native Taiwan Mandarin speakers we have consulted find VP-*mei-ne* questions like (i) acceptable, contra the judgment in Huang et al. (to appear).

- (i) a. Ni chi-guo fan mei ne?  
you eat-EXP rice not Q  
'Have you eaten the meal or not?'
- b. Ni jiehun-le mei ne?  
you marry-PERF not Q  
'Did you get married or not?'

In addition to our informants, the Internet also displays many actual uses of VP-*mei-ne* questions, suggesting that they are acceptable to a wide extent.

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- (15) a. Ta qu-guo meiyou?  
s/he go-EXP not  
'Has s/he been there or not?'
- b. Ta qu-le meiyou?  
s/he go-PERF not  
'Did s/he go or not?'
- (16) a. \*Ta you-mei-you-guo qian?  
s/he have-not-have-EXP money  
'Has s/he had or not had money?'
- b. \*Ta you-mei-you-le qian?  
s/he have-not-have-PERF money  
'Did s/he have or not have money?'

In view of the above contrast, CHT thus conclude that VP-neg and A-not-A questions do not behave on a par and cannot be derivationally related. However, this argument falls short empirically, given the following cases in (17), where the aspect marker *-guo* is in fact able to be attached to A-not-A.<sup>16</sup>

- (17) a. Ni you-mei-you-guo bei-pian de jingyan? (the author)  
you have-not-have-EXP BEI-cheat PNM experience  
'Have you had or not had the experience of being cheated?'
- b. Ni qu-mei-qu-guo Beijing? (R. Zhang 1999)  
you go-not-go-EXP Beijing  
'Have you been or not been to Beijing?'
- c. Ni qu-mei-qu-guo Zhongguo? (Hsieh 2001:109)  
you go-not-go-EXP China  
'Have you been or not been to China?'
- d. Ni lai-mei-lai-guo Tabula Rasa? (Hagstrom 2006:188)  
you come-not-come-EXP Tabula Rasa  
'Have you come or not come to (the restaurant) Tabula Rasa?'

The comparison of VP-neg data in (15a) and A-not-A data in (17) encourages us to draw a parallel between the two types of questions: they both are able to co-occur with aspect markers.

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<sup>16</sup> We are grateful to an anonymous TJJ reviewer for pointing out to us that the experiential marker *-guo* is semantically more like a tense marker than a genuine aspect marker. However, whatever it is, its ability to co-occur with A-not-A questions as in (17) jeopardizes this third argument of CHT.

An anonymous TJL reviewer pointed out that although we can find A-not-A questions involving *-guo* as in (17), it is very hard to construct corresponding examples for the perfective marker *-le*.

- (18) \*Ta qu-mei-qu-le Beijing?  
s/he go-not-go-PERF Beijing  
'Did you go or not go to Beijing?'

Nevertheless, we argue that the *mei* in A-*mei*-A questions can be compositionally analyzed as [NEGATION + PERFECTIVITY *le/you*]; in this sense, perfectivity is already encoded in A-*mei*-A questions. Consider the data below in (19) for further elaboration of our point.

- (19) a. Ta qu-le Beijing  
s/he go-PERF Beijing  
'S/he went to Beijing.'  
b. Ta mei qu Beijing  
s/he not go Beijing  
'S/he did not go to Beijing.'  
c. \*Ta mei qu-le Beijing  
s/he not go-PERF Beijing  
'S/he did not go to Beijing.'

The comparison of (19a) and (19b) suggests that *mei* can be conceived as the negative counterpart of the perfective marker *-le*; that is, *mei* in its own right may indicate aspectuality. Given this, we may predict that *mei* cannot co-occur with *-le* since they are counterparts of each other. This prediction is borne out, as evidenced in (19c). We thus conclude that A-not-A questions have the capacity to encompass perfectivity, which is not realized by *-le*, but by its negative version: *mei*.

In addition to V-not-VP questions as discussed above, CHT (1996:71) also claim, without supplying any example, that VP-not-V questions cannot take aspectual markers either. However, this is not empirically attested, as demonstrated below from N. Zhang (1997:137).

- (20) a. Ni chi-guo mangguo mei chi-guo?  
you eat-EXP mango not eat-EXP  
'Have you eaten a mango or not eaten?'

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- b. Ta chi-le fan mei chi?  
s/he eat-PERF rice not eat  
'Did s/he eat the meal or not eat?'

Thus far, two subtypes of A-not-A questions (i.e., V-not-VP and VP-not-V) have been shown to encounter no problems in co-existing with aspect. Since VP-neg questions can also co-occur with aspect, the derivational connection between A-not-A and VP-neg should not be completely out of the question.

Returning to (16), we suggest that the ungrammaticality has to do with the property of object NP. There may be a constraint requiring that the object NP in V-not-V-asp-O constructions not be generic. Consider the following contrasts.

- (21) a. \*Ni you-mei-you-guo qian?<sup>17</sup>  
you have-not-have-EXP money  
'Have you had or not had money?'  
b. Ni you-mei-you-guo henduo qian  
you have-not-have-EXP much money  
'Have you had or not had much money?'
- (22) a. \*Ni you-mei-you-guo jingyan?<sup>18</sup>  
you have-not-have-EXP experience  
'Have you had or not had an experience?'  
b. Ni you-mei-you-guo bei-pian de jingyan?  
you have-not-have-EXP BEI-cheat PNM experience  
'Have you had or not had the experience of being cheated?'

As can be seen above, both ill-formed examples upgrade in acceptability if the object NP is altered to be non-generic or specific.

In fact, there is an alternative explanation for the ungrammaticality of (16). CHT seem to take the morpheme *you* in (16) as a verb meaning 'have', since it is attached by an aspect marker. However, the phrase *youqian* 'rich' can be used as an adjectival predicate with *you* being a bound morpheme, rather than as a typical V-O structure: 'have money'. This can be confirmed below in (23).

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<sup>17</sup> This sentence is also pragmatically anomalous in that it goes against our world knowledge that everyone should, if not now, once have had money.

<sup>18</sup> This sentence can be acceptable if the object NP *jingyan* 'experience' is interpreted as a referring expression shared by the speaker and the hearer.

- (23) a. Ta feichang yingjun  
s/he very handsome  
'He is very handsome.'  
b. Ta feichang youqian  
s/he very rich  
'S/he is very rich.'  
c. \*Ta feichang you yi-wan yuan  
s/he very have one-10,000 dollar  
'S/he has ten thousand dollars very much.'

The preverbal adjunct *feichang* 'very' is normally used to modify an adjectival predicate like *yingjun* 'handsome', as in (23a) (or to modify an individual-level predicate such as *ai-chang-ge* 'love singing'). Since the phrase *youqian* 'rich' can also be modified by *feichang* 'very', it proves that *youqian* 'rich' is an adjectival predicate. In contrast, (23c) has a typical V-O structure, so it cannot be modified by *feichang* 'very' and the sentence is thus ungrammatical. Given the fact that *youqian* 'rich' in its own right is a single unit with *you* as a bound morpheme, rather than as a verb, we can thus account for the ungrammaticality of (16): the aspect markers are wrongly attached to a bound morpheme. To justify this point, we provide more supporting evidence below.

- (24) a. \*Ta wu-bu-wu-guo-li?  
s/he un-not-un-EXP-reason  
'Has s/he been un- or not un-reasonable?'  
b. \*Ta xia-bu-xia-le-liu?  
s/he low-not-low-PERF-class  
'Was he baw- or not baw-dy?'
- (25) a. Ta wu-bu-wu-li?  
s/he un-not-un-reason  
'Is s/he un- or not un-reasonable?'  
b. Ta xia-bu-xia-liu?  
s/he low-not-low-class  
'Is he baw- or not baw-dy?'

The two sentences in (24) are ungrammatical because the syllable *wu* in (24a) and the syllable *xia* in (24b) are both bound morphemes and thus unable to be attached by aspect markers. However, when aspect markers

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are removed from bound morphemes as shown in (25), the sentences become grammatical.

Another way to verify the adjectival predicatehood of *youqian* ‘rich’ is to resort to negation. Consider the contrast below.

- (26) a. Ta bu youqian (adjectival predicate)  
s/he not rich  
‘S/he is not rich.’  
b. Ta mei you qian (V-O structure)  
s/he not have money  
‘S/he does not have money.’

Two strategies available to negate *youqian* speak for its two kinds of phrasal statuses: adjectival vs. verbal.

In sum, contrary to CHT, we have shown that VP-neg questions behave on a par with A-not-A questions in being able to co-occur with aspect markers. Sentences like (16) are ruled out for certain independent reasons.

#### 2.1.4 Historical development

Following M. Zhang (1990), CHT indicate that chronologically, VP-neg questions in Classical Chinese appear earlier than other types of yes-no questions, including A-not-A questions. Along this line, deriving VP-neg questions from A-not-A questions is impossible because this runs counter to chronological order. An inference can be made from this claim that VP-neg and A-not-A questions can hardly be used interchangeably since they are derivationally unrelated. However, in Modern Chinese, the alternation between the two types of questions seems fairly free if we apply the process of ellipsis (represented by *e*).<sup>19</sup> Consider (27) and (28) below.

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<sup>19</sup> An anonymous TJL reviewer questioned the ellipsis analysis since it cannot explain why the following contrast emerges.

