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Autor: Heirman, Ann / Dessein, Bart

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*NGO 吾 AND *NGÂ 我

Ann Heirman, Fund for Scientific Research, Flanders
Bart Dessein, Ghent National University

Part 1: Flexion and a Phonetic-syntactic Interpretation

1. Flexion

1.1 The first person pronoun

1.1.1 *Lun-yü*

Analyzing the use of the first person pronouns *ngo (吾) and *ngâ (我) in the *Analects* of Confucius (*Lun-yü* 論語), composed during the two to three generations after the death of the master in 479 BC¹, Bernhard Karlgren in “Le proto-chinois, langue flexionnelle”, *Journal Asiatique*, XV, 1920, pp.205-232, attained to the following result:

<i>1st person</i>	<i>Nominative</i>	<i>Genitive</i>	<i>‘Cas régime’²</i>
*ngo ³	95	15	3
*ngâ ⁴	16	4	26

*ngo 吾

nominative: 95 x.

genitive: 15 x.

‘cas régime’: 3 x in pre-verbal position, explained by B. Karlgren as assimilations to the preceding subject (nominative) *ngo.

- 1 Idema, W. and Haft, L., *Chinese Letterkunde*, 1985, p.161.
- 2 In Karlgren’s analysis, ‘cas régime’ applies to objects depending upon a verb or upon a preposition. Many Chinese prepositions were originally verbs, and have kept many features of a verb. They are considered as verbs followed by a ‘cas régime’.
- 3 Karlgren, B., *Grammata Serica Recensa*, 1957, p.35, No.58f.
- 4 *ibid.*, 1957, p.20, No.2a.

*ngâ 我

nominative: 16 x: three of these cases are explained by B. Karlgren as an assimilation to the object *ngâ figuring in the same sentence; 12 or maybe 13 cases are, according to B. Karlgren, emphatic.

genitive: 4 x, of which two with the auxiliary genitive 之 and two immediately after a transitive verb or a preposition (= normal place of the 'cas régime')

'cas régime': 26 x, of which 18 after a verb and 8 after a preposition

Karlgren thus concluded that in the *Analects* *ngo was the pronoun for the nominative and the genitive, and *ngâ the pronoun for the 'cas régime'.⁵

1.1.2 Meng-tzu

A similar analysis of the later *Mencius* (*Meng-tzu* 孟子), most likely was compiled shortly after the death of Meng-tzu in 289 BC⁶, resulted in the following scheme:

<i>1st person</i>	<i>Nominative</i>	<i>Genitive</i>	<i>'Cas régime'</i>
*ngo	76	47	–
*ngâ	68	14	53

Karlgren concluded that in the *Mencius* *ngâ is more and more taking over the position of *ngo⁷:

5 Karlgren, B., "Le proto-chinois, langue flexionnelle", *Journal Asiatique*, XV, 1920, p.211.

6 Idema, W. and Haft, L., 1985, p.161.

7 Karlgren, B., 1920, pp.212-213. Karlgren saw parallels with the Indo-European languages, cf. the French subject 'moi' being derived from the 'cas régime' 'me'. See also Dobson, W., *Late Han Chinese – A Study of the Archaic-Han Shift*, 1964, p.44 and p.87.

1.1.3 *Tso-chuan*

An analysis of the *Tso-chuan* (左傳), dating most likely from the second half of the 4th century BC⁸, seems to support the evolution seen in the *Mencius*:

1st person	Nominative	Genitive	'Cas régime'
*ngo	369	223	4
*ngâ	231	126	257, of which 211 after a verb and 46 after a preposition

1.1.4 Conclusion

The figures of the above analysis convinced Karlgren that the pronunciation *ngo/*ngâ with an -O/-A change is a pure flexion, -O being the nominative and genitive, -A being the 'cas régime'. As in the Indo-European languages, the 'cas régime' was thought to have, later, encroached on the nominative and on the genitive.

1.2 The second person pronoun

Karlgren's investigation of the second person pronouns brought him to the following result⁹:

	2nd person	Nominative	Genitive	'Cas régime'
<i>Analects</i>	*ńjo ¹⁰ 汝 (女)	14 (13)	-	2 (4)
	*ńia ¹⁰ 爾	9 (6)	3 (7)	6 (5)

8 Idema, W. and Haft, L., 1985, p.155.

9 The corrections between brackets are by Chou Fa-kao, *A Historical Grammar of Ancient Chinese*, Part 3 (Substitution), 1959, pp.28 ff. for the *Lun-yü* and by A.C. Graham, "The Archaic Chinese Pronouns", *Asia Major (New Series)*, XV, Part 1, 1969(b), p.19 for the *Mencius*.

10 汝: Karlgren, B., *Grammata Serica Recensa*, p.43, No.94j: Archaic Chinese (the language of the early Chou) *ńjo; Ancient Chinese (the language of Ch'ang-an ca. 600 AD) ńziwo; 爾: p.103, No.359a: Archaic Chinese: *ńia; Ancient Chinese ńzię.

<i>Mencius</i>	*ńjo	3 (-)	2 (4)	- (1)
	*ńia	5 (4)	2 (3)	3

Referring to his own findings for the first person pronoun, Karlgren concluded that also the second person pronoun shows an -O/-A change, i.e. flexion.¹¹

1.3 Earlier stages of the language: *Shu Ching* and *Shih Ching*

Problems arise when we go back in history, i.e. to the *Book of Documents* (*Shu Ching* 書經) and the *Book of Songs* (*Shih Ching* 詩經). Here (i) the first person pronouns essentially are 予 and 朕,¹² and (ii) *ngo 吾 does not exist.¹³

1.3.1 *Shu Ching*

– *Yü Shu* 虞書 and *Hsia Shu* 夏書, i.e. the period before 1766 BC:

	予	朕	我	吾
nominative:	23	3	1	-
genitive:	6	13	5	-
'cas régime':	4	-	-	-

11 Karlgren, B., 1920, pp.221-223. The parallelism between the functioning of the 1st person and the 2nd person pronouns has already been refuted by A.C. Graham, *BSOAS*, 1950, pp.556-571. See also Pulleyblank, E.G., *Asia Major*, XII, Part 1, p.117.

12 Apart from these two pronouns, there further are the first person pronouns 台 (*yi* / *d̥iəg), 印 (*ang* / *ngâng) and 陽 (*yang* / *d̥iang). These pronouns are, however, only very sporadically used. See Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.53.

13 Karlgren, B., 1920, pp.224-225. In the bronze inscriptions, however, an ancestor of the pronoun *ngo is found, namely *ngjo (魚, 虞) (Graham, A.C., 1969(b), pp.21-22).

– *Shang Shu* 商書, i.e. the period 1766-1122 BC:

	予	朕	我	吾
nominative:	36	9	10	–
genitive:	5	13	33	1
'cas régime':	14	2	2	–

– *Chou Shu* 周書, i.e. the period 1122-627 BC:

	予	朕	我	吾
nominative:	93	18	78	1
genitive:	3	20	70	–
'cas régime':	17	–	23	–

Karlgren interpreted the above figures as:

- (i) There is no case-distinction in the *Shu Ching*.
- (ii) In the *Shu Ching*, *ngo does not exist (the two cases of *ngo are explained as probably due to later redaction¹⁴).
- (iii) Of the two pronouns *ngo and *ngâ, the *ngâ form is the older one.

1.3.2 *Shih Ching*

Only the part called *Kuo-feng* 國風 of the *Shih Ching* was investigated by Karlgren. The situation here is¹⁵:

	予	朕	我	吾
nominative:	17	–	54	–
genitive:	11	–	103	–
accusative:	9	–	111	–

14 Karlgren, B., 1920, p.225; Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.52. See also Idema, W. and Haft, L., 1985, p.153: of the 50 texts of the *Shu Ching*, 18 are definitely and 4 are likely to be falsifications of the early fourth century AD.

15 Karlgren, B., 1920, p.225. Also Dobson, W., in *The Language of the Book of Songs*, 1968, p.34 and p.99 analyzes the distribution of pronouns in the *Book of Songs*. He comes to different figures. The general conclusions to be drawn from these figures parallel the ones made by B. Karlgren.

This analysis, according to Karlgren, makes clear that:

- (i) There seems to be no case-distinction.
- (ii) 朕 and 吾 (*ngo) do not exist.
- (iii) 我 (*ngâ) is the most common form.

