

Comparative Analysis of Chinese-Vietnamese Counterfactual Conditionals Based on Constructive Grammar

Xuemei Lu

College of International Education, Nanning Normal University, Nanning 530000, China

Abstract: Counterfactual conditional is a common linguistic phenomenon in linguistics. This paper compares and analyzes Chinese-Vietnamese counterfactual conditional based on constructive grammar, and finds out the essential differences between them. This paper analyzes three typical Chinese constructive grammar [hypothetical conjunction+negator +a,b], [hypothetical conjunction+a,b], [早知道 zao zhi dao+ a,b], and three typical Vietnamese constructive grammar[counterfactual marker+a,b],[đã/đã...rồi], [hypothetical conjunction+a,b], and concludes that the Chinese and Vietnamese counterfactual conditionals are highly similar but with many distinctions. The main difference is that Chinese lacks mature counterfactual markers, while Vietnamese has obvious markers of counterfactual conditionals. which can also be used to realize the counterfactual meaning through negation, time and hypothetical conjunction.

Keywords: Counterfactual conditionals, Constructive grammar, Chinese-Vietnamese comparison.

1. Background of the Study

Counterfactual conditional is a kind of conditional sentence that expresses a virtual state contrary to the fact. It is an object of study in philosophy, psychology, linguistics and other disciplines. Both Chinese and Vietnamese scholars have done a lot of researches on conditional sentences, with rich results. According to Chinese academic research, on the one hand, there are rich and diverse lexical and syntactic means (i.e., counterfactual components) in Chinese that help hypothetical conditional complex sentences express counterfactual semantics (Chen, 1988; Wu, 1993; Wang, 2013; Wang, 2016); on the other hand, context, inference, and other ways help express counterfactual semantics (Li & Thompson, 1981; Au, 1983; Wu, 1987: 87; Wu, 1993: 144; Jiang Yan, 2000). Lishi Minheng, a Vietnamese scholar, argues that conditional sentences are of the highest hypothetical nature, where both the antecedent and the consequent terms embody hypotheticality. From the comparative linguistic studies of Chinese and Vietnamese counterfactual conditionals, the comparative studies of Chinese are mainly based on the Chinese-English and Chinese-Japanese counterfactual conditionals, while the comparative studies of Vietnamese is mainly based on the Vietnamese-English and Vietnamese-Japanese counterfactual conditionals, the comparative studies of Chinese-Vietnamese counterfactual conditional is rarely mentioned by experts and scholars. We can only find the PhD thesis of Tran Linh Huong Giang, "A study of "if A then B" Chinese conditional sentences regarding cognitive linguistics — Contrasting with equivalent expressions in Vietnamese", which is a brief comparison of the corresponding forms of Chinese-Vietnamese counterfactual conditionals. Due to geographical and historical differences, Vietnamese has been influenced by China in terms of language and culture, and has a lot in common with China. But in the process of their development, they have formed their own unique and different cultural and linguistic characteristics influenced by history, geographical environment, social background, religious beliefs and psychological consciousness. Therefore,

the comparative study of Chinese-Vietnamese bilingualism has been a topic of concern for linguists in China and Vietnam, and conditional sentences are a typical sentence pattern that plays an important role in natural language. Many linguists agree that conditional sentences exist in many languages, and counterfactual conditional is one of the most popular topics in recent years. Although Chinese-Vietnamese counterfactual conditionals has been less addressed, it is still of great significance for study. This paper will study the contrast between Chinese and Vietnamese counterfactual conditionals.

2. Constructive Analysis of Chinese Counterfactual Conditionals

Chinese language lacks mature counterfactual conditional based on constructive grammar, but it can achieve conditional meaning through time, conjunction, negation, person and counterfactual conditional semantic. It relies on not one element but several. Mr. Zhao Yuanren in Chao (1968) argues that the possibility of hypothesis expressed by markers varies, and we can arrange them into a continuum, namely: yaobushi (要不是)、要、假如、若是、倘若、假若、假使、倘使和设若. the further back the word the less likely it has hypothesized meaning, and the more often it is used for hypotheses contrary to the truth. Jiang Yan believes that to the above list of words need to be added to the modern Chinese commonly used words 如果和假设. According to Yuan Yuying, counterfactual conditionals are usually guided or expressed in conditional clauses by hypothetical conjunctions (如果【不是】、要【不】是【因为】、若【不】是【因为】、假使助词【的话】), or by negative conjunctions (否则、要不、不然、要不然) to guide or represent conditional clauses. Wang Yuying (2012) classifies hypothetical conjunctions into three categories according to their counterfactual conditional ability: counterfactual hypothetical conjunctions (yaobushi (要不是), 若非, 如果不是, 若不是), hypothetical conjunctions that may generate counterfactual meaning(如果, 要是, 假如, 假使, 假设, 倘若, 如若, 设若), and