- (i) Ta zou-le mei [*e*]?  
s/he leave-PERF not  
‘Did s/he leave or not?’  
(ii) \*Ta zou-le mei zou?  
s/he leave-PERF not leave  
‘Did s/he leave or not leave?’

- (27) a. Ni qu bu qu?  
you go not go  
'Will you go or not go?'  
b. Ni qu bu [e] ?  
you go bu  
'Will you go or not?'
- (28) a. Ni chi-guo mei chi-guo?  
you eat-EXP not eat-EXP  
'Have you eaten or not eaten?'  
b. Ni chi-guo mei [e] ?  
you eat-EXP not  
'Have you eaten or not?'

As shown above, we can interchangeably use an A-not-A question or a VP-neg question to express the same interrogative meaning, and the way we answer either type of question is also of no difference, as evidenced below.

- (29) A: Ni qu bu qu?  
you go not go  
'Will you go or not go?'  
B: Qu / Bu qu / \*Shi / \*Bu shi / \*Dui / \*Bu dui  
go not go yes not yes right not right
- (30) A: Ni qu bu?<sup>20</sup>  
you go not  
'Will you go or not?'

---

However, quite a few of our informants do not find (ii) totally unacceptable. Also, a grammatical VP-*mei*-V question can actually be found in the literature, e.g., from N. Zhang (1997:137).

- (iii) Ta chi-le fan mei chi?  
s/he eat-PERF rice not eat  
'Did s/he eat the meal or not eat?'

We accordingly follow the judgment of N. Zhang and our informants in our analysis, not ruling out a case like (ii). Consequently, the acceptability contrast between (i) and (ii) does not show up and the ellipsis analysis can still hold.

<sup>20</sup> Thanks to B. Li (p.c.), a VP-neg question cannot be answered by using *shi* 'yes' or *dui* 'right', unless the main verb of the question is the linking verb *shi* 'be' (e.g., *ni shi xuesheng bu?* 'Are you a student or not?').

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B: Qu / Bu qu / \*Shi / \*Bu shi / \*Dui / \*Bu dui  
go not go yes not yes right not right

Given the parallelism between (29) and (30), it should come as no surprise that it is possible to derive VP-neg from A-not-A questions through ellipsis. Since both are alternative questions by nature, the answer to them is, as expected, chosen from either the given A<sub>1</sub> alternant or the given not-A<sub>2</sub> alternant, rather than ‘yes’ (i.e., *shi / dui*) or ‘no’ (i.e., *bu-shi / bu-dui*).

As seen above, the parallelism drawn from synchronic data in Modern Chinese supports the potential derivational relationship between VP-neg and A-not-A questions, which, however, contradicts CHT’s argument based on the historical development of the two types of questions in Classical Chinese. In fact, the conflict can be accommodated if we appeal to a solution put forth by B. Li (2006:146) that “[I]t is possible that NPQs in Classical Chinese and NPQs in Modern Chinese are different types of questions, and they are derived from different sources”. An empirical fact in support of such a distinction comes from the behavior of the neg. Consider the following contrast.

(31) Modern Chinese

- a. Ni qu bu?  
you go not  
‘Will you go or not?’
- b. Bu qu  
not go  
‘(I will) not go.’

(32) Classical Chinese

- a. Zhi ke fou (Zhuangzi, 10, cited by CHT 1996:52)  
know possible not  
‘(Someone) knows whether it is possible or not.’
- b. \*Fou ke  
not possible  
‘(It is) not possible.’

The above contrast shows that the neg of a modern VP-neg like *bu* in (31a) can negate a following predicate, as shown in (31b); nevertheless, the neg of a classical VP-neg like *fou* in (32a) cannot negate a following modal verb, as shown in (32b). Given this contrast, we thus have reason

to believe that VP-neg questions in Modern Chinese may not share the same nature as those in Classical Chinese. This immediately poses a challenge for CHT's argument based on Classical Chinese.

## 2.2 Parallelisms between VP-neg Questions and A-not-A Questions

In Subsection 2.1, we have argued against CHT's claimed heterogeneity between VP-neg and A-not-A questions. In this subsection, we turn to argue for the homogeneity between the two types of questions by presenting much supporting evidence.

### 2.2.1 How questions are answered

One of the properties that VP-neg and A-not-A questions have in common is the way they are answered. As pointed out by Hagstrom (2006:174), "the clearest difference between A-not-A questions and yes/no questions is that only yes/no questions can be naturally answered with *shi* 'yes', *dui* 'correct', or *bu* 'no'".<sup>21</sup> Our earlier discussion in (29) and (30) already touched upon this point. Now, we add yes-no particle *ma*-questions for further comparison with VP-neg and A-not-A questions. Consider (33)-(35).

- (33) A: Ni qu bu qu? (A-not-A question)  
you go not go  
'Will you go or not go?'  
B: Qu / Bu qu / \*Shi / \*Dui / \*Bu  
go not go yes right no
- (34) A: Ni qu bu? (VP-neg question)  
you go not  
'Will you go or not?'  
B: Qu / Bu qu / \*Shi / \*Dui / \*Bu  
go not go yes right no
- (35) A: Ni qu ma? (particle question)  
you go Q  
'Will you go?'  
B: Qu / Bu qu / Shi / Dui / Bu  
go not go yes right no

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<sup>21</sup> Wei (2007:35) holds the similar view.

The comparison shows that VP-neg questions pattern on a par with A-not-A questions, but not with yes-no particle questions. This contrast follows naturally, given that “[S]emantically, an A-not-A question requests the addressee to choose between a positive and a negative alternative provided in the question, while a yes-no question asks for a confirmation or denial of a single proposition, which itself may be positive or negative” (Huang, Li and Li, to appear, henceforth HLL). The fact that a VP-neg question like (34A) also requires one of the two given alternatives as the answer corroborates its striking association with A-not-A.

### 2.2.2 Presupposed context

By exemplifying the exchange below in (36), Li and Thompson (1981:550) indicate that “[T]he A-not-A question is used only in a *neutral context*, whereas the particle-question may be used in a *neutral* or *nonneutral context*”. In (37), a VP-neg response to the statement in (36A) is further provided by B. Li (2006:147).

- (36) A: Ni haoxiang shou-le yi-dian  
you seem thin-PERF one-bit  
'You seem to have lost some weight.'  
B: a. Shi ma? (particle question)  
BE Q  
'Is that so?'  
b. \*Shi bu shi? (A-not-A question)  
BE not BE  
'Yes or not yes?'
- (37) B: c. \*Shi bu? (VP-neg question)  
BE not  
'Yes or not?'

The above examples show that a VP-neg question and an A-not-A question behave alike, in contrast with a yes-no particle question. In the exchange, the Speaker A assumes that the Addressee B has lost some weight. Under a nonneutral context like this, only a particle question, rather than an A-not-A question or a VP-neg question, can be allowed as the response.

2.2.3 Co-occurrence with *nando* / *daodi*

As observed in CHT (1996), yes-no *ma*-questions differ from A-not-A questions in that the former can co-occur with the adverbial *nando* ‘actually’ while the latter can co-occur with *daodi* ‘truly’.<sup>22</sup> The reverse is not possible, however, as shown below.

- (38) a. *Nando*/\**Daodi* ta hui qu ma? (particle question)  
 actually truly s/he will go Q  
 ‘Is it actually the case that s/he will go?’  
 b. \**Nando*/*Daodi* ta hui qu bu hui qu? (A-not-A question)  
 actually truly s/he will go not will go  
 ‘Let me get to the truth: will s/he go or won’t go?’  
 c. \**Nando*/*Daodi* ta hui qu bu? (VP-neg question)  
 actually truly s/he will go not  
 ‘Let me get to the truth: will s/he go or not?’

As can be seen above, VP-neg and A-not-A questions behave in concord, both being able to co-occur with the adverbial *daodi* ‘truly’ but not with *nando* ‘actually’. This homogeneous character thus brings us support for arguing that VP-neg and A-not-A questions can be derivationally related.

2.2.4 Negated vs. non-negated verb

CHT (1996) have noted a constraint on both A-not-A and VP-neg questions, which requires that the verb be affirmative. We understand this constraint as a ban on forms like ‘not-A-not-A’ and ‘not-VP-neg’. The examples below in (39) capture this negation constraint.

- (39) a. \**Ta* bu qu bu qu? (\*not-A-not-A)  
 s/he not go not go  
 ‘Will s/he not go or not go?’  
 b. \**Ta* bu qu bu? (\*not-VP-neg)  
 s/he not go not  
 ‘Will s/he not go or not?’

---

<sup>22</sup> We refer readers to Kuo (1997) and HLL (to appear) for more discussion on these two attitudinal adverbials.

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In contrast, yes-no *ma*-questions are immune to the negation constraint, thus allowing forms like ‘not-VP-Q’, as shown below.

- (40) Ta bu qu ma? (not-VP-Q)  
s/he not go Q  
‘Will s/he not go?’

The comparison here, again, displays the symmetry between VP-neg and A-not-A questions, as opposed to yes-no *ma*-questions.

As a matter of fact, the negation constraint in question is just another way to express what we discussed earlier about intervention effects. According to Yang (2007), the negator *bu* may act as an intervener and block the covert movement of the A-not-A operator at LF. This may explain why (39a) is ungrammatical. Since our theory is that VP-neg questions are derived from A-not-A questions, we should predict that intervention effects also occur with VP-neg questions. This prediction is indeed met, as evidenced in (39b). Hence, to argue that VP-neg and A-not-A questions are derivationally correlated should not be inapplicable.