1.3.3 Conclusion

The analysis of the personal pronouns in the *Shih Ching* and in the *Shu Ching* shows that we do not have even the slightest evidence of a Proto-Chinese case system in the pronouns. Since Karlgren argued that the case system he discovered for the first and the second person pronouns in the *Analects* are remains of an older and much more developed case system¹⁶, the least one can say is that the absence of this case system in all works older than the *Analects* is remarkable. For his own defence, Karlgren states that it should, in this respect, be noted that even when comparing the *Shih Ching*, composed in the same period as the later parts of the *Shu Ching*¹⁷, and the *Chou Shu* (1122-627 BC), we see that

- (i) the *Chou Shu* has 113x 予, 38x 朕 and 171x 我 (*ngâ), and that
- (ii) in the *Shih Ching*, 我 (*ngâ) takes an almost exclusive position.¹⁸

In view of this fact and in view of the fact that in the most recent parts of the *Shu Ching*, composed little before the life-time of Confucius, 吾 (*ngo) lacks completely, while it takes a dominant nominative position in the *Analects*, Karlgren argues that this phenomenon is most likely not a problem of time, but a problem of dialects. He claims that the languages of the *Shu Ching*, the *Shih Ching* and the *Analects* are each based on a different dialect. Hereby, the dialect of Lu 魯 (*Analects*) is that dialect which has preserved the traits of an old flexional Proto-Chinese. In other dialects, these

16 Karlgren, B., 1920, p.206: "Aucune catégorie de mot n'est aussi conservatrice que les pronoms, et on sait, par exemple, comment le français, qui s'est débarrassé si largement des flexions, en offre toujours des exemples assez riches dans les pronoms".

17 According to Idema, W. and Haft, L., 1985, p.167, the *Shih Ching* was written between approx. 1000 and 600 BC and was probably finished shortly after 600 BC.

18 Karlgren, B., 1920, p.227.

traits were lost.¹⁹ Since the territory of the state of Lu, home-state of Confucius, had belonged to the Shang 商 state in the period of the *Shu Ching*²⁰ – 吾 (*ngo) failing in the *Shang-shu*, this argument needs further refinement.

Karlgren adds that each style of writing (poetry, documentary texts, philosophical texts) was based on one particular dialect, and that one continued to use these dialects for stylistic reasons. So, even when the state of Lu was a part of the Shang state, people of Lu would not have used their own dialect to write a documentary text, but a dialect appropriate to a documentary style. When they, later, were writing a different style of text, e.g. philosophical texts, these people of Lu used their own dialect.²¹ However acceptable this hypothesis may seem, it remains a puzzling question why some of these – basic – dialects show traits of a completely developed flexional system, and some not.

1.4 General Conclusion

Considering all above facts, it seems obvious that Karlgren did not have enough evidence to conclude that there has ever been a flexional system in Chinese, not even as far as the pronouns are concerned. The opposition found between the pronouns *ngo and *ngâ in the dialect of Lu (*Analects*) is very likely to be due to some other reason. We will return to this in the second part.

2. *A phonetic and syntactic interpretation: level and deflected tones*

2.1 Stress, pause and tone

George A. Kennedy, 1956, discovered a contrast between a ‘level tone’ and a ‘deflected tone’ in pronouns and particles of similar meaning, whereby he points out two principles:

19 *ibid.*, 1920, p.227.

20 See Herrmann, A., *An Historical Atlas of China*, 1966, p.3 and p.5.

21 Karlgren, B., 1920, pp.227-230.

- (1) A 'level tone' appears when a pronoun or particle is non-phrase-final and is thus inviting continuation (this is the case for 吾 *ngo).²²
- (2) A 'deflected tone' appears when a pronoun or particle, sometimes phrase-final, is marking completion (this is the case for 我 *ngâ).²³

According to George A. Kennedy²⁴, the pronouns *ngo and *ngâ were originally one single word of which the pronunciation changed under influence of a difference in stress and in position:

- (1) *ngo- is unstressed and is not followed by a pause.
- (2) *ngâ´ is stressed and is regularly followed by a pause.

2.2 Tone

Of the three elements used by George A. Kennedy to describe the pronouns *ngo- and *ngâ´, i.e. tone, stress and pause, A.C. Graham, in "The Archaic Chinese Pronouns", *Asia Major (New Series)*, XV (Part 1), 1969, refutes the latter two, i.e. stress and pause.²⁵ He considered Kennedy's theory on stress as "a purely speculative construction;"²⁶ and as for the element 'pause,' Graham proves that, very often, a deflected tone is not at all followed by a pause. Graham further states that Kennedy's attempt to eliminate the need of a syntactic distinction between *ngo and *ngâ is not tenable, as a syntactic explanation is needed to explain why in certain positions the pronoun *ngo 吾 is impossible.

However, Graham does not completely deny a possible relationship between 'level-tone' and 'incompletion' and between 'deflected tone' (always rising) and 'completion'. He suggests that the principles pointed out

22 Kennedy explains Karlgren's 吾 as nominative in this sense. See *Selected Works*, 1964, p.436.

23 This is the case for the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, the *Chuang-tzu*, the *Ch'un-ch'iu*, and the *Hsün-tzu*. See G.A. Kennedy, *Selected Works*, 1964, pp.435-436.

24 G.A. Kennedy, *Selected Works*, 1964, pp.439-440.

25 Also B. Karlgren, "Tones in Archaic Chinese", *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, 32, 1960, p.141, refuted Kennedy's theory that *ngo is unstressed and that *ngâ is stressed. In fact, also Kennedy, *Selected Works*, 1964, p.438 gives major importance to the element 'tone'.

26 Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.26.

by Kennedy are, presumably, features of phrase intonation which easily could have affected the morphology of particles and pronouns bound to fixed positions in the phrase, and could have established the inherent tone of a word. He adjusts Kennedy's theory as follows:

- (1) The relation between 'level tone' and 'incompletion' only applies to words ending in -O.
- (2) The relation between 'rising tone' and 'completion' only applies to words followed by a pause.

Hereby, the level-tone-words not ending in -O and the rising-tone-words not followed by a pause are eliminated. Graham further claims that the syntactic position of a word on the one hand and the tone on the other, are closely connected: it is precisely because of its position in a sentence that a word acquires a certain tone. Analyzing the syntactic positions – and particularly the syntactic positions of *ngo and *ngâ – in the *Analects* and in the *Mencius*, Graham primarily describes the pronouns *ngo and *ngâ as 'dependent' and 'independent' forms of the first person pronoun, i.e.:

- (1) *ngo is confined to subordinate positions (subject, possessive) – the possessive being subordinate to the noun that follows, and the subject being subordinate to the sentence-core from which it is excluded.
- (2) *ngâ is not confined to any position, and is, therefore, the only form that can occupy the object-position (except in the some cases of pre-verbal object).

In second instance, Graham distinguishes two varieties of syntactic prominence: (1) the prominent as the 'new, not the given', (2) the prominent as 'given but contrasted'. It is explained that these cases of syntactic prominence are clearly recognizable and distinguishable, with some restrictions for the second variety of prominence, i.e. in case of an external contrast: contrast not inside parallel phrases.²⁷ Graham finds evidence that, for the pronouns *ngo (吾) and *ngâ (我) as they appear in the *Mencius*:

27 Graham further refers to E.G. Pulleyblank's theory that 實 as a demonstrative resumes and emphasizes the subject, in the same way that 是 resumes and emphasizes the inverted object (Pulleyblank, E.G., "Studies in Early Chinese Grammar", Part 1, *Asia Major (New Series)*, VIII, Part 1, 1960, pp.36-67). He

- (i) In a non-contrast situation, the subject is the dependent pronoun *ngo.
- (ii) In a contrast situation, we find the independent pronoun *ngâ.

In the position of a possessive, the situation is almost exactly the opposite:

- (i) In a non-contrast situation, the pronoun is either *ngo or *ngâ.
- (ii) In a contrast situation, the pronoun is *ngo.

This latter feature is explained as due to: (1) the syntactic difference between *ngo and *ngâ, (2) the rigor of Chinese parallelism. The argument is that *ngo is always neutral, and that only when the pronoun is either contrasted (subject) or is in conjunction with contrasted words (possessive), the use of *ngâ becomes possible. We will return to this later. Finally, Graham claims that the relationship between the early Chinese pronouns was effected by an evolution from one coherent system to another. He calls the first system 'pre-classical' (represented in the oracle bone and in the bronze inscriptions, and in the *Shu Ching*), and the second system 'classical' (the system of the language of literary texts from the *Analects* downwards). The fundamental difference between the two systems is said to be a syntactic one: the former system contrasts possessive with non-possessive forms (subject and object), the later contrasts dependent (subject and adjunct) with independent forms.