hypothetical conjunctions that cannot generate counterfactual meaning(万一). Wang Chunhui (2010) believes that conditional sentences containing "早" and "yaobushi (要不是)" can be interpreted as counterfactual conditional sentences. The above arguments lead us to conclude that the main constructive form of Chinese contractual conditionals are 【hypothetical conjunction+negator+a,b】, 【hypothetical conjunction+a,b】, 【早知道 zao zhi dao+ a,b】.

2.1. [hypothetical conjunction+negator+a,b]

[hypothetical conjunction+negator+a,b]

Chen Guohua (1988) believed that the conditional sentences guided by "yaobushi (要不是), 若不是" and "ruofei(若非)" in classical Chinese are all counterfactual conditional sentences. In this constructive grammar, the hypothetical conjunctions include "ruoguo(如果)", "若" etc., and the negative words include "bushi(不是)", "meiyou(没有)", "fei(非)" etc. Common combinations include "yaobushi (要不是)", which can be equivalent to "ruoguo(如果不是)", "ruofei(若非)", "ruobu(若不)"; a is a phrase or clause, and b is a rhetorical question equivalent to an affirmative or negative sentence. In this type of counterfactual conditional sentence, a describes the real event, but because "hypothetical conjunction+negator" is a counter-hypothesis contrary to the fact. b generally describes the real event, but the negation appears in front of b, so the event described in the previous term is a virtual event, and b is a virtual event that describes the counterfactual sentence. Generally, we think that the "yaobushi (要不是)" sentence is the most typical counterfactual conditional sentence, and we can use "yaobushi (要不是)" to understand the relationship between the previous and following sentence.

Argumentation pattern of the "yaobushi (要不是)" sentence.

Because if yaobushi (要不是) a, jiu(就) b

That is, not a → b

And because the fact is "not a"

So non non a, that is, b

From this argument, we believe that the proposition "not a" is true. After reasoning, we prove that the proposition "非 a" is true to prove that the proposition "not b" is false, i.e., "non nona" is true, and the negation of the negation is affirmative, thus proving "because a" is true. This process is an indirect proof and is a typical use of the converse method.

1. 要不是来了爆炸大队, 咱这一家子, 早就饿死了..... (莫言《丰乳肥臀》)

If it weren't the arrival of the bombing brigade, our family would have starved to death (Mo Yan, "Big Breast Wide Hip")

2. 父亲如果不是手拄长枪, 早就头重脚轻栽倒到地上。(莫言《红高粱》)

If my father hadn't held a long gun, he would have fallen to the ground with a heavy head and a light foot. (Mo Yan, "Red Sorghum")

3. 这个盲女长得奇俊, 如果不是瞎了眼, 她应该嫁给皇上做娘娘。(莫言《丰乳肥臀》)

This blind girl was so pretty that if she had not been blind, she would have married the emperor as a queen. (Mo Yan, "Big Breast Wide Hip")

4. 若不是因为李昕是一个胆小的姑娘, 蒋合营肯定不

会应声。(萧克凡《堡垒漂浮》)

Had Li Xin not been a timid girl, Jiang Heying would certainly not have said yes. (Xiao Kefan "The Floating Castle")

5. 要不是他接济的话, 我不可能读到大学毕业。

(If he hadn't given me financial help, I wouldn't have graduated from college.)

In example 1), a "来了爆炸大队" is a true description, but if the preceding term of a is not a false proposition and a virtual condition of counterfactual, b "饿死了" is a counterfactual virtual result, because in fact "咱这一家子" did not "饿死". In example 2), a "手拄长枪" is true, and b "头重脚轻栽倒到地上" is false. In the above example sentences, yaobushi (要不是)、如果不是、若不是 all indicate the hypothetical counterfactual condition, while the latter term expresses the counterfactual result.

