AN ANALYSIS OF CHINESE TAG QUESTIONS WITH A CROSS-LINGUISTIC COMPARISON TO ENGLISH TAGS

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes Chinese tag questions in contrast to English tag questions. Whereas English tags are syntax-based, Chinese tags are more discourse-based and the choice of tag verbs is decided mainly according to the speaker's discourse intentions, such as asking for an agreement of the host proposition, seeking consent of an invitation, making a refutation, etc. The Chinese tag question comprises a tag verb in the interrogative form, namely V-not-V, V-particle, or Neg-V-particle, and a null *pro* of CP, which is identical with the host sentence. The various interrogative forms of the tag verb display varied degrees of presupposition from the speaker. Tag verbs include mostly the declarative tags of *dui, shi*, *you,* etc. and imperative tags of *hao, xing, keyi.* Some epistemic modals such as *yinggai, keneng* and some discourse commentary verbs such as *guai, zan, ku, sheng,* etc. can also be tag verbs, though in relatively low frequency. From the cross-linguistic comparison, it is concluded that English tags might be harder for Chinese EFL learners to acquire than Chinese tags for English CFL learners due to the syntactic complexity of canonical tags and irregularity in formation in non-canonical tags.

Key words: Chinese tag question, English tag question, contrastive analysis

1.   INTRODUCTION

Although most languages have tag questions, they might not manifest under the same semantic concept or with similar syntactic constructions. For instance, unlike English, which has positive and negative tags varying with the negative and positive host sentence as shown in (1), Chinese can freely have three tag forms, namely V-not-V, V-particle, and Neg-V-particle, regardless of the positive or negative form of the host sentence, as illustrated in (2). Unlike English tags, in which the tag verbs vary according to the finite auxiliary verb of the host sentence, Chinese has tags of verbs of limited number, such as *shi, dui, hao, xing, keyi, you,* etc., as exemplified in (3). Unlike English tags, which require a pronoun subject, Chinese tags need only the tag verbs but no subject, as displayed in the Chinese tag examples in (2-3) below.

(1)   a. John cannot speak Chinese, can he?

       b. John can speak Chinese, can't he?

(2)   a. 張三已經走了，{是不是？/是嗎？/不是嗎?} (positive host)
          Zhangsan yijing zou-le, {shi-bu-shi? / shi-ma? / bu-shi-ma?}
          Zhangsan already go-Asp$_1$. {be-not-be / be-Part. / no-be-part.}
          'Zhangsan has gone, {hasn't he? / is it? / isn't it?}'

       b. 張三沒來，{是不是？/是嗎？/不是嗎?} (negative host)
          Zhangsan mei-lai, {shi-bu-shi? / shi-ma? / bu-shi-ma?}
          Zhangsan not-come, {be-not-be / be-Part. / no-be-part.}
          'Zhangsan did not come, {did he? / is it? / isn't it?}'

(3)   a. 張三應該說實話，{對不對？/ 是不是?}
          Zhangsan yinggai shuo shihua, {dui-bu-dui? / shi-bu-shi?}
          Zhangsan should say truth, {true-not-true / be-not-be}
          'Zhangsan should tell the truth, right?'

b. 借我兩百塊，{好不好？/行不行？/ 可以不可以？}
   jie wo liang-bai-kuai, {hao-bu-hao? / xing-bu-xing? / keyi-
   bu-keyi?}
   lend I two-hundred-dollar, {good-not-good / workable-not-
   workable / OK-not-OK}
   'Lend me two hundred dollars, OK?'

c. 你上次拿了我伍佰塊，有沒有？
   ni shangci na-le wo wu-bai-kuai, you-mei-you?
   you last-time take-Asp$_1$. I five-hundred-dollar, exist-not-exist
   'You took five hundred dollars from me, wasn't it?'

Even though the syntactic representations or semantic properties of tag questions vary among languages, the purpose of tags is to seek a response or confirmation from the addressee and is pragmatically similar in all languages. According to Quirk et al. (1985), English tag questions are questions, having typically a form of yes-no question, attached to the end of an indicative clause. The tag questions considered are thus called 'question tags' or 'attached questions'. For Chinese tags, most linguists agree that a Chinese tag question is a short question attached to the end of a statement requesting a response or confirmation from the addressee (Chao 1968; Wang 1965; Tang 1981; Liu 1996; Chu 1998; Li and Thompson 2003; Chang 2006).

In addition to an inquiry, however, a Chinese tag functions differently from an English tag and is oriented more to discourse than to syntax. Regardless of the host sentence, a tag attached to it varies according to the discourse purpose that the speaker intends to express. In (4), three tags show varied inquiring purposes. *Dui-bu-dui* in (4a) displays a request or confirmation of the truth value of the host sentence, *you-mei-you* in (4b), of the existence of the event of the host sentence, and *hao-bu-hao* in (4c) typically with an impatient tone, of a forceful agreement of the host sentence. These observations reveal that Chinese and English use distinct syntactic forms to form tag questions and that Chinese tags perform varied discourse purposes via the variations of the tag verbs.

(4) a. 你上次拿了我伍佰塊，對不對？
　　　ni shangci na-le wo wu-bai-kuai, dui-bu-dui?
　　　you last-time take-Asp_1. I five-hundred-dollar, true-not-true
　　　'You took five hundred dollars from me, is it right?'

　　b. 你上次拿了我伍佰塊，有沒有？
　　　ni shangci na-le wo wu-bai-kuai, you-mei-you?
　　　you last-time take-Asp_1. I five-hundred-dollar, exist-not-exist
　　　'You took five hundred dollars from me, wasn't it?'

　　c. 你上次拿了我伍佰塊，好不好？
　　　ni shangci na-le wo wu-bai-kuai, hao-bu-hao?
　　　you last-time take-Asp_1. I five-hundred-dollar, good-not-good
　　　'(It's undoubted) You took five hundred dollars from me, OK?'

Though both languages have tag questions that have similar functions, Chinese and English differ evidently in their tag constructions and discourse intentions. As most past research on tag questions comprised mono-lingual studies (Chao 1968; Hu 2001; Kimps and Davidse 2008; Li 1997; Li and Thompson 2003; Pichler and Torgersen 2012; Tottie and Hoffmann 2006, among others), a contrastive study between English and Chinese, a western vs. an eastern language, would be inspiring and can contribute to an enhanced understanding of the syntactic formations and semantic variations in discourse functions of tag questions cross-linguistically. This comparative linguistic study can, then, inform foreign language teaching and learning and provide teachers and students with a systematic and profound interpretation of tag questions across languages.

In this study, we aim to investigate the mechanism of Chinese tags by contrasting the syntactic structures and discourse purposes of English and Chinese tags cross-linguistically. The organization of this study is as follows. Section 1 provides contrasts between English and Chinese tags and introduces the notion that Chinese tags aim at discourse, instead of syntactic, functions. Section 2 examines various Chinese tag forms and their interpretations, scrutinizes a distinction between real and false tags, and analyzes the components inside a tag question. In section 3, syntactic analyses of Chinese and English tag constructions account for all the

various tag forms of Chinese and enable a cross-linguistic contrast between the two languages. Section 4 summarizes a cross-linguistic comparison between English and Chinese in both the syntactic structures and the discourse functions, and shows how these contrastive differences can inspire and help EFL and CFL teaching. Section 5 concludes this study.

2.   FORMS AND FUNCTIONS OF CHINESE TAGS

2.1 Tags of Three Syntactic Forms

As mentioned above, Chinese tags are fixed in three syntactic types: V-not-V, V-particle, and Neg-V-particle, and with a limited number of tag verbs, such as *shi, dui, hao, keyi, xing, you,* etc., each functioning for different discourse purposes. Chang (2006) presented detailed functions of the Chinese tag of V-not-V questions, summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Categories and functions of Chinese tags according to Chang (2006:33)

Type of A-not-A	Functions
Hao-bu-hao	to request the addressee's evaluation or consent, to mark directives or prohibitions, to express refutations of the addressee's statement or presupposition;
Dui-bu-dui	to request the addressee's judgment of the truth of a proposition, to request the addressee's agreement to, or confirmation of, the veracity of the speaker's statement, to strengthen the veracity of the speaker's own statement by activating the addressee's common background knowledge;
You-mei-you	to request acknowledgement of the existence of a proposed entity in the addressee's knowledge state, to establish the speaker's intended information or topic by negotiating the addressee's confirmation of the existence of the head proposition in his knowledge state, to activate the speaker's own knowledge state by activating the addressee's, at the same time. to strengthen the speaker's opinion by requesting an acknowledgement of the same opinion in the addressee's knowledge state;
Shi-bu-shi	to request confirmation of the statement on hearer knowledge, to request reconfirmation of the received information, to challenge the addressee's intent.

Of the three types of tag forms in Chinese, each tag has a discourse function in modality by the speaker. Type V-not-V (e.g. 是不是) is most neutral in modality as it provides complementary choices of both positive

and negative propositions, P and ~P, which shows it to be unbiased either way. Type V-particle (e.g. 是嗎) has a presupposition, similar to the yes-no question relative to a V-not-V question (McCawley 1994). Although inquiring the truth of the proposition of the sentence, the V-particle tag shows the speaker has some idea about the sentence proposition. Type Neg-V-particle (e.g. 不是嗎) has a strong presupposition, similar to the negative yes-no question. The increasing strengths of presupposition for the three tag types, as shown in (5), are the same as for the corresponding three question forms, as shown in (6). The degrees of presupposition of the three Chinese tag forms are in the order of Neg-V-particle > V-particle > V-not-V.

(5)   a. 張三會說德語，是不是?   (no presupposition)
          Zhangsan hui shuo deyu, shi-bu-shi?
          Zhangsan can speak German, yes-not-yes
          'Zhangsan can speak German, can't he?' (with rising intonation)

       b. 張三會說德語，是嗎?   (relative presupposition)
          Zhangsan hui shuo deyu, shi-ma?
          Zhangsan can speak German, yes-part.
          'Zhangsan can speak German, is it so?'

       c. 張三會說德語，不是嗎?   (strong presupposition)
          Zhangsan hui shuo deyu, bu-shi-ma?
          Zhangsan can speak German, not-yes-part.
          'Zhangsan can speak German, can't he?' (with falling intonation)

(6)   a. 張三會(說德語)還是不會說德語?   (no presupposition)
          Zhangsan hui (shuo deyu) hai-shi bu-hui shuo deyu?
          Zhangsan can (speak German) or not-can speak German
          'Zhangsan can (speak German) or cannot speak German?'

       b. 張三會說德語嗎?   (relative presupposition)
           Zhangsan hui shuo deyu ma?
          Zhangsan can speak German part.
          'Can Zhangsan speak German?'

    c. 不是(說)張三會說德語嗎?　　　　　　　(strong presupposition)
      bu-shi (shuo) Zhangsan hui shuo deyu ma?
      not-be (speak) Zhangsan can speak German part.
      'Isn't it that Zhangsan can speak German?'