Analyzing the pronouns and some demonstratives of the pre-classical and classical system, he comes to the following result (the numbers refer to the numbers in the enumeration of the pre-classical and classical pronouns by A.C. Graham, 1969[b], pp.51-54)²⁸:

adds that in cases the subject is resumed by 實, it mostly is not given but new (Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.38).

28 The addition of Chinese characters is our own. This system proposed by Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.54, is based on the predominant syntactic functions of the pronouns, but for each pre-classical pronoun, except for *k_iwăt and *g'ïəg, we can notice some irregularities, indicated by Graham himself in his enumeration of the pre-classical pronouns (pp.51-54):

*djo can occasionally be possessive in the *Shu Ching* (cf. Karlgren's findings);

Pre-classical system

	Subject and Object	Possessive	
		Earlier Series	Later Series
1st person	1. *d̥io- (余, 予)	2. *d'jəm' (朕)	11. *d̥jæg- (台)
2nd person	3. *ńio' (女, 汝)	4. *næg' (乃)	12. *ńjæg- (而)
3rd person	—	9. *kiwăt (厥)	10. *g'jæg- (其)
Demonstratives	7. *t̥jæg- (之) 8. *tsjæg (茲)		

Classical system

	Independent	Dependent
1st person	5. *ngā' (我)	6. *ngo- (吾)
2nd person	13. *ńia' (爾)	—
Demonstratives	19. *pia' (彼) 18. *ts'jār' (此)	20. *b'jwo- (夫) —

Graham points out that the remarkable symmetry of the non-possessive and later possessive series of the pre-classical system might suggest a declension. This declension can, however, not be a Proto-Chinese survival given the irregularities displayed by the earlier possessive series. He then agrees with Chou Fa-kao²⁹ in explaining that the later possessive series is a fusion

*d'jəm is exclusively possessive on both Shang and Chou inscriptions, but comes to be used also as a subject in the *Shu Ching* (cf. Karlgren's findings);

*d̥jæg is purely possessive in the inscriptions, but in the two surviving examples in the *Shu Ching*, one of them is subject;

*ńio: one case of a possessive is reported on a Shang inscription, and Chou Fa-kao acknowledges with reservations three cases in the *Shu Ching*; otherwise, according to Chou Fa-kao, *ńio is exclusively subject and object down to the *Analects* and the *Tso-chuan* (Chou Fa-kao, 1959, p.31).

*næg is exclusively possessive in the Shang and Chou inscriptions, but is occasionally also subject in the *Shu Ching*;

*ńjæg occasionally encroaches on the subject in the *Tso-chuan* and often in the *Chuang-tzu*.

29 Chou Fa-kao, 1959, p.13.

with the possessive *tjæg (之, modern *chih*). The final -O shared by the non-possessives is, accordingly, not considered to be a case ending. The limitation in distribution of the pre-classical non-possessives is explained as the result of the fact that these non-possessives are forced out of the possessive positions due to the wealth of possessive forms. Graham further wants to verify whether the forms of the pre-classical non-possessive pronouns may be explained by his principles that:

- (1) level tone plus -O implies incompleteness.
- (2) rising tone plus pause implies completion.

As the pre-classical language is, unlike the classical language, characterized by the almost absolute inexistence of final particles³⁰, Graham argues that there was a shift of weight from before to after the verb. This shift is visible in the treatment of the pronouns: "If at the earliest known phase the pronouns were rarely final, and earlier were perhaps never final at all,"³¹ then the pronouns ending in -O were pronounced only in mid-phrase [implying incompleteness]. Later, with the shift from pre-classical to classical Chinese, pronouns were needed more and more at the end of the phrase. In this evolution, Graham assumes that there first was a change from level tone to rising tone, and, subsequently, this change of tone affected the vowel, forcing the final -O on the rising tone to tend to shift to -A. This -A-form is characteristic of the independent classical pronouns, whether new (*ngâ´, *pia´) or adapted from a pre-classical word (e.g. *ńia´ from *ńjo). The reason why there could be no *dja´ from *djo, is that *dja´ would be indistinguishable from the final particle *dja´ (也 *ye*). Graham then supposes that tone and final became part of the morphology of pronouns. The -O forms subsequently became exclusively subject, the -A forms exclusively object. As possessive and subject are both subordinate, this enabled the subject form -O to encroach upon the possessive. Consequently, in the classical period, there is a final opposition between level tone -O forms in the subject, and in the possessive and rising tone -A forms in the object. The form *ngo, now, syntactically requires words which it precedes and so it is a 'dependent form,' either possessive (requiring a succeeding noun), or subject (requiring a succeeding sentence) or in-

30 See Dobson, W., 1962, pp.246-247.

31 Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.56.

verted object (requiring a succeeding verb). The old -O form had no syntactic significance but was, in practice, confined to subject and object by the abundance of possessive forms.

2.3 Conclusion

We can thus see Graham's theory as describing an evolution from pre-classical Chinese (represented in the oracle bone and bronze inscriptions, and in the *Shu Ching*) to classical Chinese (the language of literary texts from the *Analects* downwards). In the pre-classical period, there was an opposition between non-possessive (subject and object) and possessive. When a shift of weight from before to after the verb occurred, this implied that the object, mid-phrase in the pre-classical period, became phrase-final.

In the pre-classical period, level tone forms ending in -O and marking incompleteness³² meant no problem: the non-possessive (subject and object) level tone -O forms were not phrase-final. In the classical period, however, the sentence-structure shows the object at the end of the phrase. This forced the level tone -O forms into phrase-final positions. As a rising tone was needed to indicate completion at the end of a phrase, this implicated that level tone -O changed into rising tone -O forms. Influenced by this rising tone, the -O subsequently changed into -A. This explains the pairs *ngo- and *ngâ', *ńjo' and *ńia' and *b'iwo- and *pia'. The dependent -O forms finally encroach upon the possessive.

3. A critical analysis of Graham's theory

3.1

The starting point of Graham's theory is a shift in weight from before to after the verb: the pronoun object, mid-phrase in the pre-classical period, is thought to have become phrase-final in the classical period. Such a shift

32 Graham adds that the relevance of this contrast is not discredited if Archaic Chinese is proved not to be a tonal language because "we have no reason to doubt that the level/rising contrast of the Ancient readings reflects some distinction in Archaic phonology whether tonal or not" (Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.25).

from a pre-classical SOV pattern to a classical SVO pattern has been examined by Charles Li and Sandra Thompson (1974). According to Li and Thompson, Pre-Archaic Chinese (12th century BC) was a SOV language, which might have changed to a SVO language between the 10th and the 3rd centuries BC, before shifting back to SOV again, the last stage being still in progress.³³ This hypothesis has been criticized by many scholars. A brief summary of these critics is to be found in Alain Peyraube, "On Word Order and Word Order Change in Pre-Archaic Chinese", *Selected Papers of the 10th Biannual Conference, EACS, Prague, 1974*.³⁴ In this paper, Peyraube analyzes the position of objects and prepositional phrases in 'jiaguwen' (Pre-Archaic Chinese). He proves that in the case of full lexical noun phrase objects the regular, unmarked, order was SVO. There are, however, some pre-verbal objects preceded by markers.³⁵ Peyraube underlines that also for pronoun objects, Pre-Archaic Chinese was not more SOV than Early/Late Archaic Chinese was, and that pre-verbal pronouns are limited to negative or interrogative sentences, as in Classical Chinese.³⁶

- 33 See Li, Ch., and Thompson, S., 1974, pp.206 ff.; Li, Ch., and Thompson, S., 1975, pp.185 ff.
- 34 For objection against an SVO to SOV shift: see also Venneman, Th., 1973, p.40 and Chun, Ch.-f., 1996, p.15.
- 35 See Peyraube, A., 1994: "These are nonetheless sentences with a pre-verbal object. One therefore has to admit that the language of the oracular bone inscriptions, when it wants to focalize an NP object, uses two devices: (i) put in front of the said object a marker of focalization; (ii) move it, with its marker, in pre-verbal position. In the absence of the marker *hui/wei*, the order remains of course (S)VO."
- 36 In negative sentences, the pronoun object often moves to before the verb (this also goes for interrogative pronouns in interrogative sentences). According to Peyraube, pronoun objects become post-verbal some time during the Han. In the 'jiaguwen,' the pre-verbal pronoun objects are probably rarer than in Archaic Chinese. See Peyraube, A., 1994. Also Pulleyblank, E.G., 1995, p.70, when pointing to it that: "A preposed object was repeated by a pronoun, usually *zhī* 之 or *shì* 是 placed *in front of* the verb instead of after it. This is no doubt a survival of a more widespread placing of pronoun objects in front of the verb in preclassical language," does not appear to consider this as the unmarked position.