It is worth mentioning the constructive grammar of "yaobushi (要不是)", counterfactual hypothetical sentence. In examples 1) 2) 3), the latter term is an affirmative sentence, while in examples 4) 5), the latter term is a negative sentence. The affirmative and negative sentences in examples 1)-5) are rhetorical sentences of affirmative and negative one, and rhetorical sentence is also one of the Chinese counterfactual conditional sentence.

2.2. [hypothetical conjunction+a,b]

□hypothetical conjunction+a,b□

In this constructive grammar, it may be a hypothetical conjunction(如果, 要是, 假如, 假使, 假设, 倘若, 如若, 设若) that produce a counterfactual meaning. a indicates the hypothetical counterfactual condition; b indicates the possible result under the counterfactual condition. However, if a is false, then the result b resulting from a must also be false. In contrast to constructive grammar 1, there is no negation after the hypothetical conjunction in this constructive grammar, and we know that negation helps to produce the counterfactual meaning and enhances the hypotheticality of the sentence, so how can we determine whether a is hypothetical or counterfactual without negation after the hypothetical conjunction? We can judge it by the context. For example,

A. 如果他们能说明这一切, 将来就不会再遭罪。(假设性条件句)

If they can explain all this, they will not suffer any more in the future. (Hypothetical conditional sentence)

B. 如果我是个男的, 一定要娶一个这样的女子做老婆。(王朔《永失我爱》)

(违实条件句)

If I were a man, I would marry a woman like that as my wife. (Wang Shuo "Lose My Love Forever") (Counterfactual conditional sentence)

In sentence A, "如果,....就...." indicates that a certain assumption infers a certain result. It is important to objectively show things, assuming that "他们能说明这一切" happens, then it is possible to produce a result like "不会再遭罪". Combined with the context, we can know that the former term is a hypothetical condition, and the latter term is a possible result under this condition. Both the former and the

latter are hypothetical speculations that have not occurred. Sentence B is classified as a counterfactual conditional sentence by Wang Chunhui (2016). It can be seen from the context, a “我是男的” is impossible to be realized, and the latter term “一定要娶一个这样的女子做老婆” is the result of the assumption of the impossible fact “我是男的”, which must not be realized either. Therefore, the hypothetical conjunction “如果” corresponds to the condition that “我是男的”, which is impossible to be true, and makes the sentence counterfactual meaning. Similarly, the hypothetical conjunctions 要是、要、假如、若是、倘若、假若、假使、倘使 and 设若 are the same as above.

6. 假如陈金在本届亚锦赛上没有夺冠, 球迷肯定颇为惋惜, 但陈金没让球迷失望, 且获得了角逐奥运会入场券的机会。(CCL)

If Chen Jin had not won Asian Championship this year, his fans would have been pity for him, but Chen Jin did not disappoint the fans and won a ticket to the Olympics. (CCL)

7. “爹, 俺娘那会儿要是也敷上这种药就不会死了吧?” 父亲问。(莫言《红高粱》)

"Father, if my mother had put on this medicine at that time, she wouldn't have died, would she?" Father asked. (Mo Yan, "Red Sorghum")

8. 蒋天枢认为, 若陈寅恪听其劝说, 也许陈的右腿可以治好。(转引自蒋严 2000)

Jiang Tianshu thought that if Chen Yinke had listened to his advice, perhaps Chen's right leg could have been cured. (Quoted from Jiang Yan 2000)

9. 倘若我是女的, 我会是绝世美人。(转引自蒋严 2000)

If I were a woman, I would be a great beauty. (Quoted from Jiang Yan 2000)

In sentence (6), the word “假如” brings out a “陈金在本届亚锦赛上没有夺冠”. In combination with the context, it can be seen that Chen Jin has won the championship. The article was written after Chen Jin won the championship. Therefore, the former term is false, which is a condition contrary to the fact. b “陈金在本届亚锦赛上没有夺冠” is a false proposition, so the fans regret that the proposition of this result cannot be realized. 7) 8) 9) a sentence can be understood in the context as the counterfactual condition, so b is also the result of the counterfactual result.