    Romero and Han (2004) proposed that a strong presupposition in questions is always derived from the preposed negation to the sentence initial position, as shown in (7a), as compared with (7a'). Preposed negation in yes-no questions necessarily contributes the implicature that the speaker believes or expects that the positive answer is correct, whereas the non-preposed negation does not. According to Romero and Han, the implication is triggered by the epistemic conversational operator, named VERUM.

(7)   a. Doesn't John smoke?
      Positive epistemic implicature: The speaker believes John smokes.

    a'. Does John not smoke?
      No epistemic implicature necessary.

    b. Does John smoke?
      (No epistemic implicature necessary.)

    b' Does John really smoke?
      (Negative epistemic implicature: The speaker believed or at least expected that John does not smoke.)

    c. A: Sam believes/doesn't believe the kids will finish on time.
      B: They will not finish on time.　　(No epistemic implicature.)
      B': They will NOT finish on time. (with epistemic implicature.)

    In addition to the preposed negation, VERUM in English can emerge in other forms, too. VERUM can be overtly spelled out with the English epistemic adverb *really*, as shown in the contrast of (7b-b'), and can be signaled by phonological stress on a polarity element, such as NOT or

auxiliary. The contrast between the replies of B and B' in Example (7c) indicates that a polarity stress on NOT can indeed trigger the existence of an epistemic implicature.

Following Romero and Han, I propose the strong presupposition in Chinese Neg-V- particle tag derives from the preposed negation in the sentence initial position. The Neg-V-particle tag in (5c) is theoretically a negated tag verb plus a null copy of the host sentence, i.e. '不是(張三會說德語)嗎?'; the VERUM operator hence adds a strong belief of the speaker that '張三會說德語.'

The presupposition of English tags is displayed phonetically via a falling intonation since the tag verb is syntactically fixed in its positive or negative form. That is, when the host sentence is positive, the tag verb is in the negative form, and vice versa. VERUM operator; therefore, cannot apply in English tags. The presupposition in tags can only be conducted phonetically. The phonetic effect of the falling intonation adds in the presupposition implication to the tag, whereas the rising intonation does not, but merely expresses doubt about the tag question's default or a request for verification of the host sentence (Quirk et al., 1985; Huddleston and Pullum 2002). Examples in (8) show the strong presupposition tags in the two languages, with a Neg-V-particle in Chinese and a falling intonation in English.

(8) a. 張三已經離開了，不是嗎? (speaker strongly believes Zhangsan has left.)
       Zhangsan yijing likai-le, bu-shi ma?
       Zhangsan already leave-Asp_1, not-be part.
       'Zhangsan has already left, hasn't he?'   (with a falling intonation)

     a'. 張三沒有離開，不是嗎? (speaker strongly believes Zhangsan hasn't left.)
        Zhangsan meiyou likai-le, bu-shi ma?
        Zhangsan no-have leave-Asp. Not-be-part.
        'Zhangsan has not left, has he?'   (with a falling intonation)

     b. John has left, hasn't he?   (the tag with a falling intonation)

     b'. John hasn't left, has he?   (the tag with a falling intonation)

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2.2 Tag verbs

2.2.1 Regular tag verbs

In addition to *dui, shi, you,* and *hao* stated by Chang (2006), there are tag verbs in Chinese such as *xing*, *keyi*, or *yinggai*, etc. Unlike English tag verbs that are derived from the finite auxiliary verbs of a host sentence, Chinese tag verbs are originally discourse verbs in response to a statement or inquiry of a conversation partner, and verbs normally serve various discourse functions. They generally appear like a short reply form to all sorts of discourse utterances except wh-questions, such as yes-no questions, commands, invitations, exclamations, refutations, etc. As shown in (9), *shi* in (9a) indicates hearer B's agreement of the truth value of the proposition from speaker A. *Dui* in (9b) indicates B's confirmation of the information of the statement from speaker A. *Hao* in (9c) indicates B's consent to the request or command of speaker A to sweep the floor, and *xing* and *keyi* signify B's ability and hence acceptance to A's inquiry or invitation, as in (9d). *You* in (9e) indicates B's confirmation of the existence of A's description of an event. *Hao/xing* in (9f) displays B's consent or reconciliation to A's refutation. (9g) shows B's strong disagreement or dissent from the event or act in A's statement. These verbs can be roughly categorized into two types and are sometimes used interchangeably within the same type based on the discourse function of the speaker. For instance, *dui* and *shi,* both meaning agreement or confirmation of the statement, can replace each other; *hao, xing* and *keyi,* originally indicating different lexical meanings of positive evaluation, ability, consent, or agreement, are mostly interchangeable in Chinese tags to a request or invitation, or even in a refutation tag.

(9)　　a. A: 語言學很難學嗎?　　　　　B: 是，很難。
　　　　　A: yuyan-xue hen-nan xue ma?　　B: shi, hen-nan.
　　　　　　　language-study very-hard learn part.　　be, very-hard
　　　　　A: Is linguistics very hard to learn?　　B: Yes, it is hard.

b. A: 明天要開會嗎？　　　　　　　B: 對呀，十點。
　A: mingtian yao kaihui ma?　　　　B: dui-ya, shi-dian.
　　tomorrow need meeting part.　　　　true-part. ten-o'clock
　A: Do we have a meeting tomorrow?　B: Yes. Ten o'clock.

c. A: 把地掃乾淨!　　　　　B: 好，馬上就掃。
　A: ba di sao ganjing!　　　B: hao, mashang jiu sao
　　Ba floor sweep clean　　　　good, immediately will sweep
　A: Sweep the floor clean.　B: OK, I'll sweep immediately.

d. A: 到我家喝杯茶吧!　　　　　　B: 行/可以，走吧。
　A: dao wo-jia he bei-cha ba!　　　B: xing / keyi, zou ba.
　　arrive I-home drink cup-tea part.　workable / OK, walk part.
　A: Have a cup of tea at my home!　B: OK. Let's go.

e. A: 你去過北極嗎？　　　　　　　B: 有呀，去過呀。[1]
　A: ni qu-guo beiji ma?　　　　　　B: you-ya, qu-guo ya.
　　you go-Asp. north-pole part.　　　exist-part. go-Asp. part.
　A: Have you been to the North Pole?　B: Yes, I have.

f. A: 小美不是胖子! (不耐語氣)　B: 好/行，不說了。
　A: Xiaomei bu-shi pangzi!　　　B: hao / xing, bu-shuo-le.
　　xiaomei not-be fatty　　　　　B: good / workable,
　　(impatient tone)　　　　　　　　not-speak-Asp.
　A: Xiaomei is not a fatty!　　　B: OK. I'll say no more.

g. A: 小張教小孩抽菸　　　　　B: 不應該，抽菸有害呀!
　A: Xiaochang jiao xiaohai　　　B: bu-yinggai, chouyan
　　chouyan　　　　　　　　　　　you-hai ya
　　xiaochang teach child　　　　　not-should, smoke
　　smoke.　　　　　　　　　　　have-harm part.
　A: Xiaochang teaches children　B: He shouldn't. Smoking is
　　to smoke.　　　　　　　　　　harmful!

[1] Some authors suppose that discourse verb *you* is peculiar to Taiwanese, and would prefer *shi* or *dui* in this discourse context. Even so, we cannot deny that *you* has become a common discourse verb in Taiwan Mandarin and is commonly used also in a tag question.

These verbs and their discourse functions are derived from their original semantic properties. For instance, *dui* and *shi*, meaning correct and agreement, are used in response to a confirmation or agreement of a statement. *Hao*, meaning good in evaluation, *xing*, meaning feasible, and *keyi,* meaning permissible, serve to indicate consent to a request or invitation. *You*, meaning existence, confirms the existence of an event or state or an object. Or *yinggai*, meaning obligation or duty, indicates strong modality of (dis)agreement from the speaker. These verbs subsequently evolve into tag verbs and predicate on the host proposition in the question form of V-not-V, V-particle, or Neg-V-particle, and become tag questions, as shown in (10).

(10)　　a. A: 語言學很難學，{是不是/是嗎/不是嗎}?
　　　　　　A: yuyan-xue hen-nan xue, {shi-bu-shi? / shi-ma? / bu-shi-ma?}
　　　　　　　　language-study very-hard learn, {be-not-be / be-Part. / no-be-part.}
　　　　　　A: Linguistics is hard to learn, {isn't? / is it? / isn't it?}

　　　　b. A: 明天要開會，{對不對/對嗎/不對嗎}?
　　　　　　A: mingtian yao kaihui, {dui-bu-dui / dui-ma / bu-dui-ma}?
　　　　　　　tomorrow need meeting part., {true-not-true /true-part. / not-true part.}
　　　　　　A: We have a meeting tomorrow, {don't we? / right? /isn't it true}?

　　　　c. A: 把地掃乾淨，{好不好/好嗎/不好嗎}?
　　　　　　A: ba di shao ganjing, {hao-bu-hao / hao-ma / bu-hao-ma}?
　　　　　　　Ba floor sweep clean, {good-not-good / good-part. / not-good-part.}?
　　　　　　A: Sweep the floor clean, {will you / OK / isn't it OK}?

　　　　d. A: 到我家喝杯茶，{行不行/行嗎/不行嗎}?
　　　　　　A: dao wo-jia he bei-cha ba, {xing-bu-xing / xing-ma / bu-xing ma}?
　　　　　　　arrive I-home drink cup-tea part., {workable-bu-workable / workable-part. / not-workable-ma}?
　　　　　　A: Have a cup of tea at my home, {will you / OK / isn't it OK}?

e. A: 你去過北極，{有沒有/有嗎/沒有嗎}?
   A: ni qu-guo beiji, {you-mei-you / you-ma / mei-you ma}?
      you go-Asp. north-pole, {exist-not-exist /exist-part. / not-exist part.}
   A: You have been to the North Pole, {haven't you / right / isn't it right}?

f. A:小美不是胖子，{好不好/好嗎}?
   A: Xiaomei bu-shi pangzi, {hao-bu-hao / hao-ma}? (impatient)
      xiaomei not-be fatty,   good-not-good / good-part.
   A: Xiaomei isn't a fatty, OK?

g. A: 小張教小孩抽菸，{應(該)不應該/應該嗎/不應該嗎}?
   A: xiaozhang jiao xiaohai chouyan {ying(gai)-bu-yinggai/ yinggai-ma /bu-yinggai ma}?
      xiaozhang teach child smoke, {should-not-should / should-part. /not should-part.}
   A: Xiaozhang teaches children to smoke, {should or should he not/ should he /shouldn't he}?