Note by the way that the negation constraint seems untenable, given a case as below.

- (41) Ni bu hui jiao hua bu?  
you not able water flowers not  
‘You don’t know how to water flowers, do you?’

Such a case, found in Li and Tang’s (1991) research on children’s language, is interpreted by Shao (1996) as a rhetorical question equivalent to (42) below.<sup>23</sup>

- (42) Ni bu hui jiao hua ba?  
you not able water flower BA  
‘You don’t know how to water flowers, do you?’

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<sup>23</sup> We have no idea whether Shao is given an appropriate discourse for interpreting (42) as a rhetorical question. If the contextual information is insufficient or even not given, it seems hard for the hearer to be sure of what the speaker, especially as s/he is a child, really means by saying such an unusual sentence.

Given that the neg *bu* in a case like (41) is similar in function to the particle *ba* as in (42), Hsieh (2001) proposes that the *bu* at issue is base-generated in  $C^0$ , on a par with a typical sentence-final particle. In this analysis, since a case like (41) is not a genuine VP-neg question but a rhetorical question, the fact that it is immune to the negation constraint is only to be expected.

Alternatively, we suggest that a case like (41) may not constitute a counterexample to the negation constraint because the ‘not-VP-neg’ form could be wrongly taken as being well-formed by children at a certain point during their acquisition of Chinese. Growing up, they may repair their own speech and never use the form again. This argument may explain why a case like (41) can be found in children’s language, but is rarely heard in adult speech.

#### 2.2.5 Island effect

The final evidence in support of the parallelism between VP-neg and A-not-A questions is concerned with island effects (Huang 1982/1991, Tsai 1994b, among others). Summarizing, A-not-A questions and adjunct *wh*-questions exhibit island effects, while disjunctive *haishi*-questions and argument *wh*-questions do not, as manifested below.

#### (43) Sentential Subject Island

- a. [Wo qu Meiguo haishi bu qu Meiguo] bijiao hao? (disjunctive)  
 I go US or not go US more good  
 ‘Is it better that I go to the US or not go to the US?’
- b. [Shei qu Meiguo] bijiao hao? (argument *wh*)  
 who go US more good  
 ‘Who<sub>i</sub> is [that *e<sub>i</sub>* goes to the US] better?’
- c. \*[Wo qu Meiguo bu qu (Meiguo)] bijiao hao? (A-not-A)  
 I go US not go US more good  
 ‘Is it better that I go to the US or not go (to the US)?’
- d. \*[Wo weishenme qu Meiguo] bijiao hao? (adjunct *wh*)  
 I why go US more good  
 ‘Why<sub>i</sub> is [that I go to the US *t<sub>i</sub>*] better?’

On a par with A-not-A questions and adjunct *wh*-questions, VP-neg questions are also observed with island effects, as evidenced below.

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- (44) \*[Wo qu Meiguo bu] bijiao hao? (VP-neg)  
I go US not more good  
'Is it better that I go to the US or not?'

The paradigm above shows, for our purpose, that VP-neg and A-not-A questions pattern together, as both are sensitive to island constraints.

### 2.3 Summary

We have thus far shown that none of the evidence provided by CHT against deriving VP-neg from A-not-A questions holds up to close scrutiny and that these two types of questions actually pattern on a par in a number of respects as illustrated above. This homogeneity may receive a straightforward account if we consider one type of question as being derived from the other. Deviating from this view, CHT propose a functional-head movement approach to deriving VP-neg questions, which is to be discussed below in Section 3.

## 3. REVIEW OF THREE APPROACHES TO DERIVING VP-NEG QUESTIONS

This section reviews three diverse approaches to deriving VP-neg questions in the following order: the NEG<sup>0</sup> raising approach (CHT 1996), the anaphoric ellipsis approach (Hsieh 2001), and the morpho-syntactic approach (Gasde 2004).

### 3.1 NEG<sup>0</sup> Raising Approach

CHT's (1996) proposal of NEG<sup>0</sup> raising is in principle driven by feature checking.<sup>24</sup> Below we will first introduce and then evaluate this functional-head movement analysis.

#### 3.1.1 CHT's analysis

CHT's analysis is that the neg of VP-neg questions can and must move from a preverbal position which negators in Chinese normally occupy (i.e., NEG<sup>0</sup>) to C<sup>0</sup> to check the [NEG] feature. This analysis

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<sup>24</sup> Also refer to N. Zhang (1997) for a similar account based on feature checking.

begins with a discussion of the development of VP-neg questions in Classical Chinese. Consider (45) below, cited from CHT (1996:52).

- (45) a. Ruci ze dong-xin fou hu? (Mengzi, Gongsunchou, Shang)  
if-so then move-heart not Q  
'If this is so, will you be inclined (to do it)?'  
b. Jie wei? (Zhongbenqijing, 148)  
understand not-yet  
'(Do you) understand it yet?'

Following M. Zhang (1990), CHT indicate that at an earlier stage, a sentence-final particle like *hu* is attached to certain VP-neg questions in Classical Chinese, as in (45a). However, such a particle disappears later, as we can see in a case like (45b). The disappearance of the question particle can be interpreted as a process whereby the particle has been incorporated into the negation marker or has been taken over in function by the negation marker. In this light, the neg of VP-neg questions in Classical Chinese like (45b) functions in a similar way to a typical question particle (also see Tang 1994:95).

The data in Classical Chinese prompt CHT to consider the possibility of an analysis of the neg of VP-neg questions in Modern Chinese as being on a par with a question particle. Nevertheless, they also notice that the neg and the question particle do not behave exactly alike. Consider the contrast below.

- (46) a. Hufei hui qu ma?  
Hufei will go Q  
'Will Hufei go?'  
b. Hufei qu-le ma?  
Hufei go-PERF Q  
'Did Hufei go?'
- (47) a. Hufei hui qu bu/\*meiyou?  
Hufei will go not  
'Will Hufei go or not?'  
b. Hufei qu-le \*bu/meiyou?  
Hufei go-PERF not  
'Did Hufei go or not?'

Evidently, the question particle *ma* in (46) appears unconstrained by verb/aspect, contrary to the neg of VP-neg questions in (47). For typical question particles like *ma* and *ne*, CHT, following Tang (1989), assume that they are base-generated in the  $C^0$  position. Furthermore, they argue that in some Chinese dialects like Taiwanese and Cantonese, the neg of VP-neg questions is also base-generated in  $C^0$ , since it is irrespective of verb/aspect. The neg of VP-neg questions in Modern Chinese, however, must respect aspect, suggesting that it should be base-generated somewhere other than  $C^0$ .

A dilemma emerges. On the one hand, the neg of VP-neg questions is on a par with a Q-particle in being able to specify interrogativity, but on the other, the neg is unlike a Q-particle because it should not be base-generated in  $C^0$ . Given this, CHT are thus led to propose an analysis based on overt movement of the neg, which they claim is triggered by unchecked features in the sense of Chomsky (1995). Specifically, they postulate a phonologically null  $C^0$  with formal features [Q, NEG] in the sentence-final position. For the [NEG] feature to be checked off, the neg has to raise from its underlying preverbal position (assumed as  $NEG^0$  by CHT) to  $C^0$ , as a result deriving the correct surface form as well as the interrogative meaning.

CHT argue that their  $NEG^0$  raising analysis may gain support from the fact, as already seen in Subsection 2.1.2, that VP-neg questions cannot co-occur with a Q-particle. Consider (48), cited from HLL.

- (48) a. \*Ta mai shu bu ne?  
s/he buy book not Q  
'Will s/he buy books or not?'  
b. \*Ni chi-le fan mei ne?  
you eat-PERF rice not Q  
'Did you eat the meal or not?'

Under CHT's assumption that question particles like *ma* and *ne* are base-generated in  $C^0$ , the movement of the neg to  $C^0$  will cause a clash and thus render the sentence ungrammatical.

As a final remark, CHT point out that in Mandarin, the negation marker *bu* cannot be used to indicate embedded questions, while *meiyou* can.

- (49) a. Ta xiang zhidao ni lai-le meiyou (CHT 1996:62)  
s/he want know you come-PERF not  
'S/he wonders whether you came or not.'  
b. \*Ta xiang zhidao ni qu bu  
s/he want know you go not  
'S/he wonders whether you will go or not.'

CHT attribute the unacceptability of (49b) to the “matrix property” unique to the neg *bu*. That is, *bu* can only occur in the matrix  $C^0$  but never in the embedded  $C^0$  except that it passes there.<sup>25</sup> Given the unacceptability of a case like (49b), an analysis based on ellipsis (cf. B. Li 2006) would wrongly predict it to be acceptable, given the following derivation in (50).

(50) Ta xiang zhidao ni qu bu [*e*]

An unacceptable case like (49b) seems to call into question for an ellipsis-based approach to deriving VP-neg questions. However, this may not be true empirically, as we will argue in the following subsection.

### 3.1.2 Problems with CHT's analysis

Appealing as it may appear, CHT's analysis raises some problems. First, as pointed out by Hsieh (2001) and B. Li (2006), it is impossible for the neg of a VP-neg question like (51a) to be extracted from a preverbal position as in (51b), given that (51b) is ungrammatical.

- (51) a. Ta qu-le xuexiao mei(you)?  
s/he go-PERF school not have  
'Did s/he go to school or not?'