2.3. 【早知道 zao zhi dao+ a,b】

Chen Guohua (1988) believed that “早” and “知(道)” are combined to form the phrase “早知(道)”, which means that we "know beforehand". The condition formed by this phrase always expresses a counterfactual semantics, in which a is followed by a phrase to indicate a real event, but “知道 a” is a counterfactual event because the speaker does not know the occurrence of a; b indicates a counterfactual event that is expected to happen but does not happen, so both the preceding and the following terms indicate a counterfactual meaning, which is not a real event. The counterfactual meaning of “早知道” is not just in its semantic; the speaker adopts a counterfactual hypothesis because the fact that it has happened is contrary to what he hoped, and thus expresses his regret, regret or dissatisfaction, with the speaker's subjective attitude or evaluation of the proposition, which belongs to the subjunctive category of modality. Therefore, “早知道” expresses a kind of counterfactual virtual tone.

9. “哟, 张大夫, 早知道您在厨房, 我就交给您了。”小王说。(陈建功《皇城根》)

"Oh, Dr. Zhang, if I had known you were in the kitchen, I would have left it to you." Xiao Wang said. (Chen Jiankong, "Huang Cheng Gen")

10. 爹叹息一声, 垂头丧气地说, “早知道这痣能传给下辈, 我当年还不如光棍着好。”(莫言《生死疲劳》)

Dad sighed and said with a down voice, "If I had known that this mole could be passed on to the next generation, I might as well have not married then." (Mo Yan, "Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out")

11. 早知道我有这串珍珠项链, 我就穿上一件开领的上衣了。(1994 年《读者》合订本)

If I had known I had this string of pearls, I would have put on a blouse with an open collar. (bound edition of The Reader, 1994)

12. 如果早知道后人要斗个你死我活, 何必当初还要找这麻烦呢? (冯向光《三晋春秋》)

If I had known that my descendants would have to fight to the death, why would I have sought this trouble in the first place? (Feng Xiangguang, "Sanjin Spring and Autumn")

13. 爷爷, 如果你早知道会悬在空中受苦, 就不会杀死狐狸儿女, 抢占狐狸洞穴了吧? (莫言《红高粱》)

Grandpa, if you had known that you would be hanging in the air suffering, you would not have killed the fox's children and grabbed its cave, would you? (Mo Yan, "Red Sorghum")

14. 他很后悔, 早知道大夫的办法是这么简单, 他自己就会治这个病, 何必白花三十元钱呢? (老舍《四世同堂》)

He regretted that if he had known the doctor had simple treatment, he would have cured the disease himself and not spend thirty yuan? (Lao She, "Four generations live under one roof")

In 9) sentence, a “您在厨房” is a fact, and we know that a “知道您在厨房” is against the real meaning, because the speaker does not know that Dr. Zhang is in the kitchen, and b “我就交给您了” is also a counterfactual event that did not happen. However, the speaker hopes that b will happen, so it also expresses the speaker's regret. In 10) sentence, a “这痣能传给下辈” is a fact, but the speaker does not want this fact to happen, so the speaker uses the counterfactual subjunctive “早知道” to express that the proposition of “知道这痣能传给下辈” was contrary to the fact, and thus expressed direct regret. (11) 12) sentences both have the hypothetical conjunction “如果”. However, the hypothetical conjunction cannot be used as a marker for counterfactual meaning, and it is the “早知道” that can express the counterfactual meaning.

3. Constructive Analysis of Vietnamese Counterfactual Conditionals

Le Thi Minh Hang, a Vietnamese scholar, believes that the Vietnamese language is rich in ways of expressing the counterfactual meaning. She thinks that there are three ways to express counterfactual hypothesis in Vietnamese conditional sentences: first, they are marked with counterfactual meanings; second, the modal predicate of time such as: *đã/đã...rồi*. Third, the hypothetical marker with the counterfactual meaning, such as: *nếu/nếu...thì...đã...(rồi)*. According to the research results of Lishi Mingheng, we summarize the constructive grammar of Vietnamese counterfactual conditional sentences into three types:

[counterfactual marker+a,b], [hypothetical conjunction+a,b], [đã/đã...rồi]

3.1. [counterfactual marker+a,b]

Giá (giá như , giá mà) a, b

The markers with the counterfactual meanings are the preposition Giá (giá như , giá mà) the predicates Ví thứ, ví phỏng, giá dụ, giá sử. The preposition Giá (giá như , giá mà) is considered to be the most typical counterfactual marker. Le Thi Minh Hang believes that Giá (giá như , giá mà) adequately shows the counterfactual meanings, whenever Giá (giá như , giá mà) appears it means that the presupposition involved in the sentence will not happen in the real world, indicating that there will be some sentences with giá , which indicates the hypothetical sense. But she and Ho Le both classify this as the misuse of conjunctions.