2.2.1 Tags with modal verbs[2]

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[2] Modal verbs in Chinese are verbs that can take other verbs as their complement while regular verbs cannot and are the main verbs that contribute the primary semantic property to the predicate of the sentence. Verbs, such as *shi, you, xing,* etc., in (i) are regular verbs, whereas verbs such as *hui, yinggai, keneng,* etc., in (ii) are modal verbs. Some verbs such as *hui* and *you* can have dual roles, as shown in (iii).

i. a. ta-de fuqin <u>shi</u> yisheng.
       he-poss father be doctor
       His father is a doctor.
    b. ni <u>you</u> san-ge haizi
       you have three-CL child
       You have three children.
    c. zhe-jian shi, ni <u>xing</u>, ta bu-<u>xing</u>
       this-CL matter, you able, he no-able
       You, but not he, can handle this matter.
ii. a. ta-de didi <u>hui</u> shi yisheng
       he-poss brother maybe be doctor

iii. a. ta <u>hui</u> dewen.
        he able German
        He knows German.
     b. wo <u>you</u> qian.
        I have money
        I have money
     a'. ta <u>hui</u> xiu diannao.
        he able fix computer
        He can fix computers.
     b'. wo <u>you</u> kan-guo Taiwan-xiong
        I have see-EXP Taiwan-bear

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Chiu (2011) proposed Chinese tags of two types — modal and invariable: the former is a tag question of verbal type with a modal verb predicating a sentential subject as in (11); the latter is the tag mentioned above with a regular discourse verb predicating on a discourse complement. We discuss here the modal tag and leave the invariable tag in the syntactic analysis to section 3.

(11)   a. 張三敢高空彈跳，{敢嗎/不敢嗎/敢不敢}？(Chiu 2011:158)
        Zhangsan gan gaokong tantiao, {gan-ma/ bu-gan-ma/ gan-bu-gan}?
        zhangsan dare high-space jump, {dare-part./ not-dare-part. /dare-not-dare}
        'Zhangsan dare do bungee jumping, {dare he/ dare he not/ dare or dare he not}?'

       b. 張三應該去台北，{應該嗎/不應該嗎}？
         Zhangsan yinggai qu Taipei, {yinggai-ma/ bu-yinggai-ma}?
         Zhangsan should go Taipei, {should-part./ not-should-part.}
         'Zhangsan should go to Taipei, {shouldn't he (rising tone) /shouldn't he (falling tone)}?'

Modals can be roughly categorized as epistemic and deontic: the former behaves as a raising verb, whereas the latter acts as a control verb (Lin and Tang 1995). Epistemic modals take sentential complements, and as required by the Extended Projection Principle (EPP) that all English sentences must have a subject NP, the subject in the embedded clause moves to the matrix subject position, as illustrated in (12a). Epistemic modals are thus named raising verbs. Deontic modals are, in contrast, two-

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    His brother will be a doctor.   I have seen a Taiwan bear.

  b. ni yinggai you san-ge haizi
    you should have three-CL child
    You should have three children.
  c. zhe-jian shi, ni keneng xing
    this-CL matter, you may be able
    You may be able to handle this matter.

place predicates with two arguments: the matrix subject NP and a clausal complement with a PRO subject coreferenced with, i.e. controlled by, the matrix subject, as illustrated in (12b). Deontic modals are hence control verbs, different from epistemic modals.
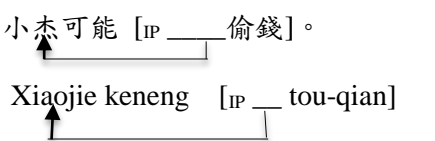
(12)　　a. 張先生應該 [IP ___ 是醫生]。（應該 as an epistemic modal）

zhang-xiansheng yinggai [IP ___　shi yisheng] 。

zhang-mister　　should　　　be doctor
'Mr. Zhang should be a doctor.'

　　　b. 張先生 ᵢ 敢 [IP PROᵢ 高空彈跳]。（敢 as a deontic modal）

Zhang-xianshengᵢ gan [IP PROᵢ gaokong tantiao] 。

Zhang-mister　　dare　　　high-space jump
'Mr. Zhang dare do bungee jumping.'

Modal *yinggai* in (11b) is an epistemic verb and can act as a tag verb but modal *gan* in (11a) is a deontic modal and hence cannot be a tag verb since *gan* must have an agent subject instead of a sentential subject; that condition is contradictory to Chiu's own definition of modal tags, which states that modal [tag] verbs appear sentence-finally and host a whole sentence as a sentential subject (Chiu 2011:161). We agree that modals can serve in Chinese tag questions, but they are limited to epistemic modals only, because Chinese tags are formed with a sentential proposition and a tag verb, either a discourse verb or an epistemic modal verb. A deontic verb such as in (11a) is not a tag question but a question with a covert subject *pro,* indicating the same subject of the previous sentence, as illustrated in (13). The seeming tag form is an abbreviated question with an empty subject *pro,* which is a common null NP since Chinese is a pro-drop language. This issue will be further discussed in the following section.

Other epistemic modals, such as *keneng,* are also raising verbs taking a clausal complement as in (14a) and can act as a tag verb, as in (14b). A

short dialogue in (14c) proves that an epistemic modal can predicate on a previous proposition in the conversation and act as a discourse verb, and therefore can function as a tag verb in a tag question. Epistemic modals, in a sense, are also discourse verbs of a type.

(13)　張三敢高空彈跳，*pro(*張三*)*敢嗎? / *pro(*張三*)*敢不敢?
　　　Zhangsan gan gaokong tantiao, *pro (*zhangsan*)* gan ma?/ *pro (*zhangsan)gan-bu-gan?
　　　Zhangsan dare high-space jump, *pro (*zhangsan*)* dare part./ *pro(*zhangsan*)*dare-not-dare?'
　　　'Zhangsan dare do bungee jumping. Dare he?/ Dare or Dare he not?

(14)　　a. 小杰可能 [IP ＿＿偷錢]。

　　　Xiaojie keneng　　[IP ＿ tou-qian]

　　　Xiaojie likely　　　　steal-money
　　　'Xiaojie is likely to steal money.'

　　　b. 小杰偷錢，可能不可能?
　　　　Xiaojie tou-qian, keneng-bu-keneng
　　　　Xiaojie steal-money, likely-not-likely
　　　'Xiaojie stole money; is it possible?'

　　　c.　A: 小杰偷錢
　　　　A: Xiaojie tou-qian
　　　　　 Xiaojie steal-money
　　　　　 Xiaojie stole money.
　　　　B: 不可能!
　　　　B:　bu-keneng!
　　　　　　not possible
　　　　B:　It is not possible.

2.2.3. False tags and rare tags in Chinese

Many constructions resemble tags in Chinese in carrying typical V-not-V, V-particle or Neg-V-particle forms as shown in (15).

(15)   a.   桌上有一盤餃子，{吃不吃 /吃嗎 /不吃嗎}？
            zhuoshang you yi-pan jiaozi, chi-bu-chi / chi-ma / bu-chi-ma}?
            table-on have one-dish dumpling, eat-not-eat/ eat-part./ not-eat-part.}?
            'There is a dish of dumplings; do you want to eat?'

        b.   阿 Q 會說阿拉伯語，{會不會/ 會嗎/ 不會嗎}？
            A-Q hui shuo Alaboyu, {hui-bu-hui / hui-ma /bu-hui-ma}?
            A-Q can speak Arabic-language, can-not-can/ can-part./ not-can-part.}?
            'A-Q can speak Arabic, {can he or can't he /can he /can't he}?'

These sentences are not real tags, because the inquiring element (i.e. V-not-V or V-particle) is a predicate of either an empty discourse partner 'you'*,* as shown in (16a), or of an empty subject of the host sentence '阿 Q' or its pronoun *he*, as shown in (16b). There are several ways to verify this. First, the thematic relation of the subject and the predicate can stand because only the discourse partner 'you' and the subject of the host sentence '阿 Q', not the proposition of the host sentence, i.e., 桌上有一盤餃子, can perform the action of the verb. That is, it is impossible to have a Chinese sentence '*桌上有一盤餃子吃' because the verb 吃 cannot predicate on a sentential subject of 桌上有一盤餃子. Only tag verbs and epistemic modals, such as 可能, can predicate on a sentential subject and form a grammatical sentence like '可能桌上有一盤餃子' or '桌上可能有一盤餃子' after the raising movement.

(16)   a.   桌上有一盤餃子，(你/pro){吃不吃? / 吃嗎}？
              zhuoshang you yi-pan jiaozi, (ni/pro) {chi-bu-chi / chi-ma}?
              table-on have one-dish dumpling, (you/pro){eat-not-eat/eat-part.}?
              'There is a dish of dumplings; do you want to eat?'

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    b. 阿 Q 會說阿拉伯語，(阿 Q/他/pro)會不會？/ 會嗎？
    A-Q hui shuo Alaboyu, (A-Q/ta/pro) {hui-bu-hui / hui-ma}?
    A-Q can speak Arabic-language, (A-Q/he/pro) can-not-can
    /can-part.}?
    'A-Q can speak Arabic; can he?'

    Second, Chinese is a *pro*-drop language, in which an empty subject *pro* or object *pro* is common and acceptable. A *pro* is a phonetically null element in a position in which an argument NP should occur. Sentence (17a) is an example taken from Huang (1988), arguing that a subject *pro* of *ni* (meaning *you*), although null in form, is at the beginning of the first clause. It is also common to see *pro* referring to the previously mentioned NP. Sentence (17b) shows the null *pro* referring to the NP, 一道菜(a dish), in the previous clause. Similarly, sentence (17c) also has a *pro* referring to the NP, 一道菜(a dish), and it acts as the subject of the interrogative predicate, 好不好吃. Consequently, 好不好吃 is the predicate of the null *pro* and is not a tag verb on the entire sentence '媽媽昨天創了一道菜'. Given this condition, we may conclude that (17c) is not a tag question because the interrogative verb 好不好吃 is not predicating on the previous sentence.

(17) a. *pro* 有了兩本書在桌上，夠你看三天了。   (Huang 1988)
      pro you-le liang-ben shu zai zhuo-shang, gou ni kan san-tian le.
      have-Asp$_1$. two-CL book at table-on, enough you look three-day
      Asp$_2$.
      'You have two books on the table; it should be enough for you
      to read for two days.'

    b. 媽媽昨天煮了一道菜，大家都說 *pro* 很好吃。
      Mama zuotian zu-le yi-dao cai, dajia dou shuo *pro* hen-hao chi.
      mother yesterday cook-Asp$_1$. one-CL dish, people all say very
      good eat
      'Mother cooked a dish yesterday; everyone said it was very tasty.'

c. 媽媽昨天創了一道菜，*pro* 好不好吃？
　　Mama zuotian chuang-le <u>yi-dao cai</u>, <u>*pro*</u> hao-bu-hao chi?
　　mother yesterday creat-Asp_1. one-CL dish, good-not-good eat
　　'Mother created <u>a dish</u> yesterday; was <u>it</u> good?'

　　Third, according to the definition, a tag is an interrogative predicate on the preceding sentence. As a result, there should exist a thematic relation between the preceding sentence and the following tag verb. Since what the tag verb predicates on is a proposition, it is unlikely to be an action verb or deontic modal which regularly takes an agent subject. For this reason, tag verbs have limited type and number. As verbs in (16) are an action verb 吃 and a deontic modal 會, and have no thematic relation with the preceding sentence, they cannot be tag verbs. In addition, the interrogative verbs in (16) can be syntactically separated from the preceding sentence with either the null NP *pro*, i.e. the actual subject of the verbs, or a period, i.e. a sentence ending marker. The two constituents are, hence, not syntactically connected, indicating that these structures are not tag questions by definition.