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<sup>25</sup> The “matrix property” analysis of *bu* is made from a parallel drawn by CHT with the yes-no question particle *ma*, as in (i) below.

(i) \*Huangrong xiang zhidao Hufei zou-le ma  
Huangrong want know Hufei leave-PERF Q  
'Huangrong wonders whether Hufei left.'

They claim that *bu* is on a par with *ma* in that both are speaker-oriented.

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- b. \*Ta mei(you) qu-le xuexiao<sup>26</sup>  
s/he not have go-PERF school  
'S/he did not go to school.'

Second, CHT's  $C^0$  clash account of unacceptable VP-neg-*ne* sentences like (48) does not hold for the judgment of all Chinese speakers. As already mentioned in Subsection 2.1.2, N. Zhang (1997) and B. Li (2006) argue that VP-neg-*ne* forms are acceptable in some Chinese dialects. Thus, given that there is no general agreement on the acceptability of VP-neg-*ne* forms, CHT's argument that the data like (48) can be used as the evidence in support of their NEG<sup>0</sup> raising analysis is less than convincing.<sup>27</sup>

The third problem deals with sentences like (49b), reproduced below as (52).

- (52) \*Ta xiang zhidao ni qu bu  
s/he want know you go not  
'S/he wonders whether you will go or not.'

CHT claim that the negation marker *bu* has the "matrix property" and thus cannot be used to form embedded VP-neg questions. This claim is, nevertheless, not attested all around. For example, B. Li (p.c.), a native speaker of Mainland Mandarin, judges a sentence like (52) acceptable

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<sup>26</sup> The ungrammaticality of (51b) can be due to the constraint that *-le* and *you*, both being perfective aspect markers, should be in complementary distribution (Wang 1965). Also see Note 6 for this point.

<sup>27</sup> We have seen that CHT have proposed the  $C^0$  clash analysis to account for their judgment on VP-neg-*ne* questions like (48). One may then wonder how the opposite judgment in certain dialects can be explained, where the  $C^0$  clash is not witnessed. Here we offer three alternative analyses. First, Kuong (2001) proposes that in Mandarin Chinese, Q-particles are base-generated in [Spec, CP], without clashing with the neg which is base-generated in  $C^0$ . Second, Hagstrom (2006) proposes an independent syntactic projection in the sentence-final position, called *npqP*, for the neg of VP-neg questions to move to. In this regard, a clash will not happen since the neg moves to its own projection *npqP* but not to whatever projection that is otherwise headed by *ne* or consists of *ne*. Third, in our view, it is more likely that *ne* and the raised A-not-A operator occupy different positions in CP at LF (e.g.,  $C^0$  and [Spec, CP], respectively) and therefore do not conflict.

with the reading of indirect question,<sup>28</sup> as shown below in (53) (the constituent in square brackets is what undergoes deletion).

- (53) Ta   xiang zhidao ni   qu bu [qu]                      (indirect question)  
      s/he want know you go not go  
      'S/he wonders whether you will go or not [go].'

The availability of the indirect reading in (53) suggests that an embedded VP-*bu* question is actually acceptable in certain dialects and that it is not unlikely to derive VP-neg from A-not-A by recourse to ellipsis.

Fourth, CHT's resort to M. Zhang's (1990) function-shift analysis of a case like (45b) is not without problems. It is unclear how it can be ascertained that the function of the missing Q-particle in Classical Chinese must have shifted to the neg (see P. Wei 2007:33 for the similar critique on this point). In their paper, we do not see any diagnostic criterion or test proposed by CHT to verify the particlehood of the neg in Classical Chinese. Moreover, P. Wei (*ibid.*:33) points out that in Middle Chinese the neg *wu* of VP-*wu* questions can only be analyzed as a verb, but not as a Q-particle. If this is true, CHT's particle analysis will turn out to lack conviction because it cannot be applied to all VP-neg forms in Classical (non-Modern) Chinese.

Last but not least, CHT's Q-particle analysis fails to explain why VP-neg questions and A-not-A questions behave alike, and why they consistently differ from typical particle questions in a number of respects, as we have seen in Section 2.

### 3.2 Anaphoric Ellipsis Approach

Against CHT's NEG<sup>0</sup> raising approach, Hsieh (2001) proposes an anaphoric ellipsis approach to deriving VP-neg questions from coordinate VP-not-VP questions. Below we will first introduce and then evaluate this VP ellipsis approach.

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<sup>28</sup> Quite a few of our informants speaking Mainland Mandarin do not find a case like (52) very awkward.

3.2.1 Hsieh's analysis

Following Aoun and Li (1993), Hsieh assumes that in Mandarin Chinese, there exist a QP (question phrase) and an independent operator in [Spec, QP]. Under this assumption, Hsieh further proposes that A-not-A questions and VP-neg questions both have the [+WH] feature base-generated under the functional head Q, and that the independent [+Q] operator moves from [Spec, QP] to [Spec, CP] at LF in order to check the strong [+Q] feature of  $C^0$ . Consider a VP-neg question in (54a) and its simplified structure in (54b) (adapted from Hsieh 2001:132).

- (54) a. Ta kan-le nei-ben shu meiyou [<sub>VP</sub> e] ?  
s/he read-PERF that-CL book not  
'Did s/he read the book or not?'
- b. [<sub>CP</sub> Op<sub>i</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> Ta [<sub>QP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> Q<sub>[+WH]</sub>] [&P [<sub>VP</sub> kan-le na-ben shu]...&...[<sub>NegP</sub> meiyou [<sub>VP</sub> e ]]]]]]

Along the lines of Progovac (1999), Hsieh puts forward a coordinate &P analysis of a VP-not-VP question, as depicted in (54b), which contains a conjunction phrase headed by & (cf. Munn 1987). The & head is presumably a null form in an A-not-A construction.

In addition to the QP proposal, there are some other important assumptions made in Hsieh's theory. First, she distinguishes VP-*bu* questions from VP-*meiyou* questions by assuming that *meiyou* heads a NegP which can license a null VP, while *bu* does not head a NegP and cannot license a null VP except when it is focused. This is why the contrast shown below in (55) emerges under Hsieh's system, contrary to many other studies which consider both VP-*bu* and VP-*meiyou* questions well-formed. In fact, Hsieh's judgment on VP-*bu* questions is closer to the intuition of Chinese speakers from Taiwan, contra those from Mainland China. Intricacies in judgment aside, what concerns us more is that even if we accept Hsieh's judgment on VP-*bu* questions, her analysis still raises certain problems of its own, as we will argue in the next subsection.

- (55) a. Ta kan-le nei-ben shu meiyou [<sub>VP</sub> e] ?  
s/he read-PERF that-CL book not  
'Did s/he read the book or not?'

- b. \*Ta chang qu bu [VP e] ?  
 s/he often go not  
 ‘Does s/he often go or not?’

According to Hsieh, a VP-*bu* question like (55b) is ruled out because in such a case *bu* is unfocused and unable to license VP ellipsis. Hsieh also shows that the same contrast can be observed in declarative sentences. Consider (56).

- (56) a. Zhangsan mai-le nei-ben shu, keshi Lisi meiyou [VP e]  
 Zhangsan buy-PERF that-CL book but Lisi not  
 ‘Zhangsan bought the book, but Lisi didn’t.’  
 b. \*Zhangsan xihuan zhe-ben shu, keshi Lisi bu [VP e]  
 Zhangsan like this-CL book but Lisi not  
 ‘Zhangsan likes this book, but Lisi doesn’t.’

In Hsieh’s analysis, in a case like (56b), what is focused is the subject, but not *bu*. As opposed to unfocused *bu*, its focused counterpart may license VP ellipsis, as shown below by Hsieh.

- (57) a. ?Dajia dou yiwei Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> hen kuaile, keshi ta<sub>i</sub> shuo  
 everybody all think Zhangsan very happy but he say  
 ta<sub>i</sub> bu [VP e]<sup>29</sup>  
 he not  
 ‘Everybody thought Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> was happy, but he<sub>i</sub> said he<sub>i</sub> wasn’t.’  
 b. Dajia dou yiwei Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> hen kuaile, keshi ta<sub>i</sub> shuo ta<sub>i</sub>  
 everybody all think Zhangsan very happy but he say he  
 yi-dian-ye-bu / yi-dian-dou-bu [VP e]  
 one-bit-also-not one-bit-all-not  
 ‘Everybody thought Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> was happy, but he<sub>i</sub> said he<sub>i</sub> was not at all.’

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<sup>29</sup> Hsieh considers this sentence acceptable in her analysis. However, both our informants and we ourselves feel that such a neg-stranded case is relatively less acceptable than cases like (57b) and (57c). In order to capture this detectably felt contrast, we will mark a case like (57a) ungrammatical in the following presentation.

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- c. Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> keyi qu, keshi ta<sub>i</sub> pian bu [<sub>VP</sub> *e*]  
Zhangsan can go but he just not  
'Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> can go, but he<sub>i</sub> just doesn't want to.'

To account for these well-formed cases, Hsieh follows Lee and Pan (2001) by assuming that *bu* is a focus-sensitive operator. Only when it is focused does it suffice to license VP ellipsis.

Second, Hsieh correctly observes that *meiyou* can license VP ellipsis while *mei* cannot, as shown below in a contrastive structure like (58a). This observation, nevertheless, seems not to hold for a VP-*mei* question like (58b) in which *mei* can replace *meiyou* and license VP ellipsis.