1. Giá quanh năm là mùa xuân thì tuyệt.

(假如常年都是春天那就完美了。)

(It would be perfect if it were spring all year round.)

2. Giá kể hồi đó người ta hằng gươm gươm, báo tử lần lượt thừa ra thì có khi mẹ em vẫn còn sống được tới giờ. (Bao Ninh, "The Sorrow of War")

(要是那个时候来通知阵亡信息的人不那么急, 来得晚一些, 来得不要那么勤, 也许我妈还能活到现在。)

(If at that time, the people who came to inform the dead were not so hasty, but came later and not so often, maybe my mother would still be alive now.)

3. Khô quá! Giá có tôi ở nhà thì đâu đến nỗi. (Nan cao "Chi pheo")

(倘若他也会唱歌的话, 也许他就不用骂街了。)

(Alas! If I were at home, we wouldn't be end like this?)

4. Giá hẳn biết hát thì có lẽ hẳn không cần chửi. (Nan cao "Chi pheo")

(If he could also sing, maybe he wouldn't have to scold people in the street.)

5) Giá như có thể không cần phải ngủ, giá như có thể không cần phải sống lấy lệ cuộc sống hàng ngày, giá như toàn bộ lượng thời gian còn lại có thể chỉ để dành cho duy nhất sự nghiệp bút nghiên,....., thì tới ngày đã định của số phận trở lại với mòm bờ sông dốc đứng kia anh sẽ nhẹ lòng hơn và thanh thản hơn biết bao khi xuống với dòng nước đưa anh về cõi chết, nơi vô vàn linh hồn thân thuộc đang đón chờ anh.

(Bao Ninh, "The Sorrow of War")

(假如可以不需要睡眠, 假如在生活中没有那么多例行公事, 假如可以将自己的余生全部投入唯一的事业....., 那么, 即使到了自己生命终结的那一天, 当他再次回到那个河岸上的高坡, 跳下河水, 走向死亡, 融入等待自己的无数熟悉的灵魂中时, 他将 会感到多么轻松, 多么坦然。)

(If we could live without sleep, if we didn't have so many daily routines in life, if we could devote the rest of our lives to our work , even on the day when his life ends, how relaxed and eased he will feel when he returns again to that high slope on the river bank, jumps down into the river and walks towards death, among the countless familiar souls for him).

6. Tôi nghĩ giá mà tôi là cậu, một con trâu không suy không nghĩ thì hay biết mấy. (莫言《生死疲劳》越语版) (Mo Yan, "Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out" in Vietnamese)

(At that time, I thought how good it would be if I were a thoughtless bull.)

In sentence 1), the main counterfactual meaning is that "quanh năm là mùa xuân (常年都是春天)" cannot be true, and b "tuyệt (完美, 棒极了)" cannot be realized either. In sentence 2), b "có khi mẹ em vẫn còn sống được tới giờ.(也许我妈还能活到现在)", it can be seen from the context that the speaker's mother has died, so we can conclude that the proposition b is false. From the false proposition b, we can infer that a "hồi đó người ta hằng gươm gươm, báo tử lần lượt thừa ra (那个时候来通知阵亡信息的人不那么急, 来得晚一些, 来得不要那么勤) is also false. In sentence 3), the context shows that a "có tôi ở nhà (我在家)" is a false proposition, b "đâu đến nỗi.(不至于会弄成这个样子)" is also false. "đâu đến nỗi.", which Le Thi Minh Hang also noticed, she said that in addition to the counterfactual meaning, the latter term often appear Đâu đến nỗi (不至于这样), chắc là khác rồi (肯定不一样了), không như vậy(不像这样) and other phrases with evaluative feature, which enhance the truthfulness of conditional sentences.

Giá như , giá mà is derived from the counterfactual meaning to express a hope (which is difficult or impossible for the speaker to achieve). In sentence 5), the proposition of Giá như is "có thể không cần phải ngủ (可以不需要睡眠)", "có thể không cần phải sống lấy lệ cuộc sống hàng ngày, (在生活中没有那么多例行公事)", "toàn bộ lượng thời gian còn lại có thể chỉ để dành cho duy nhất sự nghiệp bút nghiên, (以自己的余生全部投入唯一的事业)" and in sentence 6), the proposition of giá mà is "tôi là cậu, một con trâu không suy không nghĩ (一头没有思想的公牛)", we can know from common sense and context that these propositions cannot be realized, which is contrary to reality, but they express the speaker's desire for things that cannot be realized in reality. When showing desire tendency, the latter term can often be ignored.