　　In contrast, question forms in (18) are seen occasionally; we propose they are real, though noncanonical, tag questions in Chinese. The tag question is defined as a short, quick inquiry from a speaker requesting a response or confirmation of an addressee about a statement or speech given; the inquiry or the tag verb should accordingly predicate on the preceding host statement. According to this definition, (18a-b) should be regarded as tag questions as verbs *guai* [怪] and *zan* [讚] predicate on the propositions stated before them, and as the verbs lack thematic relations with a possible covert subject such as *feiji* [飛機], *mingtian* [明天] or the conversation partner *you*. These sentences thus conform to tag questions. *Guai* and *zan* are hence tag verbs, although tag verbs of this type are less common than the regular types in (9).

(18) a. 飛機就這樣不見了，怪不怪？
　　　　feiji jiu zhe-yang bu-jian-le, guai-bu-guai?
　　　　airplane just this-way not-see-Asp_1. strange-not-strange
　　　　'The airplane just disappeared like this; isn't it strange?'

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b. 下了好幾天的雨，明天就要放晴了，讚不讚？
   xia-le hao-ji-tian de yu, mingtian jiu-yao fang-qieng-le, zan-bu-zan?
   drop-Asp. very-several-day DE_1 rain, tomorrow will turn-sunny-Asp. great-not-great
   'It rained for several days. It will turn sunny tomorrow. Isn't it great?'

c. 林書豪個人獨得十九分，酷不酷？
   Lin-Shuhao ge-ren du-de shi-jiou fen, ku-bu-ku?
   Jeremy Lin person alone-get ten-nine point, cool-not-cool
   'Jeremy Lin got 19 points all by himself. Wasn't it cool?'

d. 阿傑不到十秒就把魔術方塊搞定了，神不神？
   A-jie bu-dao shi-miao jiu ba moshu fangkuai gao-ding-le, shen-bu-shen?
   A-jie not-arrive ten-second then BA magic cube manage-fix-Asp_1. amazing-not-amazing
   'A-jie fixed the magic cube in less than 10 seconds. Isn't it amazing?'

Question forms in (18c-d) can be confusing as the verbs can predicate on the preceding event as in (18c-d) or on the subject as seen in (19a-b). Although these discourse verbs such as *shen* [神], *zan* [讚], *ku* [酷] and *guai* [怪] can predicate on a person, it has typically a discourse context previously set to generate a comment verb of this kind. The name is hence an abbreviation for the whole event. A discourse example in (20) shows that, if there be only a person's name and no preceding context of an event, the verb would require the information to be given to clarify which event content the discourse verb 酷 is predicating on. We hence take all discourse verbs such as *shen*, *zan*, *ku*, *guai,* etc. to be tag verbs and to form tag questions, although they are uncommon because of their limited function of commenting on atypical events.

(19)   a. 林書豪，酷不酷？
       Lin- Shuhao, ku-bu-ku?
       Jeremy Lin, cool-not-cool
       'Jeremy Lin, isn't he cool?'

       b. 阿傑，神不神？
       A-jie, shen-bu-shen?
       A-jie, amazing-not-amazing
       'A-jie, isn't he amazing?'

(20)   A: 林書豪，酷不酷？
       A: Lin- Shuhao, ku-bu-ku?
          Jeremy Lin, cool-not-cool
       A: Jeremy Lin, isn't he cool?

       B: 什麼酷不酷？
       B: shemo ku-bu-ku
          what cool-not-cool
          What is cool about him?

       A: 對湖人隊啊，個人獨得十九分，酷不酷？
       A: dui hu-ren dui a, ge-ren du-de shi-jiu fen, ku-bu-ku
          against Lakers team part., person alone-get ten-nine point,
          cool-not-cool
       A: In the game against the Lakers, he got 19 points all by
          himself. Isn't it cool?

       B: 酷，當然酷呀。
       B: ku, dangran ku ya.
          Cool certainly cool part.
       B: Yeah, of course it was cool.

2.3. Rhetoric Tags in Chinese

Chinese regular tags can be classified into two major types based on the structure of the host sentence. The first type takes a declarative host

sentence and the tag can be various, ranging from requesting the addressee's judgment of the truth of a proposition as in *dui*, requesting the addressee's confirmation of the information as in *shi*, requesting acknowledgement of the existence of an event or entity as in *you*, asking for addressee's agreement on a certain unusual oddity as in *ku, zan, sheng,* or *guai*, or inviting the addressee's agreement on the conjecture or moral judgment of a certain event as in *yinggai* or *keneng,* etc. The second type takes a host sentence of imperatives or inviting requests and the tag can ask for either consent or evaluation as in *hao,* or feasibility as in *keyi* or *xing*.

In addition to the regular tags mentioned above, Chinese has two rhetoric tags that have further discourse meaning. Previously, tag verbs such as *hao, keyi,* or *xing* are for inquiring sentences such as imperatives or invitation requests. Used rhetorically, *hao, keyi,* and *xing* can predicate also on declaratives, displaying a rhetoric function of refutation, demonstrated in (21).

(21) a. 我們沒有逃稅，{好不好/行不行/可以不可以}?[3] (in refutation)
    women mei-you tao-shui {hao-bu-hao/ xing-bu-xing/ keyi-bu-keyi}?
    We not-have escape-tax {good-not-good / workable-not-workable / OK-not-OK}
    'We did not evade taxes, OK?'

   b. 這種題目是考白癡的，{好不好/行不行/可以不可以}? (in refutation)
    zhe-zhong timu shi kao baichi de, {hao-bu-hao/ xing-bu-xing/ keyi-bu-keyi}?
    This-kind question be test idiot DE_2, {good-not-good / workable-not-workable/ OK-not-OK}
    'This kind of question is for idiots, OK?'

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[3] A reviewer is concerned about the non-existence of tags of *xing-bu-xing* and *keyi-bu-keyi* in refutation tags such as (21). The author believes this condition is due to the varied degree of acceptability in the tag verbs of *hao, xing* and *keyi* in refutation tags. *Hao* is acceptable for everyone; however, *xing* and *keyi* are much lower in acceptability, which probably leads to the doubt of such tag verbs in the refutation tags.

In refutation tags, the proposition of the host sentence is expressed with the strongest assertion and is regarded as the absolute truth by the speaker, so unquestionable. *Shi* and *dui* are hence avoided; *hao*, *xing,* and *keyi* indicate the speaker's pseudo-action of asking permission or agreement but actual refutation. The only reply acceptable to the speaker is a positive one.

A rhetoric tag of another type in Chinese is towards the other extreme, with tag verbs *shi* and *dui* predicating on a pseudo-inquiry from the speaker. Tag verbs *shi* and *dui* express the speaker's sarcastic inquiry about the truth value of a nonexistent event or proposition in the host sentence. The speaker does not believe the content of his statement either, but declares it sarcastically and interrogates the addressee with a tag question. The discourse purpose of a rhetoric tag of this type is to challenge the addressee's intent; the subject of the host sentence is hence invariably the second person and atypically omitted. The host sentence indicates the nonexistent and untrue state of a proposition and the inquiry form, with truth-finding tag verbs of *dui* and *shi*, shows that the purpose of the tag question is not inquiry but sarcasm, because the speaker expects no answer or a definitely negative reply from the addressee. Examples of such rhetoric tags appear in (22).

(22)   a. 想偷錢，{是不是/ 是嗎/ 對不對}?
         xiang tou-qian, {shi-bu-shi / shi-ma /dui-bu-dui}?
         want steal-money {be-not-be / be-part. / true-not-true}
       'You want to steal money, don't you?' (with falling intonation)

      b. 你想找碴，是不是?/ 是嗎?/ 對不對?
         ni xiang zhaocha, {shi-bu-shi / shi-ma /dui-bu-dui}?
         you want find-trouble, {be-not-be / be-part. / true-not-true}
         'You are looking for trouble, aren't you?' (with falling intonation)

c. 吃飽了撐著，是不是?/ 是嗎?/ 對不對?
   chi-bao-le cheng-zhe, {shi-bu-shi / shi-ma /dui-bu-dui}?
   eat-full-Asp$_1$. hold-Asp. {shi-bu-shi / shi-ma /dui-bu-dui}?
   'Being full after eating, you have nothing to do, do you?'
   (falling intonation)

The two rhetoric tags in Chinese display extreme discourse presuppositions. The refutation tag has strong assertion from the speaker in the host sentence; tag verbs *shi* or *dui,* requesting the agreement or confirmation of the proposition, are hence inappropriate. Instead, tag verbs of *hao, xing* or *keyi*, asking for agreement or consent sarcastically, are adopted here to show the speaker's impatience and discontent. The pseudo-inquiry tag, or the challenging tag has, in contrast, strong disbelief or denial of the proposition of the host sentence from the speaker. Tag verbs of *shi,* and *dui,* questioning the truth of the proposition, are used sarcastically to show the obvious contradiction. The forms and tag verbs in rhetoric tags are in exact reverse of the regular tags in Chinese. The choice of a tag verb is, consequently, not mechanically dependent on the structure of the host sentence, but displays the speaker's intention in the discourse, proving that Chinese tags are a discourse-oriented construction.

2.3 Event pro and Discourse pro in Tags

Chinese is a pro-drop language; there are many covert *pro*s in a sentence (Chiu 2011). In addition to an empty subject or object *pro*, an event *pro* is also common; Iatridou and Embick (1997:76) proposed that an event *pro* is possible in many Asian languages. (23a) is an example taken from Iatridou and Embick; the empty *pro*, translated as *it* in English, refers to the event 'you cannot return on time' in the *if* clause. In his analysis of Chinese sluicing structure, Wei (2004:228) asserted the existence of an event *pro* predicated by the time and reason wh-words, as shown in (23b). Yang (2012) asserted also that a discourse *pro* is possible in Chinese. Two examples appear in (23c). As a typical pro-drop language, Chinese is replete with phonetically null elements in the texts, referring to entities with NP *pro*s, to events or propositions with event *pro*s (IP *pro*), and to even larger groupings of propositions with discourse *pro*s (CP *pro*s).

(23)　　a. 要是你們不能按時回來就 *pro* 會打亂我們的計畫
　　　　Yaoshi nimen bu-neng anshi huilai jiu *pro* hui daluan women
　　　　de jihua
　　　　if you　not-can on-time return then (it) will ruin our CM plan
　　　　'If you cannot return on time then it will ruin our plan.'

　　　　b. 張三送某人一些東西，但我不知道 *pro*(是在)什麼時候(time)
　　　　　Zhangsan song mou-ren yi-xie dongxi, danshi wo bu-zhidao
　　　　　pro (shi-zai) shemo shihou
　　　　　Zhangsan send some-person one-some thing, but I not-know
　　　　　(be-at) what time
　　　　　'Zhangsan sent someone some things, but I don't know
　　　　　when.'