Referring to Djamouri, R., 1988, p.462, Peyraube also points to possible focalization of these pre-verbal objects.³⁷ Peyraube thus concludes that:

“The situation of the Pre-Archaic language could therefore very well have been the following: (i) the regular, unmarked order was SVO; (ii) there was also an inverse order SOV, but this order was marked (the object was stressed, introduced by a marker *hui* or *wei*; (iii) in the sentences with *bu*, however, when the object was the personal pronoun *wo*, the focalizer *hui* or *wei* was not necessary. From marked, these sentences became progressively unmarked, giving birth to an unmarked SOV order. Thus, pronouns could not have been conservative of an ancient order, as it is usually believed, but, on the contrary, initiators of a new order ...”

This implies that the SO(pronoun)V order was limited to negative sentences, and was not a survivor of a general SOV order³⁸ which was to change to SVO. If we do not accept a general shift from a SO(pronoun)V pattern to a SVO(pronoun) pattern, the starting point of Graham’s evolutionary theory becomes very weak.

3.2

According to Graham, the shift in weight from before to after the verb imposed a change from a level tone (for the mid-phrase pronouns) to a rising tone (for the phrase-final pronouns), and this change is thought to have further influenced the final vowel of the pronouns.

Since in the pre-classical period one series of pronouns was used for the subject and object while another series was used for the possessive, Graham only takes into account the pronouns of the subject and object positions, as it are exactly these pronouns that will find themselves in a phrase-final position when the object position moves from a mid-phrase to a phrase-final position. Except for some very unusual pronouns, these pro-

37 In the ‘*jiaguwen*’ the negative *bu* (不) could be equivalent to *bu wei* (不爲). This implies that pre-verbal objects were focalized just as the full lexical NP-objects (see note 35). See Djamouri, R., 1988: *Etude des formes syntaxiques dans les écrits oraculaires gravés sur os et carapaces de tortue*. Thèse de l’EHESS, Paris.

38 i.e. both SO(pronoun)V order, and SO(noun)V order.

nouns, i.e. *d̥jo and *ńjo, end in -O and have, according to Graham, a level tone, indicating incompleteness. When put in a phrase-final position, these pronouns shift to a rising tone, marking completion. It is because of this evolution that the O- changes to A'. To this, we can make the following remarks:

3.2.1 The pronouns of the earlier possessive series (*d'jəm', *nəg' and *k̥wät), all have a deflected tone (two times rising). As, according to Kennedy's theory, it is a level tone that marks incompleteness and a deflected tone that marks completion, we should expect a level tone here.³⁹ However, it is in accordance with the theory as adjusted by Graham that "it is only with pronouns ending in -O that a level tone marks incompleteness," and that "a rising tone has to be followed by a pause to mark completion". If tone is that important that the level tone (in words ending in -O) is felt to mark incompleteness so strongly that it even has to change to a rising tone in phrase-final position, then, to our view, it still remains puzzling – even suspicious – why that tone is only important for those pronouns ending in -O and seems to be no factor of influence for the possessives (earlier series).

3.2.2 The level tone of the pre-classical subject and object pronouns is not univocally established. Except for some very unusual pronouns, there are, basically, only two pronouns attested: *d̥jo- and ńjo'. Only the first one of these has a level tone. In *Ch'u* poetry – and *exclusively* in *Ch'u* poetry, it has a rising tone at the end of a line.⁴⁰ Moreover, as Graham indicates himself, the question is whether this confinement of the rising tone to the end of the line belongs to the living language, or is merely reflecting a convention of verse chanting. The least we can say is that the general necessity of two forms – *d̥jo level tone, which, when put at the end of a phrase, changes into *d̥jo rising tone – in the pre-classical language, is not at all evident.

39 These forms are considered by A.C. Graham, 1969(b) as being very irregular, see p.55: "[...] the older possessive series displays not symmetry but tantalizing irregularities the reasons for which must be lost in the prehistory of the language."

40 Graham, A.C., 1969(b), pp.28-29.

Yet, referring to this occurrence of a level and a rising tone *d̄iŋo in the *Ch'u* poetry, Graham concludes that the existing rising tone *ń̄iŋo´ must, by analogy, be traced back to a level tone *ń̄iŋo. This appears as an artificial supposition created in need of an equilibrated starting point for his theory. Due to the very low incidence of *ń̄iŋo in *Ch'u* poetry texts, this hypothesis cannot be verified *even in Ch'u poetry itself*, let alone that it would be verifiable in other literature. The problem with Graham's supposition is that *ń̄iŋo is traditionally read on the rising tone. Although we may admit that it is tempting to start from a level tone mid-phrase pronoun ending in -O as opposed to pronouns at the end of the phrase and as opposed to pronouns not ending in -O, the evidence for such a level tone *ń̄iŋo seems too scarce.

Further in his article, Graham tries to explain the origin of the traditional rising tone in *ń̄iŋo. For this aim, his own hypothesis that in the pre-classical period we had a level tone *ń̄iŋo in the subject and object position, and that in the possessive position (later series) we had the pronoun *ń̄iŋəg, is the starting point. Due to an evolution from a SOV-pattern to a SVO-pattern, *ń̄iŋo is said to have found itself at the end of a phrase and, necessarily, to have taken on a rising tone, thus involving a change from -O to -A. This brings us to the situation that in the classical *Analects* *ń̄iŋo is holding the position of subject, while *ń̄ia is taking over the object position, i.e. except in three examples where the object is in front of the main verb⁴¹ and in one example which Graham explains as a common formula based on rhyme⁴². As subject, *ń̄ia is, in the *Analects*, always contrastive or is the new element. Why, in this new situation, *ń̄ia can also be possessive is not explained by Graham. Based on his analysis of the linguistic situation of the *Analects*, Graham suggests the underneath sketch should represent the *general* linguistic situation at that time⁴³:

- (i) *ń̄ia can be subject, possessive and object.
- (ii) *ń̄iŋo can be subject and object.
- (iii) *ń̄iŋəg can be possessive.

The latter gives us the following scheme:

41 *Analects* Bk. 2, Ch. 17; Bk. 11, Ch. 23 and Bk. 17, Ch. 21.

42 *Analects* Bk. 17, Ch. 8: 吾語女, *ngo nḡiŋo ń̄iŋo.

43 Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.60.

<i>subject</i>	<i>possessive</i>	<i>object</i>
*ńĭo	*ńĭəg	*ńĭo
*ńia	*ńia	*ńia

The scheme appears to be based on the linguistic situation of the *Analects* itself, with the exclusion of *ńĭəg, the appearance of which in the scheme only is to be explained as a trace of an earlier stage, since *ńĭəg, actually, does not appear in the *Analects* itself⁴⁴. According to Graham's theory, in classical times (from the *Analects* downwards) the need was felt for a dependent second person pronoun, parallel to the first person pronoun *ngo. Herefore, there were three possibilities:

- 1) Excluding *ńĭo from the object and extending it to the possessive. This implies that only *ńia can be object. He finds this situation in the *Mencius*, except for one object *ńĭo, which, however, is not in phrase-final position.
- 2) Extending *ńĭəg to the subject. This implies that both *ńĭo and *ńia can be object. He sees this situation in the *Chuang-tzu*.
- 3) Excluding *ńia from the object. This implies that only *ńĭo can be object. He sees this situation in the *Tso-chuan*.

This theory implies that, starting from the hypothetical situation described in the above scheme – i.e. based on the Lu-dialect and including an unexplained possessive *ńia, and with addition of the older possessive form *ńĭəg –, the pronoun systems of the dialects used in these three texts each developed individualistically, following the same principle. It seems quite unfounded to state that dialects different from the Lu-dialect developed from this situation, and, even for the Lu-dialect, the question remains why *ńia can be possessive.