Except Giá (giá như , giá mà , there is a similar preposition phải/phải chỉ ,phải/phải chỉ to Giá, which can express counterfactual meaning . it also expresses the speaker's regret.

7. Phải chỉ mai anh chưa đi, mình đi thăm một số bạn bè cũ thì hay quá!

(要是明天还没去, 我能去看一些老朋友那该多好啊)

(If only I could go to see some old friends tomorrow)

In sentence 7), Phải chỉ mai anh chưa đi, mình đi thăm một số bạn bè cũ thì hay quá! (要是明天还没去, 我能去看一些老朋友那该多好啊), the proposition of Phải chỉ is a " mai anh chưa đi, mình đi thăm một số bạn bè cũ (明天还没去,我能去看一些老朋友)", which is contrary to reality, and also expresses the speaker's regret for not being able to see his old friends.

(Ví thứ, ví phỏng, giá dụ, giá sử) a,b

a, b

In addition to the preposition above, the predicates Ví thứ, ví phỏng, giá dụ, giá sử can also express counterfactual meanings, which is in the counterfactual category.

8. Giá dụ ông có chuyện giã gió gì với bà nội tôi thì đó chẳng phải là loạn luân ư?(Mo Yan, "Red Sorghum 'in Vietnamese)

(假如这位曾祖父竟与我奶奶有过风流事, 岂不是乱伦吗?)

(If this great-grandfather actually had an affair with my

grandmother, wouldn't that be incest?)

9. Giả dụ khi ấy có ai muốn ra khỏi nhà xay, chắc chắn không bị ngăn trở, Nhưng

10. không có người nào bỏ trốn.(Mo Yan, "Big Breath Wide Hip" in Vietnamese)

(如果这时候有人想离开风磨房, 没有人会阻拦,但没人离开。)

(If someone wants to leave the wind mill at this time, no one will stop him.)

In sentence 8), the proposition a “ông có chuyện giảng gió gì với bà nội tôi (这位曾祖父竟与我奶奶有过风流事)” can be judged from the context that this proposition is contrary to the fact that this great-grandfather could not have had an affair with my grandmother, which is a counterfactual supposition, so we infer that b “đó chẳng phải là loạn luân (岂不是乱伦)” is also definitely false.

In sentence 9), the proposition a “Giả dụ khi ấy có ai muốn ra khỏi nhà xay”(如果这时候有人想离开风磨房) according to the context, this assumption is contrary to the fact that no one wants to leave the Wind Mill, so this is a false condition. Then b "chắc chắn không bị ngăn trở (没有人会阻拦)" will not be realized.

3.2. [a, đã b(rồi)]

a, đã b(rồi)

Đã means “already 已经” in Vietnamese and is an adverb to express past time. According to Le Thi Minh Hang, đã/đã... rồi can be used not only for time but also express counterfactual meaning, đã/đã... rồi can express counterfactual meaning if the latter term appears (in the absence of the counterfactual preposition), while đã/đã... rồi is not a marker counterfactual sense, but when the hearer and the speaker have a consensus on the reality of the event (both parties have known the past facts), đã/đã...rồi can express counterfactual meaning, but it cannot be used to mark a counterfactual sentence.

11) Trời không mưa thì trận đấu đã diễn ra rồi.
(要是天不下雨, 战斗都已经开始了)

(If it didn't rain, the battle would have started already.)

12) Tôi biết cái điện thoại đó là của cậu, tôi đã giữ dùm rồi.
(我要知道那个电话是你的, 就留起来了)

(If I know that phone number is yours, I will keep it.)

In sentence 11), a is a known condition that the speaker and the hearer have known it, so the hearer can determine the counterfactual meaning of the sentence. Why đã can express counterfactual meaning, Le Thi Minh Hang analyzed sentence 11) as an example.

A. Trời không mưa thì trận đấu đã diễn ra rồi.

(If it didn't rain, the battle would have begun.)

B. Trời không mưa thì trận đấu sẽ diễn ra .

(If it doesn't rain, the battle will begin.)