- (58) a. Zhangsan mai-le nei-ben shu, keshi Lisi mei\*(you) [<sub>VP</sub> *e*]  
Zhangsan buy-PERF that-CL book but Lisi not have  
'Zhangsan bought the book, but Lisi didn't.'  
b. Ni chi-le fan mei(you) [<sub>VP</sub> *e*] ?  
you eat-PERF rice not have  
'Did you eat the meal or not?'

Hsieh (p.c.) pointed out to us that the *mei* of VP-*mei* questions may have undergone reanalysis and evolved into something like a question particle occupying the Q head position in the QP structure, on a par with the neg *bo* in Southern Min, as illustrated below.

- (59) Mandarin Chinese  
a. Ni chi-le fan [<sub>NEG</sub> meiyou] *e* ?  
you eat-PERF rice not  
'Did you eat the meal or not?'  
b. Ni chi-le fan [<sub>Q</sub> mei] ?  
you eat-PERF rice not  
'Did you eat the meal?'
- (60) Southern Min  
a. I e lai bo? (CHT 1996:55)  
s/he will come not  
'Will s/he come?'  
b. I ki-gue bo? (CHT 1996:75)  
s/he go-EXP not  
'Has s/he been there?'

Since the neg *mei* of VP-*mei* questions is a particle occupying Q<sup>0</sup> rather than a typical negator occupying NEG<sup>0</sup>, *mei* thus neither heads a NegP nor licenses any VP ellipsis, contra *meiyou*.

3.2.2 Problems with Hsieh's analysis

Hsieh's analysis, though attractive, is not without problems. First, a QP structure like (54b) suffers a recovery problem, as illustrated below in (61).

- (61) \*Ta kan-le nei-ben shu meiyou [<sub>VP</sub> kan-le nei-ben shu]?  
 s/he read-PERF that-CL book not read-PERF that-CL book  
 'Did s/he read the book or not read the book?'

Under the assumption that structural isomorphism underlying ellipsis (Merchant 2001:17) requires "a syntactically identical twin", the elided VP in (54b) must be structurally isomorphic to its antecedent VP (i.e., *kan-le nei-ben shu*). Nonetheless, the recovery of the elided VP conjunct results in unexpected ungrammaticality, suggesting that Hsieh's QP structure calls for refinement.

Second, the coordinate &P analysis of VP-not-VP questions may not be on the right track, given the following contrast observed in McCawley (1994).

- (62) a. Ni [<sub>positive</sub> xihuan ta] haishi [<sub>negative</sub> bu xihuan ta]?  
 you like him/her or not like him/her  
 'Do you like him/her or not like him/her?'  
 b. Ni [<sub>negative</sub> bu xihuan ta] haishi [<sub>positive</sub> xihuan ta]?  
 you not like him/her or like him/her  
 'Do you not like him/her or like him/her?'
- (63) a. Ni [<sub>positive</sub> xihuan ta] [<sub>negative</sub> bu xihuan ta]?  
 you like him/her not like him/her  
 'Do you like him/her (or) not like him/her?'  
 b. \*Ni [<sub>negative</sub> bu xihuan ta] [<sub>positive</sub> xihuan ta]?  
 you not like him/her like him/her  
 'Do you not like him/her (or) like him/her?'

As we can see in (62), a typical coordinate structure like a disjunctive question headed by the overt conjunction *haishi* '(whether)...or' allows a

switch of the two conjuncts in order. However, a VP-not-VP question prohibits such a switch and only allows the positive conjunct preceding the negative conjunct, as in (63). This implies that a VP-not-VP question is inappropriate to be analyzed as being on a par with a coordinate structure.

Third, Hsieh's focus account cannot explain the detectable contrast in acceptability between (57a) and (57b), reproduced below as (64a) and (64b), respectively.

- (64) a. \*Dajia      dou yiwei    Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> hen kuaile, keshi ta<sub>i</sub> shuo  
          everybody all think    Zhangsan very happy but    he say  
          ta<sub>i</sub> bu [<sub>VP</sub> e]  
          he not  
          'Everybody thought Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> was happy, but he<sub>i</sub> said he<sub>i</sub>  
          wasn't.'
- b. Dajia      dou yiwei    Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> hen kuaile, keshi ta<sub>i</sub> shuo ta<sub>i</sub>  
          everybody all think    Zhangsan very happy but    he say he  
          yi-dian-ye-bu    / yi-dian-dou-bu [<sub>VP</sub> e]  
          one-bit-also-not    one-bit-all-not  
          'Everybody thought Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> was happy, but he<sub>i</sub> said he<sub>i</sub> was  
          not at all.'

In Hsieh's analysis, (64a) is given one question mark and not significantly distinguished from (64b) in acceptability. She analyzes both cases as involving focused *bu*. However, according to our informants, (64b) sounds notably better than (64a). Thus, a better analysis would be able to capture this detectable difference, and we will show in Section 4 that our analysis is able to do so.

Fourth, it is questionable if *bu* in a contrastive structure like (56b) is really unfocused, given that in the same type of structure like (65) below, as suggested by T. Wei (2006:161), *bu* actually falls under polarity focus (López and Winkler 2000, and Winker 2000), as opposed to contrastive focus (Rooth 1992).<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Consider the same analysis for English as shown below.

(i) Tony ate beans last night, (but) PETER<sub>F</sub> DIDN'T<sub>F</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> e].

"Intuitively, focus on *PETER* marks contrast with its correlate *Tony*, and focus on negation signals contrast with its correlating polarity in the preceding sentence" (Romero 2003:271).

- (65) [<sub>contrastive focus</sub> Zhangsan] [<sub>polarity focus</sub> yao qu Meiguo],  
           Zhangsan                          want go US  
   danshi [<sub>contrastive focus</sub> Lisi] (que) [<sub>polarity focus</sub> bu yao [<sub>VP</sub> e ]]  
   but                          Lisi yet                  not want  
   ‘Zhangsan wants to go to the US, but Lisi does not want to.’

Furthermore, in Hsieh’s work, we see little, if there is any, in-depth theoretical discussion on the nature of *yi-dian-ye/dou* ‘one-bit-also/all’ and *pian* ‘just’ in (57b-c), which are claimed to be able to render *bu* focused when they are combined.

Fifth, Hsieh’s focus account for the contrast between (56b) and (57a) is not convincing. She claims that in (56b) the focus is on the subject of the *bu* clause (i.e., *Lisi*, in contrast with *Zhangsan*), but not on *bu*, while in (57a) the focus is on *bu* (note that in this case the subjects are found with no contrast, i.e., *Zhangsan* and its pro-form *ta*). However, even though the embedded subjects in (57a) are not contrastive, the matrix subjects are obviously contrastive (precisely, the contrast between ‘what everybody thought’ and ‘what Zhangsan said’). Our point is, in (57a), if the focus is to fall under the matrix domain shown with contrast, *bu* will be rendered unfocused, an undesirable result for Hsieh. Briefly, those who identify the acceptability contrast between (56b) and (57a) and also favor the focus account must well explain why *bu* can be focused in (57a), but cannot in (56b).

Finally, Hsieh’s treatment of VP-*mei* questions like (59b) as being on a par with particle *bo*-questions in Southern Min like (60) is undesirable because it leaves mysterious why *mei* has to agree with verb/aspect, while *bo* does not.

### 3.3 Morpho-Syntactic Approach

Departing from CHT (1996) and Hsieh (2001), Gasde proposes a novel morpho-syntactic approach to deriving VP-neg questions. Under this approach, various subtypes of A-not-A questions are derived uniformly by a raising rule, but non-uniformly in terms of the raised constituent and the underlying morphological structure. Below we will first introduce and then comment on this distinctive approach.

3.3.1 Gasde's analysis

Gasde proposes that the V-not(-V) template is a “morphological word” composed of a verb stem and a semi-suffix, as schematized below in (66). Also, this morphological word carries a question feature [+Q] which is checked at LF.

- (66) a. [verb stem V<sub>1</sub>] [semi-suffix -not-V<sub>2</sub>] (D-structure)  
b. [verb stem V] [semi-suffix -not]<sup>31</sup> (D-structure)

Assuming in conformity with Tai (1985) and Liu (2000) that Mandarin Chinese is an underlying SOV language, Gasde derives various subtypes of A-not-A questions by raising either V<sub>1</sub>-not-V<sub>2</sub> or V<sub>1</sub> to precede the direct object (DO), for the purpose of licensing DO or assigning Case to DO under a rightward directionality requirement at S-structure.<sup>32</sup> Consider the derivations below in (67)-(70).

(67) **V-neg-VO**

Ni kan-bu-kan dianying?  
you watch-not-watch movie  
'Do you watch or not watch movies?'

- a. [<sub>V</sub> dianying kan-bu-kan] (D-structure)  
b. [<sub>V</sub> kan-bu-kan<sub>i</sub> [<sub>V</sub> dianying t<sub>i</sub>]] (S-structure)

(68) **VO-neg-V**

Ni kan dianying bu kan?  
you watch movies not watch  
'Do you watch movies or not watch?'

- a. [<sub>V</sub> dianying kan-bu-kan] (D-structure)  
b. [<sub>V</sub> kan<sub>i</sub> [<sub>V</sub> dianying t<sub>i</sub>-bu-kan]] (S-structure)

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<sup>31</sup> A similar analysis that also treats 'V-not' as an independent lexical item can be seen in He (1996). However, this kind of analysis has some weaknesses. See Tang (1999) for critical comments.