Graham's further argumentation to explain the origin of the traditional rising tone in *ńĭo, seems even more unfounded. In the second and third possibility described above, the pronoun *ńĭo remained a pronoun for the object, to which Graham says⁴⁵:

44 Cf. Legge, J., 1971, pp.487-488.

45 Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.60.

“In either case *ńĵo becomes the independent pronoun, to be left without a rival when *ńia falls out of sight late in the 4th century BC. On our hypothesis the pre-verbal *ńĵo of the Lu-dialect was level-tone, but the independent pronoun victorious by 300 BC would have to be rising-tone. This explains why in the case of *ńĵo it is the rising-tone reading which survives, although the reading of *dĵo which survives is the one on the level tone.”

The above statement is not compatible with Graham’s own theory on the evolution of pronouns: the presence of the rising tone *ńia in all dialects is only to be explained by the level tone *ńĵo becoming rising tone *ńĵo´, and, subsequently -O becoming -A. So, necessarily, *all* dialects have level tone *ńĵo and rising tone *ńia. When *ńia subsequently disappears in the fourth century BC⁴⁶, we are left with *ńĵo as the dependent pronoun in the Lu-dialect, while it occupies the object position in the other dialects.

Hereafter, Graham’s explanations become obscure: according to his view, the *ńĵo in the object position then has a rising tone. It is not said why this is so. This is conflicting with his own theory: the pre-classical mid-phrase level tone *ńĵo developed into a final-phrase rising tone *ńĵo, and subsequently changed into a phrase-final rising tone *ńia. Now, once this development is finished, we can no longer have a rising tone *ńĵo. As long as the sound law, “-O changes into -A under the influence of a rising tone” is active, a *ńĵo rising tone is simply impossible. Do we have to imagine that later, somewhere in the classical period, the sound law was no longer valid, so that in a situation where, on the one hand we have the rising tone *ńia and on the other the level tone *ńĵo, this level tone *ńĵo could again freely become a rising tone *ńĵo without changing to *ńia? Not only do we have to imagine that the former sound law is no longer valid, we even have to suppose a new phonetic evolution: “as independent pronoun, the level tone *ńĵo becomes rising tone *ńĵo”. This independent rising tone pronoun *ńĵo is then supposed to have been victorious by 300 BC and to have supplanted the level tone dependent pronoun *ńĵo of the Lu-

46 *ibid.*, 1969(b), p.53 : “However *erh* [*ńia] cannot have disappeared from the spoken language if colloquial *ni* 你 (爾) is its descendant, as the graph implies. We may suspect that it became vulgar, ...”. See also Pulleyblank, E.G., 1995, p.77: “By a regular phonetic change, the reading form became *êr* but in the colloquial language it became *nĵ*, now written 你.”

dialect. In this way, it became the traditional rising tone reading of *ńjo. The reason for such evolution is not explained in Graham's theory.

All this playing with dialects and sound laws seems very unprobable and looks like a forced attempt to explain the traditional rising tone reading of *ńjo. It should, finally, be noticed that this whole theory is based on the reconstruction of the pronunciation of 女, 汝 (the modern *rǔ*) and 爾 (the modern *ěr*) by B. Karlgren, in his *Grammata Serica Recensa*, 1957, a reconstruction that can only be a hypothetical one (see 3.2.5).

3.2.3 According to Graham, the level tone mid-phrase pronouns ending in -O change to rising tone pronouns ending in -A, in phrase-final position. There are two such mid-phrase pronouns: *djo and *ńjo. *ńjo becomes *ńja', but there is no *dja'. The reason why, according to Graham, the creation of a *dja' from the pre-classical *djo- is impossible, is that such a pronoun *dja' would be indistinguishable from the final particle *dja' (也).⁴⁷

Now, it is so that a sound law, i.e. "influenced by a rising tone, the final -O changes into -A," does not allow exceptions and does not take into account any consequences the rule might have. If the sound law exists, it must be applicable to all words ending in -O that have a level tone in the mid-phrase. This implies that we would first have two allophones, distinguished by the influence of the conditioning factor +/- level tone (+/- rising tone). Later on, the old forms on -O and the new forms on -A would be considered as two separate words (and not as one single word with a different pronunciation). If the above mentioned sound law is valid, a classical pronoun *dja (rising tone) must then have existed at least for some time, whereby it is not impossible that, due to a possible confusion with the final particle *dja', it would later have been replaced by another pronoun.

We would further like to add that Graham supposes that there might have been a pre-classical third person subject/object pronoun *g'jo.⁴⁸ This

47 Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.57.

48 Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.55, refers to Chou Fa-kao, 1959, pp.112 ff., who notices a third person pronoun with the reading *g'jo- (written 渠), sporadically entering literature of the colloquial language *from the third century AD onwards* (stress added AH/BD). Chou Fa-kao further says that this might have been the missing third person pronoun in the pre-classical period. In support of this sup-

not attested form is reconstructed by analogy with the opposition first person possessive (later series) *d̥iəg – first person subject/object *d̥io and with the opposition second person possessive (later series) *ńiəg – second person subject/object *ńio. By analogy, the third person possessive (later series) *g'̥iəg asks for a third person subject/object *g'̥io. This *g'̥io is supposed to have had a level tone. If this is true, and the sound law “influenced by a rising tone, the final -O changes into -A” is valid, then why do we not have the pronoun *g'̥ia', but, instead, two new classical third person demonstratives (*b'̥iwo and *pia')? This means that the sound law proposed by Graham, cannot be applied to two of the three pre-classical pronouns (the attested pronoun *d̥io and the reconstructed pronoun *g'̥io), and can only on a very weak basis be applied to the remaining pronoun *ńio (level tone?).

position, Graham A.C., p.55 notices: “The existence of a 3rd person pronoun in speech, as in modern dialects, is inherently likely. Such a pronoun is unnecessary in writing, which can assure continuity of discourse after a thing is first mentioned, but one may doubt whether Chinese ever lacked a 3rd person pronoun to deal with the discontinuities of living speech.” However, the pre-classical Chinese pronoun system, with pronouns only for the first and the second person, perfectly parallels that of the other Sino-Tibetan languages:

– Tibeto-Burman (Benedict, P., *Sino-Tibetan - A Conspectus*, 1972, p.93): 1st person independent: ŋa; 2nd person independent: naŋ; no 3rd person; plural by means of suffixation.

– Karen (Benedict, P., 1972, pp.129-130): 1st person : ya; 2nd person : na; no 3rd person; plural by means of suffixation.

The proposition by J. Przyluski that there might be some kind of flexion (nga-ga: nominative; nga-go: accusative) in certain languages of the Tibeto-Burman group is already shown to be of secondary origin (Meillet, A. and Cohen, M. (eds.), *Les langues du monde*, 1924, p.364). See also Meillet and Cohen, op.cit., p.364. For Miri and Dafla, see Meillet and Cohen, op.cit., p.372. See also Baxter, W., *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology*, 1992, p.208. Also in pre-classical and classical Chinese, no real third person pronoun exists, until the introduction of 他 (modern tā) in the 7 th. century AD (cf. Norman, J., *Chinese*, 1988, pp.118-119; Dobson, W., 1968, pp.190-191).

3.2.4 Presupposing that: (i) we accept an SOV to SVO evolution, and (ii) we agree that a level tone pronoun changes into a rising tone pronoun in order to be usable in front of a pause (e.g. at the end of a phrase), the sound law “level tone mid-phrase pronouns ending in -O change to rising tone pronouns ending in -A in phrase-final position” might be very meaningful. However, this evolution is only seen for the pair *ńjō / *ńja, and cannot be applied to the pairs *ngo / *ngâ and *b'jwo / *pia.

The pronoun *ngo (吾) is in the pre-classical period only, and this very sporadically, attested by its ancestors 魚 and 虞 (both pronounced *ngjō). It is only in the classical period that *ngo emerges as a major pronoun by the side of *ngâ.⁴⁹ Of the two pronouns *ngo and *ngâ, *ngâ was used as a major pronoun long before *ngo. Consequently, it is strange that *ngâ would have developed from *ngo. The demonstrative *b'jwo is, equally, unattested in the inscriptions, in the *Shu Ching* and in the *Shih Ching* (i.e. the pre-classical period)⁵⁰, while *pia is attested only very sporadically in the pre-classical period⁵¹. This implies that a change from *ngo to *ngâ and from *b'jwo to *pia is unlikely. Graham explains this change by saying that it took place in the classical period, by analogy with the change during the evolution from the pre-classical to the classical period⁵²:

“We can now account for nearly all the classical forms on the assumption that the tone change affected the vowel so that final -O on the rising tone tended to shift to -A. New forms would then evolve in the same way that the suffix ńjâr´ 爾 developed out of *ńjō- 如⁵³ [...] The -A´ form, ..., is characteristic of the independent classical pronouns, whether new (*ngâ´ ‘I’, *pia´ ‘that’) or adap-

49 See Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.52. See also G.A. Kennedy, 1964, pp.440-441 who, in addition, gives orthographic evidence to prove that 吾 is younger than 我.