C. Trời không mưa thì trận đấu diễn ra .

In sentence A there is đã, in sentence B “sẽ” is replaced by “sẽ” which means future time, and in sentence C there is no adverb of time. B can be understood as a assumption from “A.Trời không mưa thì trận đấu đã diễn ra rồi. (If it didn't rain, the battle would have begun.如果天不下雨, 战斗就会进行)”. if “Trời không mưa (it doesn't rain 天不下雨)”

is met, the latter term “trận đấu diễn ra 战斗就会进行” will become a reality. C sentence is incomplete, so we can conclude that “đã” can be used for counterfactual meaning.

In sentence 12), biết cái điện thoại đó là của cậu (知道那个电话是你的) ” is a counterfactual proposition to the truth that I did not know that the phone was yours, so b “tôi đã giữ dùm rồi (我就留起来了)” can't be true either. We need to pay attention to is the counterfactual meaning in this sentence, except for “đã...rồi...”外, “biết (知道)”, it can also enhance the effect of counterfactual meaning.

3.3. [hypothetical conjunction+a,b]

Nếu a, (thì) b

“Nếu” is a hypothetical marker, and it can also express counterfactual meaning. Vietnamese hypothetical markers include “nếu, hễ, lẽ, vạn nhất, như, bằng...”; counterfactual markers include “giả, phải/phải chi, nếu...”, whether “nếu” means hypothetical meaning or counterfactual meaning depends on the context or common sense.

13. Nếu như tôi mọc thêm đôi cánh, thì tôi là thiên sứ.

(如果我的背上生出两只肉翅膀, 我就是天使.)

(If I have two fleshy wings on my back, I am an angel.)

14. Quả vậy, nếu không làm lừa kéo cối xay thì chị Tám đã chết đói từ lâu, khỏi phải nhảy xuống sông tự vẫn.

(如果不是在磨房当驴, 八姐你早就饿死了, 省了投河)

(If you hadn't been a donkey in the mill, you would have died of hunger long ago, instead throwing yourself into the river)

According to sentence 1) a “tôi mọc thêm đôi cánh 我的背上生出两只肉翅膀”, we can know from common sense that this proposition cannot be realized. Contrary to the fact, the proposition b “tôi là thiên sứ(我就是天使) is false either. From this, we know that nếu shows counterfactual meaning and not hypothesis. In sentence 2), according to the context, we can tell that Sister is not dead, b “thì chị Tám đã chết đói từ lâu, khỏi phải nhảy xuống sông tự vẫn” is opposite to the fact, so we can refer a “không làm lừa kéo cối xay (如果不是在磨房当驴)” is false, and the fact is that sister does work as a donkey in the mill. In sentence 2) there is a negative word “không” (不是), không also adds counterfactual meaning.

Nếu a, (thì) đã b

15. Nếu không có tôi quản lý nghiêm ngặt, có lẽ bà Bạch và Nghinh Xuân đều đã chết dưới tay á từ lâu. (Mo Yan, "Red Sorghum" in Vietnamese)

(如果不是我镇压着她, 白氏和迎春都要死在她的手里)

(If I hadn't suppressed her, Bai and Yingchun would have died at her hands)

16. Nếu không có hai tay dân quân khoẻ mạnh kèm chặt, tôi đã không kể ba bảy hăm mốt, nhảy lên đài cho á vài chục cái tát. (Mo Yan, "Red Sorghum" in Vietnamese)

(如果不是有两个身强力壮的民兵反剪着我的胳膊, 我会不管什么理由冲上去, 给她一个耳光, 给她两个耳光, 给她三个耳光。)

(If there weren't two strong militiamen holding my arms backwards, I would have rushed up for whatever reason and slapped her once, slapped her twice, slapped her three times.)

Nếu a, (thì) sẽ b

17. Nếu như trước đó chỉ một thoáng chị nhìn Kim Đồng, thì sẽ không xảy ra bi kịch. (Mo Yan, "Big Breast Wide Hip" in Vietnamese)

(如果她在扣到枪机前回眸一瞥, 悲剧便会成为喜剧)
(If she glances back before she starts the gun, the tragedy will become a comedy)

18. Nếu cha anh là người cùng thời, là anh thì em sẽ yêu cha anh chứ không phải là yêu anh. (Bao Ninh<The Sorrow of War>)

如果你 爸跟我们是同龄人, 如果他是你的话, 那么我就会爱上你爸, 而不是你。

If your dad was the same age as us, if he was you, then I would have fallen in love with your dad instead of you.