　　　　　張三送某人一些東西，但是我不知道 *pro*（是）為什麼(reason)
　　　　　Zhangsan song mou-ren yi-xie dongxi, danshi wo bu-zhidao
　　　　　pro (shi-zai) wei-shemo
　　　　　Zhangsan send some-person one-some thing, but I not-know
　　　　　(be) for what
　　　　　'Zhangsan sent someone some things, but I don't know why.'

　　　　c. [CP/TopicP 那道菜，你愛他卻不愛]，是不是 *pro*?
　　　　　[CP/TopicP Na-dao cai, ni ai ta que bu-ai]，shi-bu-shi *pro*?
　　　　　[CP/TopicP that-CL dish, you love he but not-love]，be-not-be
　　　　　'As for that dish, you love it but he doesn't, isn't that so?'

　　　　d. [CP/FocusP 是黃蓉騙洪七公教郭靖武功的]，對不對 *pro?*
　　　　　[CP/FocusP Shi Huang-Rong pian Hung-Qi-Gong jiao Guo-Jing
　　　　　wugong de], dui-bu-dui *pro?*
　　　　　[CP/FocusP be H-R cheat H-Q-K teach K-J kongfu DE], true-not-
　　　　　true
　　　　　'It is H-R that fooled H-Q-K into teaching K-J kongfu, right?'

　　The derivation of Chinese tags could evolve in this way. In a Chinese
tag, an event or discourse *pro* is hidden in the tag inquiry. Tag questions

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in Chinese mean 'do you think V-not-V [the sentence event (in a *pro* form)]?' in a complete discourse, as shown in (24). The tag verb predicates on the null event or discourse *pro*, which is co-indexed with the preceding host sentence or discourse. As in conversation the addressee of the inquiry is invariably the second person *you,* the phrase *ni renwei* is omitted; the inquiring sentence is left with only a discourse verb in its inquiry form tagged to the host sentence, as illustrated in (25).

(24)   a. [語言學很難學]$_i$，你認為是不是 *pro*$_i$?
          [yuyan-xue hen-nan xue]$_i$, ni renwei shi-bu-shi *pro*$_i$?
          language-study very-hard study, you think be-not-be
          'Linguistics is hard to study. You think so, isn't it?'

       b. [把地掃乾淨]$_i$，你認為好不好 *pro*$_i$?
          [ba di shao ganjing]$_i$, ni renwei hao-bu-hao *pro*$_i$?
          BA floor sweep clean, you think good-not-good
          'Sweep the floor clean. Do you think it is okay?'

       c. [小杰偷錢]$_i$，你認為應該不應該 *pro*$_i$?
          [Xiao-jie tou-qian]$_i$, ni renwei yinggai-bu-yinggai *pro*$_i$?
          Xiao-jie steal-money, you think should-not-should
          'Xiao-jie stole money. Do you think he should or shouldn't do it?'

       d. [飛機就這樣不見了]$_i$，你認為怪不怪 *pro*$_i$?
          [feiji jiu zheyang bu-jian-le]$_I$, ni renwei guai-bu-guai *pro*$_i$?
          airplane just this-way not-see-Asp$_1$. You think strange-not-strange
          'The airplane just disappeared like this. Do you think it is strange or not?'

(25)   a. [語言學很難學]$_i$，是不是 *pro*$_i$?
          [yuyan-xue hen-nan xue]$_i$, shi-bu-shi *pro*$_i$?
          language-study very-hard study, be-not-be
          'Linguistics is hard to study, isn't it?'

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b. [把地掃乾淨]ᵢ，好不好 *pro*ᵢ?
 [ba di shao ganjing] ᵢ, hao-bu-hao *pro*ᵢ?
 BA floor sweep clean, good-not-good
 'Sweep the floor clean, OK?'

c. [小杰偷錢]ᵢ，應該不應該 *pro*ᵢ?
 [xiao-jie tou-qian] ᵢ, yinggai-bu-yinggai *pro*ᵢ?
 xiao-jie steal-money, should-not-should
 'Xiao-jie stole money. Should he or shouldn't he?'

d. [飛機就這樣不見了]ᵢ， 怪不怪 *pro*ᵢ?
 [feiji jiu zheyang bu-jian-le] ᵢ, guai-bu-guai *pro*ᵢ?
 airplane just this-way not-see-Asp₁. strange-not-strange
 'The airplane just disappeared like this. Is it strange or not?'

2.5. Why Chinese Tags Lack a Subject Pronoun

In contrast to an English tag, a Chinese tag has no subject pronoun. There are reasons for this. First, the tag verb predicates on an event that is an empty *pro* form; we thus see only the verb, not the subject. Second, Chinese uses a V-not-V or (Neg-)V-particle to form a question, for which there is no subject-verb inversion. Consequently, no subject pronoun is needed. Third, the resulting word order after the tag question formation is [host sentence + tag V + event *pro*]; the missing subject is the event or discourse *pro* and therefore unseen. The null *pro* explains why Chinese tags lack a subject pronoun.

The Chinese type of tag construction is also occasionally seen in English, as shown in (26). Instead of using a finite verb to form a tag question, pronoun *it,* referring to the preceding host sentence, and verb *to be* are combined in reverse order (indicating the interrogation) and form a tag question either in a positive or negative form, as in (26a). As English, unlike Chinese, can have no empty *pro* for an event, the tag requires the pronoun subject *it*. Many languages in the world also have tags of such a type in addition to a regular finite verb tag form, although the frequency of these two types is variable depending on the language according to the Tag Question Section in Wikipedia (source taken in Sep, 2014).

(26)   a. He has finished the work, {is it?/ isn't it?}

      b. He has finished the work, {right? / *OK?}

      c. Sweep the floor, {OK? / *right?}

Another tag form similar to Chinese tags is illustrated in (26b-c), in which no finite verb or subject pronoun are required. Instead, a discourse predicate such as 'right' and 'OK' is used to predicate respectively on a host sentence of declaration, as in (26b), or on a host sentence of command or request or invitation, as in (26c). Similar to Chinese tags, these two discourse predicates belong to discourse functions of distinct types and should accompany the appropriate discourse host sentence. 'Right' is to request the addressee's agreement or confirmation of the previous statement and should match with a declarative host, whereas 'OK' is to request the addressee's evaluation or consent of an inquiry and should match with a request or order or invitation. A mismatch produces ungrammaticality, as shown in the wrong tags in (26b-c). Single lexical item tags of these types are relatively fewer than the regular finite verb tag form in English tags (Mithun 2012).

3   SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF TAGS

3.1. Syntactic Structure of Chinese Tags

Following Chiu (2011) and the Spit CP hypothesis, we analyze Chinese TagP to be situated inside CP between FocusP and TopicP, as illustrated in Fig 1 below. As TagP is an inquiry in nature, it is naturally a part of CP. As for the relative position, we can judge that TagP is lower than TopicP in scope from sentence (27a) but larger than the regular topic-comment sentence in scope from sentence (27b). Similarly, TagP also has a larger scope than FocusP from (27c). We hence agree with Chiu in the analysis of TagP position inside CP.
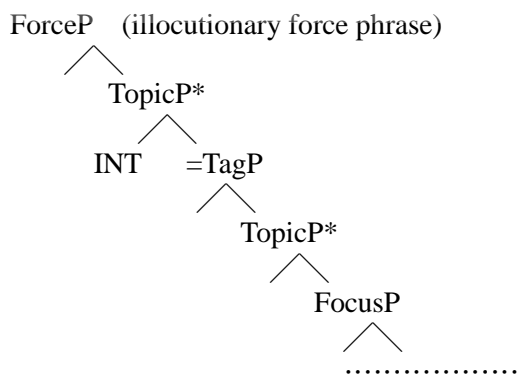
ForceP   (illocutionary force phrase)
　　　　∧
　　　TopicP*
　　　　∧
　　INT   =TagP
　　　　　∧
　　　　TopicP*
　　　　　∧
　　　　FocusP
　　　　　∧
　　　　……………

Figure 1. The position of Chinese TagP inside the Split CP (adapted from Chiu 2011:177)

(27) a. 那場火，幸虧消防隊來的早，是嗎？ (TopicP > TagP)
　　　　na-chang huo, xingkui xiaofangdui lai-de zao
　　　　that-CL fire, fortunately firemen come-DE early
　　　　'As for that fire, fortunately the firemen came early, didn't they'

　　b. 錢花光了，是嗎？　　(TagP > TopicP)
　　　　qian hua-guan-le, shi-ma?
　　　　money spend-complete-Asp_1., be-part.
　　　　'The money has all been spent, hasn't it?'

　　c. {是/只有}小華偷吃蛋糕，是嗎？ (TagP > FocusP)
　　　　{shi / zhiyou} Xiaohua tou-chi dangao, shi-ma?
　　　　Be / only　　Xiaohua steal-eat cake　be-part.
　　　　'{It is xiaohua who / Only Xiaohua} stole and ate the cake, is it not so?'

　　We propose the internal syntactic structure of Chinese tags to resemble the tree diagram in Fig 2. The TagP is headed with a discourse verb or an epistemic modal taking a discourse CP or event IP as its host in the specifier position and a co-referenced null CP/IP (the *pro*) in its complement position. The tag verb has a predication relation with its

complement in discourse and also with its host sentential subject in the [TagP, Spec] from the coindexation of the *pro* and the host sentence.
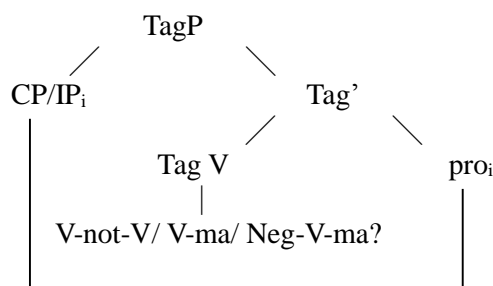
```
                          TagP
                    ╱            ╲
            CP/IP_i              Tag'
                          ╱            ╲
                     Tag V              pro_i
                       │
              V-not-V/ V-ma/ Neg-V-ma?
```

Fig. 2. Syntactic Structure of Chinese Tags

As Modern Chinese has a head initial parameter in VP structure, we propose the TagP to have the following structure and derivation. The tag verb is a one-place predicate, taking a CP or IP as its internal complement. Discourse verbs such as *shi, hao, guai, you,* etc. take a discourse CP complement as in (28a-d), and epistemic modals such as *yingkai, keneng,* etc. take a clausal IP complement as in (28e-f). The Tag' (the tag verb and its complement) subsequently merges with a host CP/IP identical with the complement CP/IP to form a TagP. As the complement CP/IP is co-referential with the specifier CP/IP, the complement CP/IP is thus deleted via PF deletion and becomes a null *pro* form at the PF (i.e. the Phonetic Form, which is a phonetic realization after the Syntactic Component) because it contains the same information with the specifier CP/IP. The reduced TagP thus has only the head tag verb left, which hence tags to the preceding host CP/IP.