50 *ibid.*, 1969(b), p.54.

51 *ibid.*, 1969(b), p.54.

52 *ibid.*, 1969(b), p.57.

53 *ibid.*, 1969(b), pp.33-35: the level tone -O suffix *ńjō- 如, in the pre-classical period, is never final. When forced at the end of the sentence (for instance in the *Analects*), it was first always followed by the rising tone particle *dja (也), later it generated its own rising tone form *ńjâr (爾).

'this'); [...]. It will be seen that an explanation on these lines does not oblige us to suppose with Kennedy that the rising-tone pronouns were exclusively final even at the beginning. All that we need to claim is that pronouns which were formed from older -O-pronouns or on the same analogy would become available at all positions only if they shifted to the rising tone in order to be usable in front of a pause,"

and further:

"Once *ngo- is recognized as a word distinct from *ngâ, its tone and final become part of its morphology; [...]."

The above quotations explain that by analogy with the result of the former phonetic change (level tone -O forms being easily utterable only in the mid-phrase and rising-tone -A forms being utterable at any position while particularly needed in front of a pause), new words, i.e. *ngâ, originated. This does not hold. The phonetic change from the pre-classical period to the classical period has left only very scarce evidence:

- (i) There is no *d̄ja which has developed from *d̄jo and even *d̄jo is hardly used anymore in the classical period⁵⁴.
- (ii) There is, according to Graham, a change from *ń̄jo to *ń̄ia, but although, in the classical period *ń̄ia can occupy every position, *ń̄jo does not occupy the possessive position in the *Analects* and does only very rarely do so in the *Mencius*.
- (iii) There is only a hypothetical *g'̄jo and no *g'̄ja which might have developed from it.

This evidence appears to be really insufficient to represent a linguistic situation of -O forms being easily utterable only in the mid-phrase and of rising-tone -A forms being utterable at any position while particularly needed in front of a pause. That, based on this evidence, it has to be so that new words necessarily had to have the same features seems unfounded. It should further be added that the classical *ngâ is not really a new word and already existed in the pre-classical period.⁵⁵

54 *ibid.*, 1969(b), pp.51-52.

55 See note 49.

The creation of a pair *ngâ / *ngo and a pair *pia / *b'jwo neither is to be explained by the hypothesis that during the classical period there have been changes from -O to -A by analogy with such a change in the evolution from the pre-classical period to the classical period. The above supposition would imply that *ngâ developed from *ngo⁵⁶, for which we then have to assume that the sound law “influenced by a rising tone, the final -O changes into final -A” was still active in a linguistic situation where this evolution was already fairly completed. It is, moreover, hard to hold that *ngâ rose as post-verbal variant of *ngo, since *ngâ already appears, as a collective first person⁵⁷, in pre-verbal position in the *Shu Ching*; in the *Shang Shu* it is even almost exclusively pre-verbal⁵⁸. This proves that a form ending on -A could perfectly function in a pre-verbal position in pre-classical times and did not develop from a level tone -O form.

3.2.5 Apart from the remarks we have already made, it has to be noticed that Graham's theory is wholly based upon a reconstruction of the Archaic Chinese pronouns by Karlgren in his *Grammata Serica Recensa*, 1957 (as earlier in his *Analytic Dictionary of Chinese and Sino-Japanese*, 1923). We find following reconstructions: 吾 (p.35, No.58f): Archaic Chinese⁵⁹ *ngo; Ancient Chinese⁶⁰ ngu; 我 (p.20, No.2a): *ngâ; ngâ;; 女 (p.43, No.94a): *njo; n'jwo;; 汝 (p.43, No.94j): *n'jo; n'z'jwo; 爾 (p.103,

56 In fact, a phonetic change from *ngâ to *ngo would be more tenable: if we have a look at the much more verifiable reconstruction of Karlgren's Ancient Chinese or Pulleyblank's Middle Chinese, with its evolution to modern Chinese, it is not at all likely that -O changes to -A after a velar consonant, while the reverse, i.e. -A changing to -O is more plausible. See: B. Karlgren, *Analytic Dictionary of Chinese and Sino-Japanese*, 1923, p.11; E.G., Pulleyblank, *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation*, 1991, p.324; W., Baxter, *Handbook*, 1991, p.795.

57 Ch'en Meng-chia, *Yin-hsü Pu-tz'u Tsung-shu*, 1956, pp.94-96; Pulleyblank, E.G., 1995, p.76 and p.164, n.24. See also Graham, A.C. 1969(b), p.52, who further adds that [in the classical period] “it would seem that the original first person pronoun [*djo] was driven out by the more modest, less aggressive wo, with which one speaks as a representative of the collective.”

58 Dobson, W., 1962, p.68, n.31.

59 This is the language of the early Chou.

60 This is the language of Ch'ang-an ca. 600 AD.

No.359a): *ńia; ńię̄;; 夫 (p.45, No.101a): *b'ıwo; b'ıu; 彼 (p.26, No.25g): *pia; pjię̄:. However, modern scholars came to a completely different reconstruction of Archaic Chinese, and even between Karlgren's Ancient Chinese and, e.g., Pulleyblank's Middle Chinese there are some differences.⁶¹ As for the Archaic Chinese, Pulleyblank does not even give a reconstruction since he does not believe "that it is possible at present to offer any complete reconstruction for stages of the language older than the Qieyun".⁶² The reconstruction of classical and pre-classical Chinese is not at all evident and it is very well possible that a series of pronouns ending in -O never existed. In any case, there is not enough evidence to say it did. Therefore, Graham's theory on the evolution of level tone pronouns ending in -O, as any theory on the evolution of any archaic sound, can only be a very hypothetical one.

The question why the law "level tone implies incompleteness" is only valid for pronouns ending in -O, and why the law "rising tone implies completion" is only valid when in front of a pause, remains. Does *ńjo really have a level tone? Is a form *dja really impossible? Has there been a form *g'jo, and, when so, why is there no form *g'ja? How were the oppositions *ngo / *ngā and *b'ıwo / *pia created?

3.3

In his analysis of Classical Chinese, Graham sees an opposition between 'subordinate' positions and 'superordinate' positions.⁶³ He treats both the subject and the possessive as 'subordinate': the subject is subordinate to the succeeding sentence-core, the possessive is subordinate to the suc-

61 E.g. Pulleyblank, in his *Lexicon of Reconstructed Pronunciation*, 1991, gives: 吾 (p.325, s.v. wú): Early Middle Chinese (i.e. the language of the Ch'ieh-yün rhyme dictionary of AD 601) ŋɔ; Late Middle Chinese (i.e. the standard language of the High T'ang Dynasty) ŋuə; 我 (p.324, s.v. wǒ): ŋa'; ŋa'; 女 (p.268, s.v. rǔ): ɲiə'; riə' / ryə'; 汝 (p.268, s.v. rǔ): ɲiə'; riə' / ryə'; 爾 (p.88, s.v. ěr): ɲiə' / ɲi'; ri'; 夫 (p.97, s.v. fū): buə; fɲiɲə / fɲuə; 彼 (p.33, s.v. bǐ): piə' / pi'; pi'.

62 *ibid.*, 1991, p.20.