“đã” and “sẽ” behind “nếu” all can show counterfactual meaning. “Nếu a, (thì) đã b” are considered to be the typical counterfactual conditional sentence of the past. In sentence 3), “từ lâu (早就 Long ago)” also emphasizes that what b means is contrary to the past events. Nếu a, (thì) sẽ b is less often used to express the contrary to the past fact, and it is often used in the latter term b to express what the speaker expects and imagines, contrary to the present in time. The “sẽ” in sentence 5) leading to “không xảy ra bi kịch (悲剧便会成为喜剧)” is something contrary to the present fact that the present fact is a tragedy. It shows the speaker's will to turn a tragedy into a comedy. In sentence 6), the proposition a “Nếu cha anh là người cùng thời, là anh (如果你爸跟我们是同龄人, 如果他是你的话)” can be known false from common sense and context, it is definitely impossible to be realized. His father can't be the same age as the speaker, nor can he be his father, so a is a false proposition. b “em sẽ yêu cha anh chứ không phải là yêu anh. (我就会爱上你爸, 而不是你.)” is not possible to realize. sẽ brings out b for speaker's imagination. Compared to Đã, sẽ are more open, while đã is more counterfactual restrictive. This difference can be seen in the following two examples.

A Nếu nó là con trai thì mẹ chồng tôi sẽ rất vui.

(要是它是个男孩, 婆婆一定高兴坏了。)

(If it is a boy, then the mother-in-law will be very happy)

B Nếu nó là con trai thì mẹ chồng tôi đã rất vui.

(要是它是个男孩, 婆婆早就高兴坏了。)

(If it is a boy, then the mother-in-law is already very happy)

In these two sentences, if the mother has not yet given birth to a child, A can be used in the hypothetical sense when we don't know the gender yet, while if the child has been born or we know the gender of the child, A can be used in the counterfactual sense, which just indicates the speaker's imagination. B is a past conditional sentence that expresses the opposite of what happened in the past, so it can only be said when the gender of the child is known. The fact is that the child is a girl, so there is no doubt that sentence B goes against the counterfactual meaning.

4. Conclusion

Through the comparison of Chinese-Vietnamese counterfactual conditional sentences, we can draw the following conclusions.

1. Chinese language lacks a mature counterfactual marker based on constructive grammar, but it can realize the counterfactual meaning through elements as time,

conjunctions, negation, person and counterfactual semantic. Vietnamese, on the other hand, has obvious grammatical markers for fixed counterfactual conditional sentences, and can also realize the disjunctive meaning through negation, temporal components, and hypothetical conjunctions. The Vietnamese preposition Giả (giả như, giả mà) is considered to be the most typical counterfactual marker.

2. Constructive form of Chinese counterfactual conditional sentence mainly include: [hypothetical conjunction+negator +a,b], [hypothetical conjunction+a,b], [早知道 zao zhi dao+a,b], while there are three ways of expressing counterfactual assumptions in Vietnamese conditional sentences: [counterfactual marker+a,b],[đã/đã..rồi], [hypothetical conjunction+a,b]. They have a high similarity in the constructive form of the counterfactual conditional sentences.

3. Both Chinese and Vietnamese have shared constructive forms with hypothetical conditional sentences. In Vietnamese, Nếu a (thì) b /nếu a (thì) đã b./nếu a.(thì) sẽ b can either express the hypothetical sense or the counterfactual sense. The conditional sentences led by these hypothetical conjunctions(如果, 要是, 假如, 假使, 假设, 倘若, 如若, 设若) in Chinese can also be used for counterfactual sense, which is the same.

4. It should be noted that [hypothetical conjunction+negator +a,b], in Chinese counterfactual conditional sentences can only be interpreted in a false way. In fact, Vietnamese also has the same hypothetical conjunction “Nếu(如果)”+否定词 không(不, 没) a,b, but unlike Chinese, the Vietnamese “Nếu(如果)”+否定词 không(不, 没) a,b not only shows counterfactual sense, but depends on the context and the following time word “đã” or “sẽ.” For example, “Nếu không có ai giúp tôi, thì tôi sẽ phá sản.(如果没人帮我, 我将会破产 If no one helps me, I will go bankrupt)”, although there is a hypothetical conjunction + negation, it is not a counterfactual meaning but a hypothetical meaning, which is different from Chinese.

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