<sup>32</sup> It is generally assumed (e.g., Koopman 1984, Y.-H. Li 1985, and Huang 1992:120) that (structural) Case is assigned from left to right in Chinese.

(69) **VO-neg**

Ni kan dianying bu?

you watch movies not

‘Do you watch movies or not?’

a. [<sub>V</sub> dianying kan-bu] (D-structure)

b. [<sub>V</sub> kan<sub>i</sub> [<sub>V</sub> dianying t<sub>i</sub>-bu]] (S-structure)

(70) **M-neg-MV**

Ni gan-bu-gan sha ji?

you dare-not-dare kill chicken

‘Dare you or not dare kill a chicken?’

a. [<sub>V</sub> [<sub>V</sub> sha ji] [<sub>V</sub><sup>0</sup> gan-bu-gan]] (D-structure)

b. [<sub>V</sub> gan-bu-gan<sub>i</sub> [<sub>V</sub> sha ji] [<sub>V</sub><sup>0</sup> t<sub>i</sub>]] (S-structure)

According to Gasde, in deriving modal-verb cases like (70), the semi-suffix must be obligatorily “taken along” with the modal-verb stem, while in deriving VP-neg cases like (69), the semi-suffix must be obligatorily “left behind”. On the other hand, in deriving cases like (67) and (68), the semi-suffix has both options; either way will do.

3.3.2 Problems with Gasde’s analysis

Novel as it is, Gasde’s analysis faces at least two problems. First, given the morphological template in (66), we doubt how a bound morpheme like *xi-* and *you-* in (71a) and (71b), respectively, can qualify as a full-verb stem in its own right.

(71) a. Ta xi-bu-xi-huan zhe-ben shu?

s/he li-not-li-ke this-CL book

‘Does s/he li- or not like this book?’

b. Ta you-bu-you-mo?

s/he hu-not-hu-morous?

‘Is s/he hu- or not humorous?’

Second, we wonder why it should be obligatory to apply the “taken along” and “left behind” mechanisms in some cases but be optional in others. Such an analysis, unless accompanied by a theoretical account, would simply be true in descriptive ways, but short of insight. Furthermore, contrary to Gasde, we argue that in deriving modal-verb

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cases, the semi-suffix need not be obligatorily “taken along” with the modal-verb stem, as evidenced below in (72).

- (72) Ni gan sha ji bu gan?  
you dare kill chicken not dare  
‘Dare you kill a chicken or not dare?’  
a. [<sub>v</sub> [<sub>v</sub> sha ji] [<sub>v</sub><sup>0</sup> gan-bu-gan]] (D-structure)  
b. [<sub>v</sub> gan<sub>i</sub> [<sub>v</sub> sha ji] [<sub>v</sub><sup>0</sup> t<sub>i</sub>-bu-gan]] (S-structure)

As shown above, the semi-suffix can be “left behind”, suggesting that Gasde’s obligatory “taken along” account for modal-verb cases is not tenable.

#### 4. A UNIFIED ACCOUNT

In this section, we first propose a unified analysis for deriving various subtypes of A-not-A questions. We then stress how our analysis is superior to Hsieh’s. We also distinguish between A-not-A questions and true disjunctive questions, as well as between classical VP-negs and modern VP-negs, before ending this section by discussing a residual issue.

##### 4.1 Morphological Reduplication & Anaphoric Ellipsis

A-not-A questions can appear in a variety of forms, as illustrated below in (73), including VP-neg questions under our proposed analysis.<sup>33</sup>

- (73) a. Ta xihuan zhe-ben shu bu xihuan zhe-ben shu? (VO-not-VO)  
s/he like this-CL book not like this-CL book  
‘Does s/he like this book or not like this book?’  
b. Ta xihuan zhe-ben shu bu xihuan? (VO-not-V)  
s/he like this-CL book not like  
‘Does s/he like this book or not like (it)?’

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<sup>33</sup> Readers interested in the empirical distribution of four subtypes of A-not-A questions (AB-not-AB, AB-not-A, A-not-AB, and AB-not) in both Classical and Modern Chinese literary texts may refer to Da (2004).

- c. Ta xihuan bu xihuan zhe-ben shu? (V-not-VO)  
 s/he like not like this-CL book  
 ‘Does s/he like or not like this book?’
- d. Ta xi-bu-xi-huan zhe-ben shu? (V-not-VO)<sup>34</sup>  
 s/he li-not-li-ke this-CL book  
 ‘Does s/he li- or not like this book?’
- e. Ta xihuan zhe-ben shu bu? (VO-not)  
 s/he like this-CL book not  
 ‘Does s/he like this book or not?’

Favoring a non-unified analysis, Huang (1991:317) derives VO-not-V questions like (73b) from base-generated coordinate VO-not-VO questions like (73a) by applying a process of anaphoric ellipsis that deletes the second occurrence of O. In contrast, the subtypes in (73c-d) are derived from a simplex D-structure which looks like (74) below.

- (74) [S [NP Ni] [INFL INFL<sup>0</sup> [VP xihuan [NP zhe-ben shu]]]]  
 you [+Q] like this-CL book

According to Huang, “the interrogative INFL is realized by a reduplication rule, which copies a sequence immediately following INFL and inserts the morpheme *bu* ‘not’ between the original and its copy” (ibid.:316). And the reduplicated length can be shorter or longer, e.g., *xi-bu-xi* in (73d), *xihuan-bu-xihuan* in (73c), or even *xihuan zheben shu bu xihuan zheben shu* in (73a). Note that in Huang’s analysis, VO-not-VO questions like (73a) can possibly be derived in two ways: either from a base-generated coordinate [[VO] [not VO]] structure or from a simplex structure like (74) undergoing reduplication. In this paper, we adopt the latter.

As opposed to Huang’s modular approach, we propose to derive all subtypes of A-not-A questions as listed in (73) from the same source, namely, (74). We follow Huang in deriving VO-not-VO like (73a) and V-not-VO like (73c-d) by applying morphological reduplication. On the other hand, regarding VO-not-V like (73b) and VO-not (i.e., VP-neg) like (73e), we suggest that they are in turn derived via anaphoric ellipsis

<sup>34</sup> We acknowledge that our labeling of (73d) as ‘V-not-VO’ is not precise because the morpheme *xi-* is clearly not a full verb in its own right. The reason why we still use the label is due to expository consistency. In fact, it is more accurate to mark (73d) under the label of ‘A-not-AB’.

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from a reduplicated VO-not-VO structure like (73a). Under this approach, we have achieved a unified reduplication analysis for deriving all A-not-A subtypes as listed in (73). We argue that our unified analysis (in the sense that we associate VP-neg with A-not-A) fares better than a non-unified analysis like CHT's (in the sense that they dissociate VP-neg from A-not-A), because all the observed parallelisms between VP-neg and A-not-A questions as shown in Subsection 2.2 are only to be expected under a unified approach like ours.

#### 4.2 Our Analysis vs. Hsieh's Analysis

Now that both Hsieh (2001) and we adopt ellipsis in deriving VP-neg questions, one may ask in what ways our theory is to be preferred over Hsieh's. Below we will demonstrate four advantages of our theory.

First, our theory proposes a unified reduplication analysis of all A-not-A subtypes, contra Hsieh's non-unified one. In her analysis, V-not-VO and V-not-V are "morphologically complex words", while VO-not-V and VO-not are syntactically derived by ellipsis from coordinate VO-not-VO headed by covert &. This immediately marks a difference from our analysis of VO-not-VO, since we do not treat it as a base-generated coordinate structure. We have previously shown in (62) and (63) that the coordinate analysis is untenable. In the next subsection, we will provide more evidence in support of our view that a VO-not-VO construction is not on a par with a genuine coordinate structure.

Second, unlike Hsieh, our theory does not suffer a recovery problem as in (61), reproduced below as (75a).

- (75) a. \*Ta kan-le nei-ben shu meiyou [<sub>VP</sub> kan-le  
s/he read-PERF that-CL book not read-PERF  
nei-ben shu]?  
that-CL book  
'Did s/he read the book or not read the book?'
- b. \*Ta mei(you) qu-le xuexiao  
s/he not have go-PERF school  
'S/he did not go to school.'

In our analysis, (75a) is ruled out in the same way as (51b), repeated above as (75b). That is, the perfective marker *you* as well as its negative counterpart *mei(you)* should be in complementary distribution with the

perfective *-le* (also see Notes 6 and 26). As for a case like (76a) below, our exact ellipsis analysis is that what has been elided is a true VP without involving perfectivity, as shown in (76b).

- (76) a. Ta kan-le nei-ben shu mei(you) [<sub>VP</sub> e]?  
 s/he read-PERF that-CL book not have  
 ‘Did s/he read the book or not?’  
 b. Ta kan-le nei-ben shu mei(you) [<sub>VP</sub> kan nei-ben shu]?  
 s/he read-PERF that-CL book not have read that-CL book  
 ‘Did s/he read the book or not read the book?’

Third, Hsieh’s treatment of VP-*mei* questions (distinct from VP-*meiyou* questions under her system) as being on a par with Q-particle questions, as demonstrated in (59) and (60), fails to explain why VP-*mei* questions can pattern together with A-not-A questions, but not with typical particle questions, as we have seen in Subsection 2.2. However, those parallelisms between VP-neg and A-not-A questions are expected under our unified analysis.