63 Graham, A.C., "Some Basic Problems of Classical Chinese", *Asia Major (New Series)*, XIV, Part 2, 1969 (a), pp.192-216.

subject and the possessive as ‘subordinate’: the subject is subordinate to the succeeding sentence-core, the possessive is subordinate to the succeeding noun.⁶⁴ Because of this common feature of subordinateness, both positions are represented by the dependent, subordinate pronoun *ngo. The syntactic status of the pronouns in the *Mencius*, says Graham, further proves this feature. To this we can make the following remarks:

3.3.1 To distinguish ‘subordinate’ from ‘co-ordinate,’ Graham gives the following criterion:

“Of two units, at any level of analysis, if only one is eliminable without the elimination of the other, it is ‘subordinate’ and the other ‘superordinate’ [...]. If either is eliminable without the elimination of the other, the two are ‘co-ordinate’ [...].”⁶⁵

He further adds:

“[...] we recognize a deletion as an elimination only if the remainder is still identifiable as a reduced form of the original unit, that is only if the deleted part may be restored whatever the context in which we choose to place the remainder.”⁶⁶

He gives the following examples of units subordinate to a noun:

Ex.1 *Mencius* Bk.1, Pt.2,15

H	IJ		
	Q	R	
事	大	國	

‘serve a great state’ (cf. J. Legge, 1970, p.175)

64 See also Pulleyblank, E., 1995, pp.14-15 : “Note that in Classical Chinese there is a clear relationship between the rule that the subject precedes the verb and the rule that the modifier precedes the modified, since, when a verb phrase is nominalized, the particle of noun subordination, *zhī* 之, is placed between the subject and the verb [...]. That is, the subject is treated as a modifier of the nominalized verb.”

65 Graham, A.C., 1969(a), pp.203-204.

66 *ibid.*, 1969(a), p.204.

Ex.2 *Mencius* Bk.1, Pt.2,3

H	IJ
	Q R
事	大

‘serve the great’ (cf. J. Legge, 1970, p.155)

He says that:

“in spite of the vacancy of the position, the nominal R is not eliminable from the nominal QR, because the remainder is no longer identifiable as a reduced form of QR; it can stand in positions where R cannot be restored.”⁶⁷

Such a position is clear in the following example:

Ex.3 *Mencius* Bk.7, Pt.1,4: 樂莫大焉 “No joy is greater than this.” (cf. J. Legge, 1970, p.451)

“On the other hand, the verbal Q [i.e. in example 1] is eliminable, because the remainder is nominal and an ultimate constituent which is nominal is expandable to QR whatever its context.”⁶⁸

The following examples show the subordinateness of the subject⁶⁹:

Ex.4 *Mencius* Bk.5, Pt.1,5: (天) (不) 言 “Heaven does not speak.” (cf. J. Legge, 1970, p.355)

Ex.5 *Mencius* Bk.4, Pt.1,28: (舜) 人也 “Shun was a man.” (cf. J. Legge, 1970, p.334)

According to Graham, the subject is to be treated as a subordinate to the whole sentence-core, in the same way as an adjunct is subordinate to a noun.⁷⁰ Without wanting to re-open the discussion whether or not the sub-

67 *ibid.*, 1969(a), p.204.

68 *ibid.*, 1969(a), p.204.

69 *ibid.*, 1969(a), pp.206-207.

70 *ibid.*, 1969(a), p.207.

ject belongs to the sentence-core⁷¹, we would like to make some remarks in order to show that Graham's hypothesis that adjunct and subject have the same degree of subordinateness is not as definitive as he wants us to believe.⁷²

Can one really say that there is no difference between a subordinate as '大' in Ex.1 事大國 and a subordinate as '天' in Ex.4 天不言? In case of the subordinate unit '大', it is true that a sentence as *事國 ('to serve a state') can always be expanded to 事大國 (Ex.1), but such an (implicit) expansion is by no means necessary. In case of the subject 天, a sentence as *言 (he speaks), can, of course, be expanded to 天(不)言 (Ex.4), but, already in the first sentence, a non-expressed subject is implicitly supposed.⁷³

Moreover, according to Graham, an elimination should allow the restoration of the original formula, without ambiguity and in every context.⁷⁴ Therefore, an object cannot be deleted.⁷⁵ To our view, eliminating the

71 It is to be noticed that the hypothesis that the subject is no real part of the sentence-core is far from accepted by all scholars. See for instance, G. von der Gabelentz, 1953, p.114: "Notwendige Bestandteile des (grammatischen) Satzes sind Subject und Prädikat;" H. Shadick, 1968, Vol.3, p.828: "Certain elements occurring at the beginning of sentences, mostly nominals or coverbals in form, are being treated [...] as sentence adjuncts (SA). [...] We distinguish these SAs from subjects because they are not topics to be commented on, but subordinate modifiers of the sentence supplying a setting in space or time or stating some limitations that restrict the meaning of the sentence. Without them, the sentence is still a sentence, whereas if the subject is removed, either there is no sentence left or it is completely changed, as, for instance, into an imperative. We will say that the body of a simple sentence is an S-P constitute, but that this can become head to a sentence adjunct. Thus the ICs of a simple sentence can be either S and P or SA and S-P."

72 Cf. Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.22: "I have recently [i.e. Graham, A.C., 1969(a)] argued that we cannot lay down a consistent procedure for eliminating subordinates from the sentence-core without classing the subject among subordinates."

73 See Pulleyblank, E.G., 1995, p.13: "the subject may sometimes be unexpressed."

74 Graham, A.C., 1969(a), p.195 and p.204.

75 In a sentence as: Ex.6 *Mencius* Bk.1, Pt.2,4: [...] 民 [F] 亦 [G] 樂 [H] 其 [I] 樂 [J] ('people likewise enjoy his enjoyment'), IJ cannot be eliminated without the re-

subject 天 in the sentence 天(不)言 (Ex.1) equally creates an ambiguous sentence-form (*言), as *言 is not necessarily expandable to the original sentence in every context: it may be either '(He) speaks,' or 'Speak!' Even if it is so that in Classical Chinese a second person subject is often expressed in imperative sentences⁷⁶, this does not allow us to unconditionally expand *言, since, in imperative sentences, only a limited group of subjects, i.e. second person subjects, is possible.

In his article on the archaic Chinese pronouns, Graham states that in the classical period, the subordinate positions are predominantly represented by their own (neutral) pronouns, i.e. *ngo in the subject and possessive positions, and *ńjo first only in the subject positions, and later both in subject and possessive positions.⁷⁷ In this way, he wants to prove that *ngo and *ńjo, have the syntactic status 'dependent' as they find themselves confined to subordinate positions, while the pronouns *nga and *ńia are not confined to any position and have the possibility to occupy the object position. They accordingly have an 'independent' status.⁷⁸ However, Gra-

mainder 樂 being syntactically ambiguous. According to Graham, it could be either H as in example 6, or L of the following formula (Graham, 1969(a), p.195): Ex.7 *Mencius* Bk.1, Pt.2,1: 獨樂樂, 與人樂樂, 孰樂 [L] "Of enjoying music alone and enjoying it with others, which is enjoyed more?", whereby "the last phrase in the [...] example [(7)] cannot be read as 孰樂 [H [IJ]] which would be translatable as 'who enjoys it?'" (Graham, A.C., 1969(a), p.195) He then concludes: "The remainder when IJ is deleted is therefore a sentence-form but syntactically ambiguous, H or L [...]." This means that when IJ is deleted from example 6, the remainder can either be translated as: 'People likewise enjoy,' or as 'people are likewise enjoyed'.

76 See Pulleyblank, E.G., 1995, p.14 and p.138.

77 Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.19 and p.54; *ńjo is in the *Analects* never possessive, it is only in the *Mencius* that we find some possessive examples.

78 See Graham, A.C., 1969(b), pp.57-58: "Once *ngo- is recognized as a word distinct from *ngâ', its tone and final become part of its morphology; the ending in -O- which is a vocal preparation for the next word now implies, [...] that the word *ngo- cannot be final in any sentence in which it is used. But this amounts to saying that *ngo- syntactically requires words which it precedes, and so that it is a dependent form, either possessive (requiring a succeeding noun), or subject or

ham does not explain the appearance of the independent *ngâ and *ńia in subordinate positions, except for those cases in the *Mencius* where they are contrasted pronouns or pronouns in conjunction with contrasted words. These positions are explained as due to a rigorous parallelism. We will refute this argument later.

We have to conclude that even when accepting that the relation between subject and verb on the one hand and the relation between subordinate possessive and superordinate noun on the other hand show some similarities, the relations subject to verb and possessive to noun are not completely parallel. Graham's suggestion of an evolution from a pre-classical opposition between non-possessive and possessive to a classical opposition between subject and possessive on the one hand and object on the other, does not necessarily imply that we have to analyze the subordinate subject and possessive positions (which are occupied by the dependent, subordinate pronouns) as opposed to the non-subordinate object position (which is occupied by the independent pronouns). A major disadvantage of this analysis is that it does not account for the presence of independent pronouns in dependent positions. The difference between subject/possessive forms and object forms may not be due to subordinateness and non-subordinateness – the pronoun *ngo, in this way, being the subordinate pronoun –, but might be due to another reason. We will return to this later.