(28)   a. 是不是[_CP 語言學很難學]?
            shi-bu-shi [_CP yuyan-xue hen-nan xue]?
            be-not-be   language-study very-hard study
            'It is true that linguistics is hard to study?'

b. 好不好[CP 把地掃乾淨]?
　hao-bu-hao [CP　ba di shao ganjing.]?
　good-not-good　BA floor sweep clean
　'Is it OK that you sweep the floor clean?'

c. 怪不怪[CP 飛機就這樣不見了]?
　guai-bu-guai [CP feiji jiu zheyang bu-jian-le]?
　strange-not-strange airplane just this-way not-see-Asp_1.
　'Isn't it strange that the airplane just disappeared like that?'

d. 有沒有[CP 小張跟小美借了五萬元去買車]?
　you-mei-you [CP Xiaozhang gen Xiaomei jie-le wu-wan yan
　qu mai che]?
　exist-not-exist Xiaozhang from Xiaomei borrow-Asp_1 five-
　ten thousand dollar go buy car
　'Isn't there such thing that Xiaozhang borrowed 50000
　dollars from Xiaomei to buy a car?'

e. 應該不應該[IP 小杰偷錢]?
　yinggai-bu-yinggai [IP Xiaojie tou-qian]?
　should-not-should　　Xiaojie steal-money
　'Is it a right thing that Xiaojie stole money?'

f. 可能不可能[IP 小珍嫁給了小杰]?
　keneng-bu-keneng [IP Xiaozhen jia-gei-le Xiaojie]?
　possible-not-possible Xiaozhen marry-to-Asp. Xiaojie
　'Is it possible that Xiaozhen married Xiaojie?'

The agreement between the tag verb and its complement CP/IP is a discourse relation; the spec-head agreement between the tag verb and the specifier CP/IP is similarly a discourse one, displaying various discourse functions, such as agreeing with or judging the truth of the sentential subject, consenting to or evaluating the request in the sentential subject, confirming the existence of an entity or proposition in the sentential subject, etc. In contrast to the English tag, which utilizes the choice question of IP-Neg IP, i.e. a combination of positive and negative

propositions, to form a question, a Chinese tag is composed of a discourse verb in an interrogative form tagged on a discourse subject CP, and the choice of the tag verb depends on both the speaker's intention of the discourse functions and the agreement with the subject CP. If the subject CP is a request, the tag verb can ask for consent or permission such as *hao* or *keyi* from the speaker; if the subject CP is a declarative, the tag verb can seek for confirmation or inquiring about the judgment of the truth such as *shi* or *dui* or can refute the addressee's presupposition or state of knowledge such as *hao* or *xing*. Chinese tags are based on discourse rather than structure.
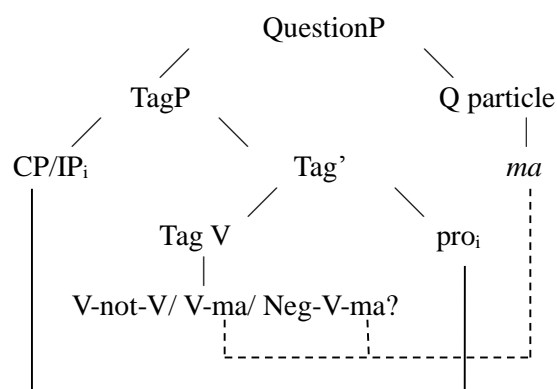
Fig. 3. Structure of Chinese Tags with particle *ma*

As TagP has the nature of a question, the tag verb is in an interrogative form. Following Huang (1987, 1991), we propose that the interrogative V-not-V is formed under the tag V through a phonetic rule. The particle interrogative form arises from another higher projection of interrogation with the head *ma* branching on the right side, similar to a regular yes-no question, as shown in Fig. 3.

The question form thus turns discourse function of TagP into meanings of asking for agreement or confirmation of the host sentence, requesting consent or evaluation, inquiring about the existence of a proposed entity or state, refuting the addressee's statement or presupposition, etc. Chinese

tags can perform all discourse functions listed in Table 1.

    A Chinese tag of another type occurs when the tag verb is an epistemic modal, showing the speaker's conjecture of probability, moral judgment or permission of the sentential subject. As the epistemic modal is a one-place predicate, it can act as a tag verb and form a tag question as do discourse verbs. The procedure resembles the diagram in Fig. 2. In contrast, as it is a raising verb, the epistemic modal can choose to have a raising construction and form an A-not-A or yes-no question by itself, as shown in (29a-b). Discourse tag verbs lack this alternative.

(29)   a. 張老闆 應該不應該 [IP ＿＿＿ 要熱心做公益]？

        Zhang-laoban yinggai-bu-yinggai [IP __ yao rexin zuo gongyi]?
        Zhang-boss should-not-should   need enthusiastic do public-welfare
        'Should President Zhang be enthusiastic about public welfare or should he not?'

     b. 張老闆可能 [IP ＿＿ 會誠實繳稅] 嗎？

        Zhang-laoban keneng [IP ＿＿＿＿ hui chengshi jiaoshui] ma?
        Zhang-boss   possible   will honestly pay-tax part.
        'Is it possible that President Zhang will honestly pay taxes?'

    As the meaning of epistemic modal is limited to conjecture or moral judgment, it typically predicates on declaratives of events and states, as shown in (30a-b), and seldom on requests, commands, or invitations, etc., as shown in (30c-d). After formation of the tag question, the epistemic modal is in an interrogative form, tagging on the host sentence, as illustrated in (31a-b). Modal tags on imperative hosts are not possible, either, as illustrated in (31c-d).

(30)   a. 可能[IP 阿 Q 娶了一位俄國小姐]
        keneng [IP A-Q qu-le yi-wei E-guo xiaojie]
        possible   A-Q marry-Asp$_1$. one-CL Russia miss
        'It is possible that A-Q married a Russian lady.'

        b. 應該[IP 小杰把所有的錢都捐出來]
         yinggai [IPXiaojie ba suoyou-de qian dou juan chulai]
         should   Xiaojie BA all-DE money all donate out
         'Xiaojie should donate all the money that he has.'

        c. *可能[IP 把地掃乾淨!]
         *keneng [IP   ba di shao ganjing!]
         possible   BA floor sweep clean
         '*It is possible [sweep the floor clean!].'

        d. *應該[IP 請到我家坐坐]
         *yinggai [IP   qing dao wo-jia zuo-zuo]
         should   please arrive I-home sit-sit
         '*It is obligated that [please come to my home and sit!].'

(31)   a. 阿 Q 娶了一位俄國小姐，可不可能？
        A-Q qu-le yi-wei E-guo xiaojie, ke-bu-keneng?
        A-Q marry-Asp. one-CL Russia miss, possible-not-possible
        'Is or isn't it possible that A-Q married a Russian lady?'

        b. 小杰把所有的錢都捐出來，應該不應該？
         Xiaojie ba suoyou-de qian dou juan chulai, yinggai-bu-
         yinggai?
         Xiaojie BA all-DE money all donate out, should-not-should
         'Should or shouldn't it be that Xiaojie donates all the money
         he has?'

c. *把地掃乾淨！可不可能？
 *ba di shao ganjing! ke-bu-keneng?
 BA floor sweep clean possible-not-possible
 *Is it possible that sweep the floor clean?

d. *請到我家坐坐，應該不應該？
 * qing dao wo-jia zuo-zuo, yinggai-bu-yinggai?
 please arrive I-house sit-sit should-not-should
 *Should it be that please come to my house and pay a visit?

In this approach, we achieve a unified analysis of all Chinese tags, in contrast to two models proposed by Chiu (2011). The advantage is that we can illustrate that epistemic modals are similar to, and also different from, discourse verbs in tag questions. In similarity, they take declarative hosts to form tags and the derivation is identical; all epistemic modals are uniform and work well in the tag questions. The difference is that, unlike discourse verbs that function only within a discourse, epistemic modals can function in a sentence as well as in a discourse, and thus have more freedom in other syntactic variations such as in raising constructions or in tag questions, as shown in (32).

(32)   a. 小杰$_i$應該不應該 [t_i把所有的錢都捐出來]?   (raising)
 Xiaojie$_i$ yinggai-bu-yinggai   [t_i ba suoyou-de qian tou juan-chu lai]?
 xiaojie should–not-should   BA all-DE$_1$ money all donate-out come
 'Should Xiaojie donate all the money he has or should he not?'

 a'. [小杰把所有的錢都捐出來]$_i$，應該不應該 *pro*$_i$?   (tag Q)
 [Xiaojie ba suoyou-de qian dou juan chulai] $_i$, yinggai-bu-yinggai *pro*$_i$?
 Xiaojie BA all-DE$_1$ money all donate out, should-not-should
 'Should or shouldn't it be that Xiaojie donates all the money he has?'

b. 阿 Q i 可能不可能[ti 娶了一位俄國小姐]?　　　　　(raising)
　　A-Q i keneng-bu-keneng [ti qu-le yi-wei E-guo xiaojie]?
　　A-Q possible-not-possible marry-Asp1. one-CL Russia miss
　　'Is it possible that A-Q married a Russian lady?'

b'. [阿 Q 娶了一位俄國小姐] i，可(能)不可能 *pro*i?　　　(tag Q)
　　[A-Q qu-le yi-wei E-guo xiaojie] i, ke(neng)-bu-keneng *pro*i?
　　A-Q marry-Asp1. one-CL Russia miss, possible-not-possible
　　'A-Q married a Russian lady; is it possible?'

3.2　Syntactic Structure of English Tags

　　English tags are formed on a syntactic concept, as shown in Fig 4. The TagP basically derives from an IP base and is composed of an interrogative choice of a positive and a negative IP, with no required order. The host IP is in the Spec,TagP position; the head tag verb takes the reversed IP as its complement. When the host IP is positive, the complement IP is hence negative, and vice versa. In the reversed IP, the subject has a pronominal form because the sentence is merely a reduplication of the host IP in an opposite proposition. The subject NP has to be present based on EPP (extended projection principle) but is reduced to pronominal.
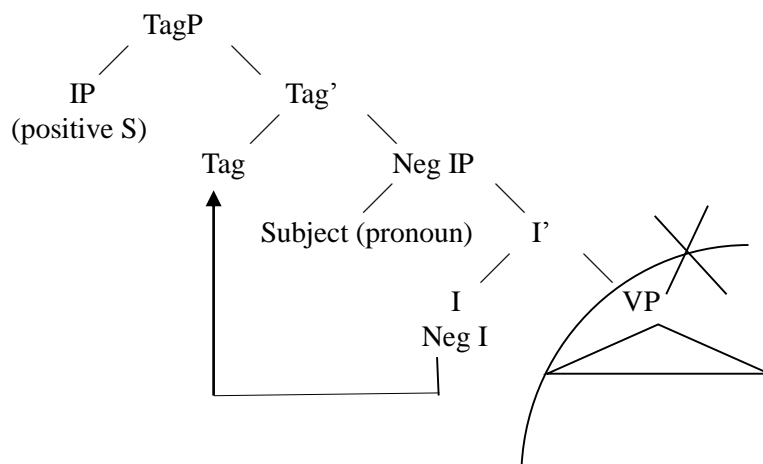
Fig. 4. Syntactic Analysis of English Tags

The tag question is formed on moving the Infl (in either positive or negative form) to the Tag head to trigger an interrogative force, similar to I-to-C movement in the formation of a yes-no question. After the movement, the VP complement of I under the reversed IP becomes deleted as head I is moved away; only the pronominal subject is left in the reversed IP. Hence we may say the English tag derives basically from a choice question (A-not-A) with an IP base; that is, a host sentence IP followed by an abbreviated (with null VP) polarity counterpart (reversed in proposition), in a subject-aux inversion order.