Fourth, our theory can provide an explanation for an earlier-mentioned contrast in (64), reproduced below as (77), as well as for similar contrasts like (78) and (79).

- (77) a. \*Dajia dou yiwei Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> hen kuaile, keshi ta<sub>i</sub> shuo  
 everybody all think Zhangsan very happy but he say  
 ta<sub>i</sub> bu [<sub>VP</sub> e]  
 he not  
 ‘Everybody thought Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> was happy, but he<sub>i</sub> said he<sub>i</sub> wasn’t.’  
 b. Dajia dou yiwei Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> hen kuaile, keshi ta<sub>i</sub> shuo ta<sub>i</sub>  
 everybody all think Zhangsan very happy but he say he  
 yi-dian-ye-bu / yi-dian-dou-bu [<sub>VP</sub> e]  
 one-bit-also-not one-bit-all-not  
 ‘Everybody thought Zhangsan<sub>i</sub> was happy, but he<sub>i</sub> said he<sub>i</sub> was not at all.’  
 (78) a. \*Zhangsan keyi qu, keshi ta bu [<sub>VP</sub> e]  
 Zhangsan can go but he not  
 ‘Zhangsan can go, but he doesn’t want to.’

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- b. Zhangsan keyi qu, keshi ta pian-bu [VP *e*]  
Zhangsan can go but he just-not  
'Zhangsan can go, but he just doesn't want to.'
- (79) a. \*Zhangsan mai-le nei-ben shu, keshi Lisi mei [VP *e*]  
Zhangsan buy-PERF that-CL book but Lisi not  
'Zhangsan bought that book, but Lisi didn't.'
- b. Zhangsan mai-le nei-ben shu, keshi Lisi mei-you  
Zhangsan buy-PERF that-CL book but Lisi not-have  
/ hai-mei [VP *e*]  
still-not  
'Zhangsan bought that book, but Lisi didn't (yet).'

Descriptively, the difference between (a) cases and (b) cases lies in how the negator is used. In (a) cases, the negator can be said to be 'stranded', while in (b) cases it is not stranded, assuming that it has been incorporated and transformed into an idiom chunk or an independent lexical unit. We dub this as the 'Neg-Stranding Constraint' (NSC) requiring that negators should not be stranded. As indicated in Huang (1988:288), this constraint is also true in English.

- (80) a. \*John likes this book, but Bill not.  
b. John likes this book, but Bill doesn't.

Hence, each (a) case in (77)-(79) is worse than its (b) counterpart due to the violation of the Neg-Stranding Constraint.<sup>35</sup>

Concerning the NSC, we principally follow Huang (1988) in assuming that the negator is adjoined from the left (i.e., left-adjoined) to the following V. In cases like (77a), (78a), and (79a), where there is no following V for the negator to adjoin or attach to, the NSC is violated and the sentences are thus ungrammatical. In this paper, we extend Huang's proposal and further assume that the NSC can also be satisfied if the negator is adjoined from the right (i.e., right-adjoined). In cases like (77b), (78b), and (79b), we find the negator being right-adjoined to

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<sup>35</sup> One might wonder whether Hsieh's theory would be more fully-grounded if it included the NSC. Such would not be the case, however, because in doing so, VP-*meiyou* questions and cases like (56a) would be wrongly ruled out by the NSC under Hsieh's system. Moreover, Hsieh considers a case like (57a) acceptable, so that this judgment can be accounted for by her focus analysis. But if the NSC were added to her theory, a case like (57a) would be ruled out, contra Hsieh's judgment.

certain morphemes to form a morphological unit, thus not violating the NSC. In terms of VP-neg questions, according to our proposed analysis, the VP-neg sequence is generated by a morphological reduplication rule, with the negator being inserted behind the copied morphological VP. In this sense, the neg here is much like an affix, as it is right-adjoined to the morphological verbal sequence, without disobeying the NSC. In the next subsection, we will show that our NSC proposal is viable.

#### 4.3 A-not-A Questions vs. True Disjunctive Questions

We argue that our NSC proposal is on the right track because it may correctly differentiate A-not-A questions from true disjunctive questions. Consider the following contrast.

- (81) a. Ta xihuan zhe-ben shu bu [<sub>VP</sub> e] ?  
s/he like this-CL book not  
'Does s/he like this book (or) not?'  
b. \*Ta xihuan zhe-ben shu haishi bu [<sub>VP</sub> e] ?  
s/he like this-CL book or not  
'Does s/he like this book or not?'

A disjunctive question containing the conjunction *haishi* '(whether)...or' as in (81b) is traditionally analyzed as a base-generated coordinate structure. The negator in such a structure, being syntactically merged and left-adjoined to nothing after VP-ellipsis, is wrongly stranded; on the contrary, the neg of a VP-neg question like (81a) is morphologically derived under our theory and being right-adjoined without destroying the NSC. The contrast here suggests not only that our NSC proposal is tenable, but also that A-not-A questions are not on a par with true disjunctive questions. This conclusion is against one of the two possible analyses proposed by Huang (1991) in deriving A(B)-not-A(B) questions, as we mentioned earlier: from a base-generated coordinate [[A(B)] [not A(B)]] structure, "joined by a null *haishi*" (HLL, to appear).

The fact that A-not-A questions are essentially not on a par with true disjunctive questions can be clearly witnessed from island effects. We have already presented in (43) that A-not-A questions and adjunct *wh*-questions exhibit island effects while disjunctive *haishi*-questions and argument *wh*-questions do not. Following Tsai's (1994a) account for the argument-adjunct asymmetry, we suggest that the A-not-A

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constituent should move to CP at LF, “both to check its interrogative feature and to mark its scope” (HLL, to appear), as illustrated below in (82).

(82)  $[_{CP} [_{VP} A\text{-not-A}]_i \ [_{IP} \text{Subj. } t_i] (Q\text{-particle}) ]$  (LF movement)

On the other hand, in the absence of island effects, disjunctive *haishi*-questions do not undergo LF movement. Rather, they are licensed in much the same way as unselective binding like the configuration below in (83), which is proposed by Tsai (1997) to account for argument *wh*-questions. Here we assume in line with HLL that the conjunction *haishi* ‘(whether)...or’ is the *wh*-counterpart of *huoshi/huozhe* ‘(either)...or’.

(83)  $Op_i [+Q] \dots [_{DP} [_{CP} \dots wh_i \dots ] \dots ] \dots$  (unselective binding)

Contrary to the LF-moved A-not-A operator, the *wh*-phrase *haishi* ‘(whether)...or’ stays *in situ* and thus does not observe island conditions.

Our proposal that A-not-A questions enter into covert movement while disjunctive *haishi*-questions do not can further be verified in virtue of intervention effects as shown below in (84).

- (84) a. \*Ta changchang qiao-ke bu qiao-ke? (A-not-A)  
           s/he often skip-class not skip-class  
           ‘Does s/he often cut classes (or) not cut classes?’  
       b. Ta changchang qiao-ke haishi bu qiao-ke? (disjunctive)  
           s/he often skip-class or not skip-class  
           ‘Does s/he often cut classes or not cut classes?’

As discussed previously in Subsection 2.1.1, certain types of preverbal adjuncts such as *changchang* ‘often’ may block covert movement, thus giving rise to intervention effects. An instance of such is seen in (84a), suggesting that an A-not-A question is licensed by LF movement. In contrast, a disjunctive *haishi*-question like (84b) does not display intervention effects, indicating that this type of question is not licensed by LF movement.

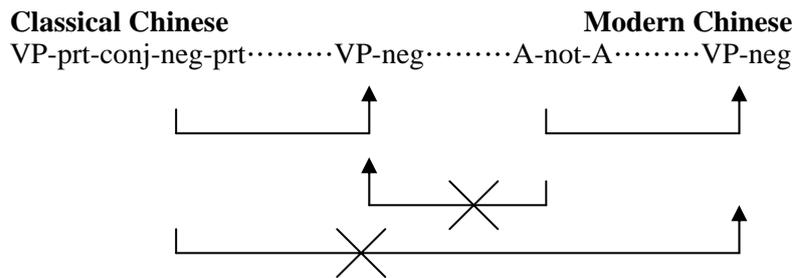
**4.4 Classical VP-neg Questions vs. Modern VP-neg Questions**

As has been argued, A-not-A questions should be discriminated from true disjunctive questions in Modern Chinese. Given this, a modern VP-neg question, taken as one of the A-not-A variants under our theory, should also be separated from a disjunctive structure. However, a VP-neg question in Classical Chinese may not be the same case; that is, it can possibly be analyzed as having been derived from a coordinate structure. For example, P. Wei (2007:43) hypothesizes that classical VP-neg questions may have undergone one of the following two potential grammaticalization processes.

- (85) a. VP-prt-conj-neg-prt > VP-prt-neg-prt > VP-neg-prt > VP-neg
- b. VP-prt-conj-neg-prt > VP-conj-neg > VP-neg

As shown above, a classical VP-neg can arguably be derived from a non-reduplicated bi-clausal string which involves an explicit alternative conjunction. In contrast, a modern VP-neg under our proposed analysis is derived from a morphologically reduplicated A-not-A source involving no conjunction. We schematize the distinction below in (86) (note that the dotted lines represent rightward temporal progress, and that the non-crossed arrowed lines represent possible derivations while the crossed ones represent impossible or unproven derivations).

(86) Historical Development of Classical and Modern VP-neg Questions



Echoing the foregoing discussion in Subsection 2.1.4, we do not parallel classical VP-neg questions with modern ones in terms of derivation.

#### 4.5 Residues

We finally center the discussion on a residual issue brought up by an anonymous TJJ reviewer. S/he pointed out that N. Zhang (1997) and Hagstrom (2006) have presented certain A-not-A facts which argue against any unified analysis like ours. Below we will show that those facts can be accommodated under our theory.

One set of facts concerns the following contrast in (87) (from N. Zhang 1997:122-123), which can be used to argue that there is a necessity to separate V-not-VP questions from VP-not-V and VP-not questions.

- (87) a. Ni gen-bu-gen ta shuohua? (V-not-VP)  
you with-not-with him/her speak  
'Do you speak to or not to him/her?'
- b. \*Ni gen ta shuohua bu gen?<sup>36</sup> (VP-not-V)  
you with him/her speak not with  
'Do you speak to him/her or not to?'

A common view as to the derivation of VP-not-V and VP-not questions is that they are produced by ellipsis from a base-generated "coordinate [[VP] [Not VP]] structure joined by a null *haishi*" (HLL, to appear). This is distinct from V-not-VP questions which are derived by reduplication. Our theory differs from this generally assumed analysis in that we do not treat VP-not-V and VP-not as being derived from a base-generated coordinate structure. A true case of this kind should be in the form of a disjunctive *haishi*-question, and there is evidence showing that it does not behave on a par with VP-not-V and VP-not questions. For example, as already observed in (43) and (44), disjunctive *haishi*-questions do not exhibit island effects, while both VP-not-V and VP-not questions do, suggesting that a genuine coordinate interrogative is essentially not the same as VP-not-V and VP-not questions. In our theory, this distinction is recognized, since we derive VP-not-V and VP-not questions in a different way from base-generated coordination: morphological

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<sup>36</sup> In fact, this preposition-stranded case is accepted by many Beijing speakers, according to Zhu (1991). Regarding this controversial acceptability, HLL (to appear) suggest that some prepositions in Mandarin Chinese have derived from verbs and still retained their verbal property to varying degrees.

reduplication. As a result, we draw a parallel among V-not-VP, VP-not-V, and VP-not questions under a unified reduplication analysis.

However, the question still exists as to how we deal with the contrast in (87). In our theory, the key that defines the crucial difference between V-not-VP and VP-not-V questions is that the latter undergo an additional post-reduplication process of anaphoric ellipsis. In fact, the ungrammaticality of (87b) may be due to the violation of an independent constraint which requires that a non-constituent sequence not undergo ellipsis. To exemplify this, consider the following data in English (from Radford 1988:82).

- (88) a. John won't put the vodka into the drink, but his brother will [e].  
 b. \*John won't put the vodka into the drink, but his brother will put the [e].  
 c. \*John won't put the vodka into the drink, but his brother will put [e].

In the same vein, (87b) is ill-formed because the elided sequence [*ta shuohua*] is clearly not a constituent. Another option for ruling out (87b) is, on a par with the NSC, to propose the 'Preposition-Stranding Constraint' (PSC) forbidding stranded prepositions. We leave this alternative account open.

Another set of data which might challenge our theory is given below in (89) and (90) (from N. Zhang 1997:138-139). The ungrammaticality of (89c-d) and (90c-d) is unexpected under our ellipsis analysis, since their corresponding VP-not-VP sources are grammatical.

- (89) a. Wo zai kaolu [ta mai shu bu mai shu <sub>VP-not-VP</sub>] de wenti  
 I at consider s/he buy book not buy book PNM question  
 'I am considering the question of whether s/he'll buy books or not buy books.'  
 b. Wo zai kaolu [ta mai bu mai shu <sub>V-not-VP</sub>] de wenti  
 I at consider s/he buy not buy book PNM question  
 'I am considering the question of whether s/he'll buy or not buy books.'  
 c. \*Wo zai kaolu [ta mai shu bu mai <sub>VP-not-V</sub>] de wenti  
 I at consider s/he buy book not buy PNM question  
 'I am considering the question of whether s/he'll buy books or not buy.'

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- d. \*Wo zai kaolu [ta mai shu bu VP-not] de wenti  
 I at consider s/he buy book not PNM question  
 ‘I am considering the question of whether s/he’ll buy books or not.’
- (90) a. [Ta qu-guo Beijing mei qu-guo Beijing VP-not-VP] gen wo wugun  
 s/he go-EXP Beijing not go-EXP Beijing with I irrelevant  
 ‘Whether s/he has been to Beijing or has not been to Beijing is none of my business.’
- b. [Ta qu-mei-qu-guo Beijing V-not-VP] gen wo wuguan  
 s/he go-not-qu-EXP Beijing with I irrelevant  
 ‘Whether s/he has been or has not been to Beijing is none of my business.’
- c. \*[Ta qu-guo Beijing mei qu-guo VP-not-V] gen wo wuguan  
 s/he go-EXP Beijing not go-EXP with I irrelevant  
 ‘Whether s/he has been to Beijing or has not been is none of my business.’
- d. \*[Ta qu-guo Beijing mei VP-not] gen wo wuguan  
 s/he go-EXP Beijing not with I irrelevant  
 ‘Whether s/he has been to Beijing or not is none of my business.’

The above data seem to invite a generalization that VP-not-V and VP-not questions cannot occur in embedded clauses. Nevertheless, this is not widely attested, since we can find counterexamples like (49a), (53), as well as the following ((91) from Tang 1999:60 and (92) from the Internet).<sup>37</sup>

- (91) a. ?Women zai taolun [nimen keyi chouyen bu keyi VP-not-V]  
 we at discuss you can smoke not can  
 de wenti  
 PNM question  
 ‘We are discussing the question of whether you can smoke or cannot.’

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<sup>37</sup> An anonymous TJJ reviewer pointed out that (91b) would become ungrammatical if *mei-you* were replaced by *mei*. This judgment is not well attested, however, because our informants can accept the *mei*-counterpart of (91b). Also, a large number of relevant VP-*mei* cases are available from the Internet, as shown in (92).

- b. Women zai taolun [nimen chou-le yan mei-you <sub>VP-not-V</sub>]  
we at discuss you drag-PERF smoke not-have  
de wenti  
PNM question  
'We are discussing the question of whether you smoked or did not.'
- (92) a. Daxue tongxue da-lai guanxin [*e* sheng-le mei <sub>VP-not</sub>]  
college classmate call-come concern bear-PERF not  
de dianhua  
PNM telephone  
'The phone call made by the college classmate to inquire whether *e* gave birth or not.'
- b. Da dianhua wen [diannao lai-le mei <sub>VP-not</sub>]  
make telephone ask computer come-PERF not  
de guocheng  
PNM process  
'The process of calling to ask whether the computer came or not.'

Judgments vary in strength and across our informants, but the general tendency seems to be that the alleged ungrammatical cases in (89c), (90c), and (90d) are marginally acceptable. Given this, our ellipsis analysis can still be arguably applied to derive VP-not-V and VP-not from VP-not-VP.

The only case left unaccounted for is (89d). Despite its unacceptability, we located a parallel case from a China webpage,<sup>38</sup> as shown below in (93), where the speaker is talking about whether there is anyone who would dare bomb the Three Gorges of China.

- (93) [Hongzha san-xia bu <sub>VP-not</sub>] de xian-wai-zhi-yi dajia yao  
bomb three-gorge not PNM meta-message everyone shall  
ting-dao  
listen-reach  
'As for the connotation of whether (they will) bomb the Three Gorges or not, everyone should figure it out.'

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<sup>38</sup> See [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_4e30fcb101000ct1.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4e30fcb101000ct1.html).

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Although the acceptability of (93) shows that a parallel structure like (89d) cannot be ruled out for sure, this kind of case is truly rare, for some reason unknown to us. We leave this issue for further investigation.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This paper has argued against approaches that do not derive VP-neg questions from A-not-A questions, in view of substantial evidence showing that they pattern on a par on many grounds. The parallelism comes as no surprise under our unified analysis, which derives all subtypes of A-not-A questions from a shared underlying VO structure. In particular, VO-not-VO questions are proposed to result from this simplex VO source by applying a morphological reduplication process, and VO-not (i.e., VP-neg) questions are in turn formed by deleting the latter VO. Given that an A-not-A question is not a base-generated coordinate structure, we have also refuted any analysis that maps A-not-A questions onto true disjunctive questions.

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論現代漢語否定詞結尾問句的衍生方式  
各類型正反問句的一致性分析

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本文提倡一致性分析 (unified analysis) 來衍生各種不同類型的正反問句 (或稱反覆問句, A-not-A question), 其中包含否定詞結尾問句 (VP-neg question)。本文提議, 所有類型的正反問句皆以同一個單一動詞組為基底, 施以構詞重疊 (morphological reduplication) 而形成, 惟某些類型之生成則必須再進行照應刪略 (anaphoric ellipsis)。根據此一提案, 否定詞結尾問句之衍生, 乃透過刪略手段, 將動詞組重疊結構 (VP-not-VP) 刪除後段動詞組而達成。本文同時論證, 現代漢語否定詞結尾問句實屬正反問句之變體, 而不屬助詞問句 (particle question, 鄭禮珊等人 1996)。此論點可由語言事實加以佐證: 否定詞結尾問句與其他類型正反問句在許多方面表現一致, 但與典型的助詞問句 (「嗎」) 表現不同。