3.3　　Cross-Linguistic Comparison of Chinese and English Tags

An English tag differs from a Chinese tag in several ways. First, the interrogation function of a tag is formed via the positive-negative IP inside the TagP in English but formed by the interrogative form (either A-not-A or with a question particle *ma*) of the tag verb in Chinese. Secondly, an English tag is generally derived from a declarative IP and hence basically inquires the truth value of the statement of the IP and only a few tags are used on requests or commands, according to a corpus study of Tottie and Hoffmann, (2006:306-307) [4] ; a Chinese tag is based on a CP and distinguishes the illocutionary force of a CP such as declaratives, requests, refutations, challenges, etc. so as to have varied tags. Thirdly, the interrogative force of an English tag occurs on moving I to a higher function head (C in a yes-no question and Tag in a tag question); the subject and the finite verb are hence in a reverse order, and the subject pronoun is necessary. The interrogative force of a Chinese tag is derived from the V-not-V form or the sentence final particle *ma* similar to the utterance-final particles in Taiwanese (Li, 1999). As the tag verb is already in an interrogative form predicating on the preceding CP host, no subject pronoun is required to create an interrogation with subject-aux inversion. Lastly, a strong presupposition in an English tag is formed with a phonetic

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[4] Only a few English tags inquire about the addressee's opinion of a request or invitation, as shown in (i)-(ii); these tags transcend our discussion here.

    i.   Let's go, shall we?
    ii.   Come to the party on time, OK/ will you?

cue of falling intonation on the tag phrase (Quirk et al. 1985), whereas a strong presupposition in a Chinese tag is formed with a negated tag verb, utilizing the conversational VERUM operator (Romero and Han 2004).

As illustrated in the English tags in (33a), the speaker indicates his strong and definite presupposition of the host IP, *John is an engineer,* via the falling intonation of the tag phrase, *isn't he*. In such a situation, the tag is merely a gesture of politeness or seeks confirmation from the addressee. With the hint, the response from the addressee is normally in agreement with the presupposition, and a disagreeing response would be strange or face-threatening. The tag with a rising intonation lacks this presupposition, as contrasted in (33b). As rising intonation generally signifies interrogation, this tag is a true inquiry from the speaker; the positive or negative response from the addressee is consequently equally appropriate and no oddity occurs when the reply differs from the host sentence.

(33)   a. A: John is an engineer, <u>isn't he</u>? (with a falling intonation)
              B: Yes, he is.
                 ??No, he isn't.

         b. A: John is an engineer, <u>isn't he</u>? (with a rising intonation)
              B: Yes, he is.
                 No, he isn't.

Chinese tags demonstrate presupposition in a different way, utilizing the conversational VERUM operator (a preposed negator in a yes-no question), as shown in (34a). After the tag verb there is the *pro* CP. So the tag inquiry is 不是[CP 你吃過午餐了]嗎? (Isn't it that you have had your lunch?). Due to the negative tag verb, the epistemic conversational operator, VERUM, hence hints a strong presupposition of the CP [你吃過午餐了] from the speaker. If the response from the addressee is a negative one in disagreement, the answer would be considered strange; on the contrary, a positive reply would be appropriate as it is in agreement with the presupposition. A positive tag verb, due to no VERUM, hence causes no strong presupposition, as shown in (34b). Either a positive or a negative reply is thus equally acceptable.

(34) a. A: 你吃過午餐了，<u>不是(*pro*)</u>嗎?
    A: ni chi-guo wucan le, bu-shi (*pro*) ma?
      you eat-Asp_1. lunch Asp_1., not-be part.
    A: You have eaten your lunch, haven't you? (with falling intonation)
    B: 是的，我吃過了。 /   B: ??不，我還沒吃。
    B: shi-de, wo chi-guo le.   B: ?? bu, wo hai-mei chi.
      be-DE, I eat-Asp_1. Asp_2.   no, I yet-not eat
    B: Yes, I have.   B: ??No, I haven't.

  b. A: 你吃過午餐了，<u>是(*pro*)</u>嗎?
    A: ni chi-guo wucan le, shi (*pro*) ma?
      you eat-Asp_1. lunch Asp_2., not-be part.
    A: You have eaten your lunch, haven't you? (with rising intonation)
    B: 是的，我吃過了。 / B: 不，我還沒吃。
    B: shi-de, wo chi-guo le.   bu, wo hai-mei chi.
      be-DE, I eat-Asp_1. Asp_2.   no, I yet-not eat
    B: Yes, I have.   B: No, I haven't.

4 CROSS-LINGUISTIC COMPARISON AND TEACHING IMPLICATIONS

According to Mithun (2012), the functions and forms of tag questions are miscellaneous across languages. This cross-linguistic study provides us a chance to improve an understanding of the underlying syntactic constructions and semantic or pragmatic functions of tag questions between English and Chinese, and hopefully can shed light on foreign language teaching and learning.

4.1 Structural Contrasts of Tags between Chinese and English

The contrastive comparison reveals that English tags have rigid syntactic rules and are syntax-oriented, whereas Chinese tags adopt tag verbs varying with discourse purposes and are discourse-oriented. Several

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distinctions of the tag structures between Chinese and English are observed. First, the host sentence and the tag form are distinct between the two languages. Chinese host sentences are a CP; utterances with varied illocutionary forces, such as declaratives, exclamations, requests, imperatives, etc. can hence appear and their distribution is relatively even. The choice of tag verbs varies with the host CP and the speaker's discourse intention. However, the canonical English tags are declarative tags, i.e. tags comprising a declarative IP and an abbreviated inversed IP tag. Only a small portion of tags are imperative tags, i.e. tags constituting an imperative host of order or request with '*shall we*' or '*will you*' tags. Although the structure of the host seems easy, the tag formation of English is complicated because of the strict regulations in the choice of the auxiliary verb and the pronominal subject, in the reversed proposition and in the subject-aux inversion order. The tag formation of imperative tags is no easier than that of declarative tags as the choice of auxiliary verb and pronominal subject is not hinted from the syntax of the host IP and is based on the pragmatics and modality of the speaker, which are typically too abstract for learners of a foreign language.

Secondly, the tag verbs of the two languages have a distinct nature and varied interrogative forms. Instead of regular verbs, Chinese tag verbs are discourse verbs and their choice depends on the nature of the host CP, such as an inquiry with a consent or permission discourse verb of *hao* or *keyi*. The choice of tag verb also decides the speaker's discourse functions of the tag question, such as confirmation or refutation; choosing the right tag verb might confuse foreign learners, especially in the rhetoric tags. The verb in the tag question has one of the three typical Chinese question forms, i.e., V-not-V, V-particle, or Neg-V-particle. This interrogative form should not be a problem for foreign learners if they have learned the question forms of Chinese for some time. English tag verbs are, in contrast, derived from, and hence identical with, the finite auxiliaries in the host sentence. Regular auxiliaries are not difficult to learn except for the dummy auxiliary *do* as it is not present in the host sentence. The reversed polarity is not too difficult for Chinese EFL learners, but the subject-aux inversion requires some duration to acquire since Chinese does not use inversion for interrogation.

Thirdly, English tags require a presence of a pronoun subject based on

the subject NP of the host IP, whereas Chinese tags don't. The pronominal subject might cause some problem in the initial stage of language learning as there must be a syntactic feature agreement between the pronoun subject in the tag and the NP subject in the host sentence; Chinese EFL learners are not very sensitive to the Φ feature agreement, i.e. person, number, gender agreement, in NP, such as in 'Mary' with 'she'.

Lastly, the general structural layout differs greatly between the two languages. Chinese tags are comprised of a discourse CP and a tagged discourse verb in an inquiry form, requesting a response from the addressee on the illocutionary force of the discourse CP. This condition resembles a monologue from the speaker, stating something and then inquiring of the addressee what s/he just said. Its structure is similar to the lexical word tag questions, like *right* or *OK*. In contrast, English tags comprise basically a positive and a negative proposition, i.e., A-not-A, of the host sentence, with no required order, to form questions. As it is derived from a syntactic construction, strict syntactic regularity is essential and the semantics are limited to declarative tags only. Also, as the interrogative form requires the subject-aux inversion, the subject must be present.

4.2 Functional Contrasts of Tags between Chinese and English

The function of canonical tags differs slightly between Chinese and English. English tags have two major functions--the epistemic modal function to indicate reduced certainty or commitment to the truth of the proposition on the part of the speaker, and the interactive function to solicit a response or participation of the hearer. The former is realized in the declarative tags and the latter in imperative tags. Other possible functions such as refutation, challenging, emphasis, seeking verification, expressing mirativity, etc. are uncanonical and irregular tags realized with either prosodic verification or irregular polarity forms (Kimps and Davidse 2008). Hence, the regular English tags are limited in discourse functions.

Chinese tags vary. Although Chinese also utilizes the truth-seeking verbs of *dui* and *shi* to form a tag to solicit the addressee's confirmation or to judge the truth value of the speaker's statement, various tag verbs have their semantic properties and can color the discourse functions of the

tag questions. In addition, the three interrogative forms of the tag verb--V-not-V, V-part, and Neg-V-part--can add to varied degree to the speaker's presupposition of the host proposition and thus diversify the functions or intensity of the tag questions.

Chinese tags are more discourse-oriented and vary freely in functions. The choice among tag verbs decides varied discourse intentions of the tag question. In addition to requesting agreement or confirmation, Chinese tags might request the addressee's evaluation of or consent to a proposal, as shown in (35a), refute the addressee's statement or presupposition, as in (35b), inquire about the conjecture of the event in the host sentence, as in (35c), solicit a moral judgment of the event in the host sentence, as in (35d), request an acknowledgement of the existence of a proposed event, as in (35e), ask for an addressee's confirmation or agreement of a admirable event, as in (35f), or challenge the intent of the addressee, as in (35g). These are just some examples among possible Chinese tags.

(35) a. 吃完飯去看電影，好不好?
         chi-wan fan qu-kan dianying, hao-bu-hao?
         eat-finish rice go-see movie   good-not-good
         'Let's go see a movie after the meal, OK?'

      b. 張三會拿他媽媽的錢，好不好?
         Zhangsan hui na ta mama-de qian, hao-bu-hao?
         Zhangsan will take he mother-DE$_1$ money, good-not-good
         'Zhangsan will take his mother's money. It's true, OK?'

      c. 張三會拿他媽媽的錢，可能不可能?
         Zhangsan hui na ta mama-de qian, keneng-bu-keneng?
         Zhangsan will take he mother-DE$_1$ money, possible-not-
         possible
         'Zhangsan will take his mother's money, is it possible?'

      d. 張三偷拿他媽媽的錢，應不應該?
         Zhangsan tou na ta mama-de qian, yinggai-bu-yinggai?
         Zhangsan steal take he mother-DE money, should-not-should
         'Zhangsan stole his mother's money. Should he or shouldn't he?'

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 e. 張三偷拿他媽媽的錢，有沒有？
  Zhangsan tou na ta mama-de qian, you-mei-you?
  Zhangsan steal take he mother-DE₁ money, exist-not-exist
  'Zhangsan stole his mother's money. Is or isn't there such a
   thing?'

 f. 他 100 公尺跑 9 秒 9，讚不讚？
  ta yi-bai kongchi pao jiu-miao-jiu, zan-bu-zan?
  he one-hundred meter run nine-second-nine, great-not-great
  'He finished the 100-meter dash in 9.9 seconds. Isn't it
  great?'

 g. 想白吃白喝，是不是？
  xiang bai-chi-bai-he, shi-bu-shi?
  want free-eat-free-drink be-not-be
  'You want to eat and drink for free. Isn't it so?'

   Hence, in contrast to English tags, which are syntactically based but limited in discourse functions, Chinese tags are more functionally based but syntactically simple. Tag verbs and forms depend on the intention of the speaker in the discourse. Given the same host sentence, the speaker can refute using the *hao-bu-hao* tag as in (35b), or conjecture using the *keneng-bu-keneng* tag as in (35c). Similarly, the speaker can request a confirmation in moral judgment as in (35d) or s/he might request acknowledgement of the existence of an event with the same host sentence as in (35e). All these tag verbs are commonly seen in daily conversation. This condition shows that Chinese tag verbs vary freely with discourse functions, thus increasing the freedom of the speaker to suit his discourse purposes.

4.3 Pedagogical Implications

4.3.1 For Chinese EFL Learners

Since most English tags are declarative tags, which are syntax oriented with rather strict formations, the main task in learning English tags for Chinese EFL learners is to become accustomed to the syntactic regularity, as Chinese tags lack such syntactic requirements. With time, these types of English tags, due to their regularity, can eventually be acquired by advanced EFL learners.

In contrast, the imperative tags in English, though fewer, are more challenging for EFL learners. The structure of the imperative tags is based not on the syntax of the host sentence but rely more on the semantic implications. Hence, in *Let's* imperatives, the host invitation involves both the speaker and the hearer; the subject pronoun in the tag is *we*; but it is *you* in *Let us* imperatives because it is a request to the hearer only. Moreover, the auxiliary verb in the tag also varies from *shall* to *will* from *Let's* to *Let us* imperatives. These variations, based on the semantic implications, would be a difficult area and require particular instructions in class. For English teachers, some semantic guidance instead of pure syntactic directions here would be an effective method. For instance, *let's* indicates inclusive us; the tag pronoun is naturally "we" and the corresponding modal is "shall." Similarly, *let us* semantically implies "you will let us" and the tag naturally becomes "won't you?".

The most difficult parts in English tags are those that have extra discourse modifications from the speaker such as expressing mirativity, seeking verification, hedging, refuting, giving offers, displaying challenges, etc. All these discourse functions can be displayed by means of prosody or irregular polarity variations (Kimps and Davidse 2008). As all these moods are very difficult to understand fully, and their tag forms are not quite regular, and as they are seldom taught in second/foreign language classes, few Chinese EFL learners understand or acquire these English tags.

However, the lexical item tags in English, such as *right* or *is it* for declarative tags and *OK* for imperative tags, though occurring mostly in colloquial conversations, are easy for EFL learners. The ease arises in

several ways. First, the concept is semantically universal, with *right* inquiring about the truth or confirmation of the host declaratives and *OK* inquiring about the agreement or permission of the host imperatives. Secondly, the tag forms are only two kinds, simple and uncomplicated. Thirdly, they are similar to Chinese tags notionally, basing the tag question with semantic or discourse functions, instead of the syntactic structures of the host clause. English tags of this type are acquired most quickly and best by Chinese EFL learners if informality is ignored. Here English teachers should take advantage of the conceptual similarities between the languages and guide students to simply follow the semantics of their native language to construct the tags in English.

4.3.2 For English CFL Learners

As Chinese tags are conceptually similar to single lexical item tags in English, they are not too difficult for English CFL learners, but the choice of tag verbs, depending on the discourse functions, might be confusing in acquisition at an early stage. The *you-mei-you* tag is more difficult than other tags as using tag questions to request acknowledgement of the existence of a proposed entity in the addressee's knowledge state does not exist in English.

Rhetoric tags, because of their additional discourse modification from the speaker, are more difficult to learn for CFL learners, but, as there are English tags with similar discourse functions, with the help of second/foreign language classroom instruction, English CFL learners should be able to successfully acquire these tags eventually.

The variations in matching the speaker's presupposition with the tag form (V-particle or Neg-V-particle) or with the host sentence requires some duration to learn, as illustrated in (36). But the difficulty will soon vanish since VERUM is a universal pragmatic operator.[5] Other things

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[5] The "VERUM operator is universal and is observed in many languages in the world, such as Greek, Spanish, Bulgarian, German, Korean, etc. However it can be realized in different linguistic mechanisms. In Chinese tags it is displayed via the Neg-V-particle tag form. In English tags, since the positive or negative structure of Aux is fixed (i.e. a positive host sentence always takes a negative tag Aux, and a negative host sentence, a positive tag Aux), the VERUM operator must be realized through another mechanism, i.e. via a

being equal, from the contrasts discussed above and the analyses, Chinese tags should be easier for English CFL learners to acquire than English tags for Chinese EFL learners.

(36) 楊過不是壞人，{好不好 /好嗎 / *不好嗎}？
    Yangguo bu-shi huairen, {hao-bu-hao / hao-ma / bu-hao-ma}?
    Yangguo not-be bad-person good-not-good/ good-part./ not-good-part.
    'Yangguo is not a bad person, OK?'

Pedagogical tips for Chinese teachers would be to start from the two canonical tags and then gradually get into complex ones. Along the way, students should become familiar with the three tag forms and tag verbs. Students should be led to feel the speaker's presupposition in the Neg-V-particle tag form before being introduced to the rhetoric tags.

5   CONCLUSION

This study analyzes Chinese tag questions, using English tag questions as a contrastive model, to show how the discourse functions of tags can differ syntactically cross-linguistically. Unlike English tags that are basically structure-based, Chinese tags are based more on function; the choice of tag verbs varies with the speaker's discourse intentions--asking for an agreement or consent of an action or a statement, making a confirmation or making a hedge, refuting, or challenging the listener, etc. The two canonical Chinese tags are declarative tags, using tag verbs *dui, shi,* etc. to question the truth value of the host proposition, and imperative tags, using tag verbs *hao, xing,* etc. to seek agreement or consent about the order or invitation in the host sentence. There are also two types of rhetoric tags in Chinese, in which the same tag verbs are utilized in a reverse order, with *hao, xing,* etc. to refute the addressee's state of knowledge and with *dui, shi,* etc. to challenge the addressee's undone intention. Additionally, epistemic modals and some rare discourse verbs such as *you* [有], *sheng*

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phonological stress of falling intonation in the tag question.

[神], *zan* [讚], etc.*,* can act as tag verbs for various discourse purposes.

Chinese tags comprise a tag verb predicating on a null discourse *pro*, which is identical with the host sentence; unlike English tags, no subject pronoun is required to form the subject-aux inversion. To have interrogative force, the tag verbs have the question form, namely V-not-V, V-particle and Neg-V-particle, and forms display a varied forceful degree of discourse presupposition from the speaker. V-not-V is the most neutral but the Neg-V-particle form shows the strongest speaker's presupposition and typically lacks harmony with the rhetoric tags due to the pragmatic conflict of presupposition.

Both Chinese and English tags have all the discourse functions of tag questions, but they have manifestly varied structures and in varied proportions. The acquisition question for language learners depends on the complication and variety of tag forms and the proportion that each tag form occupies in the particular language. Most English tags are declarative tags, which require strict and complicated, but regular, syntactic formation. A few English tags are imperative tags, the formation of which depends on the semantic implication, instead of the syntactic form. The other tags show more varied discourse functions with either prosodic manifestations or irregular syntactic forms such as constant polarity. The degree of acquisition difficulty increases accordingly in the English tags of the three types mentioned above. To assist EFL learners, appropriate classroom instruction and effective input are necessary to accelerate and to upgrade acquisition efficiency (Doughty 2003). Chinese tags are semantically and syntactically easier than English tags. Semantically, Chinese tags resemble the single-lexical-item English tags such as 'right?', 'OK?' and 'isn't it', as shown in (26), and are thus not difficult to comprehend. The meaning of 'right' and 'okay' resemble Chinese tag verbs, predicating on the host sentence and 'it' in 'isn't it' tag is similar to the discourse *pro* in Chinese tags. Syntactically, the forms are the same as the A-not-A and yes-no question forms in Chinese. Chinese tags would consequently be easier for English CFL learners to acquire than English tags for Chinese EFL learners, although the choice of tag verb to match with the discourse functions might take CFL learners some duration to acquire.

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Appendix:

Abbreviation List of Grammatical Terms

Asp_1.	Aspect marker
Asp_2.	Aspect marker at the end of a sentence
part.	Sentence final particle
BA	BA word in BA-constructions
DE_1	Possessive de
DE_2	Sentence Mood Marker at the end of a sentence
CL	Classifier for nouns

以中-英跨語言比較方式解析中文之附加問句

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本研究分析中文之附加問句，並與英語附加問句做比對。英語附加問句以句法為基底，中文之附加問句則以言談為基底，而且問句動詞的選擇也主要是由說話者的言談動向為依歸，例如，要求對母句命題的認同、尋求對方同意邀請、或是提出對母句的反駁等。中文之附加問句是由問句動詞組成問話型態，也就是 V-不-V，V-嗎，不-V-嗎的型式，再加上一個與前面母句完全相同的空號型式 CP 組成。問句動詞的三種型式展現說話者心理存有定見的程度。問句動詞則包含常見的對陳述句反問的*對*、*是*、*有*，對命令句反問的*好*、*行*、*可以*等，有些情態動詞如應該、可能，以及一些言談評論動詞例如*怪*、*讚*、*酷*、*神*等，也會偶而做附加問句動詞。由此跨語言的比較可得知，對於學習者，英語之附加問句應更難於中文之附加問句，因為英語的典型附加問句要求複雜之句法規則，而非典型附加問句又多了不規律部分。

關健字: 中文附加問句、英語附加問句、對比分析