3.3.2 Graham treats the subject and the possessive at the same level, i.e. as subordinate positions, predominantly represented by one and the same pronoun *ngo (with the syntactic status 'dependent'). When these positions are occupied by the independent pronoun *ngâ, there must be some obvious reason that explains this 'irregularity'. In order to discover the reason for this 'irregularity' and in order to verify the impression that *ngâ is used to mark contrast, Graham examines all pairs of phrases in the *Mencius* that contain one or other pronoun, either as subject or as possessive, in which there is parallelism without identity. He finds evidence that in a non-con-

inverted object (requiring a succeeding verb). Thus, the old -O- form, which had no syntactic significance in itself [...], both retreats from the object and spreads to the possessive. The main line of distinction is now between dependent and independent pronouns, and the old possessive forms lose most of their value."

trast situation, the subject is the dependent pronoun *ngo, while in a contrast situation, the subject is the independent pronoun *ngâ. In the position of a possessive, the result is nearly exactly the opposite: in a non-contrast situation, the pronoun is *ngo or *ngâ, in a contrast situation the pronoun is *ngo. He states⁷⁹:

“To contrast the pronoun with a unit subordinated by *chih*⁸⁰ it is necessary to use the form which most nearly coincides, the dependent form *wu* [...]. On the other hand to contrast the pronoun subject with a noun or an independent pronoun such as *pi* 彼 ‘that man, he’ it is necessary to use the form with a scope as wide as theirs, which is *wo*. [...] Where contrast is involved the choice depends, not on whether the pronoun is phonetically stressed, but on the syntactic status of the unit with which it is contrasted.”

He then concludes that in both cases, subject and possessive, the dependent *ngo is the neutral form and that only when the pronoun is either contrasted⁸¹ or in conjunction with contrasted nouns the use of the independent *ngâ becomes possible. This theory is based on the following two assumptions:

- (1) Chinese demands a rigorous parallelism.
- (2) A dependent position (subject, possessive) is normally occupied by the dependent pronoun *ngo; there should be some obvious reason why these positions are occupied by the independent *ngâ.

To this, we can make the following remarks: In the above argumentation, there is a confusion between, on the one hand (in-)dependent pronouns, and, on the other hand, (in-)dependent positions.⁸² Graham states that it is

79 *ibid.*, 1969(b), pp.45-46.

80 i.e. the possessive.

81 i.e. contrasted to nouns or independent pronouns.

82 Following the theory of Graham, a dependent position in the sentence is a position that necessarily has to be followed by another (a subject by the succeeding sentence; a possessive by the succeeding noun), while this is not the case for an independent position (e.g., the object). A dependent pronoun is a pronoun that can only occupy dependent positions in the sentence, while this is not the case for the independent pronoun.

due to a rigorous parallelism that an independent noun or pronoun can only be contrasted to another independent noun or pronoun. Consequently, when contrasted to an independent noun or pronoun *ngâ is used in the subject position.

If this parallelism really is so rigorous, then, in all dependent positions – be it subject or possessive, an independent word could only contrast with another independent word. This does not seem to be the case with the possessive position. On the contrary, if, in the possessive position, the subordinate words are in contrast, independent nouns are in contrast with the dependent pronoun *ngo: see the following examples:

(*Mencius* Bk.6, Pt.1,4): 長楚人之長, 亦長吾之長. (Graham, A.C., p.45: ‘I treat as befits an elder an elder *of the men of Ch’u*, and also treat as befits an elder *of my own*.’ (cf. J. Legge, 1970, p.398)

(*Mencius* Bk.6, Pt.1,4): 耆秦人之炙無以異於耆吾炙. (Graham, A.C., p.45: ‘To enjoy *a man of Ch’in’s* roast meat is no different from enjoying *my own* roast meat.’ (cf. J. Legge, 1970, p.399)

To explain this phenomenon, Graham claims that in a possessive position, a strictly subordinate (i.e. dependent) pronoun is needed to contrast with an subordinate unit. This pronoun is *ngo. This means that in the case of the possessives, Graham does not take into account the parallelism between independent nouns and pronouns, but a supposed parallelism between dependent positions. This is clearly inconsequent: in the case of the subject position, the parallelism is supposed to be between independent *nouns* and *pronouns*, in the case of the possessive position, the parallelism is supposed to be between dependent *positions*. The question why we find *ngo in a non-contrast subject and *ngâ in a contrast subject position, while in the possessive position we have nearly exactly the opposite result in the pairs of parallel phrases in the *Mencius* Graham examined, remains.

4. Conclusion

Three major points emerge from these arguments:

- 1) Graham's evolutionary theory is based on the assumption that there is a shift in weight from before to after the verb. This shift is certainly not accepted by all scholars.
- 2) Any phonetic theory can, to the present day, only be a hypothetical one.
- 3) Although Graham's theory of an evolution from a pre-classical opposition between non-possessive and possessive to a classical opposition between subject and possessive on the one hand and object on the other hand, is very convincing, this does not necessarily imply that we have to analyze the subject and the possessive positions as subordinate positions (which are occupied by the dependent, subordinate pronouns), opposed to the non-subordinate object position (which is occupied by the independent pronouns). A major disadvantage of this analysis is that it does not account for the presence of independent pronouns in dependent positions.

Part 2: Given, Comment and Prominence

1. The First Person Pronoun

Without claiming to give a revolutionary theory, we think the problem of 吾 and 我 of the Classical Chinese sentence is put in another light if we interpret the problem in terms of 'given and comment,'⁸³ and of 'prominence', a possibility not considered by Graham, although he did define 'prominence' as⁸⁴:

- (i) the prominent as 'the new' not 'the given'
- (ii) the prominent as 'the given but contrasted'

83 Cf. Chao Yuan-jen, *A Grammar of Spoken Chinese*, 1968, p.69: "The grammatical meaning of subject and predicate in a Chinese sentence is topic and comment, rather than actor and action". See also Givon, T., *Syntax, A Functional-typological Introduction*, 1984, p.147 and p.171.

84 Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.37

Hereby, Graham distinguishes 'internal contrasts' which are inside syntactically parallel phrases and which can be easily verified, and 'external contrasts,' i.e. contrasts with something explicit or implicit in the context. These external contrasts are much harder to verify. For the subject, however, Graham points to two phenomena which can help to identify an external contrast:

- (i) verbal parallelism
- (ii) repetition of the first person subject in short parallel phrases.⁸⁵

To our view, it seems that also the prominent information as 'new, not given,' and translatable as 'It was *I* who...' is an example of an external contrast, 'I' being opposed to those different from 'I'. In the following pages, we would like to show that in the linguistic situation of the *Analects*⁸⁶, there is a relation between

- (1) 'the given' and 吾,
- (2) the 'comment,' 'the prominent' and 我.

The subject and the possessive are most likely to contain old information⁸⁷, while the predicate, as a comment, contains new information. This implies that the subject and the possessive should normally be occupied by the pronoun 吾. If the subject is occupied by 我, it represents prominent

85 *ibid.*, 1969(b), p.43.

86 The result easily can be different for other texts: cf. Pulleyblank, E.G., 1995, p.3: "Though all the productions of the period [from Confucius to the founding of the Qin] are in Classical Chinese, there is a considerable linguistic diversity among them. This is, no doubt, partly the result of the geographical disunity and decentralization of the country, which allowed various regional dialects to become the vehicles of literature in their own areas. It is also the result of historical evolution."

87 Cf. Keenan, E., in Li, Ch.N. (Ed.), 1976, p.318: "Basic subjects are normally the topic of the basic-sentence; i.e. they identify what the speaker is talking about. The object they refer to is normally known to both speaker and addressee, and so is, in that sense, old information". See also Chao Yuan-jen, 1968, p.76 and Li, Ch., and Thompson, S., 1975, p.169. Kennedy, G.A., 1964, p.439 interpreted the topic, since followed by a pause, as stressed, and, thus, occupied by 我. He does not give evidence from literary works for this.

information. We will discover that, as a possessive, 我 appears to be a trace of an older collective first person. That the subject and possessive cannot be considered parallel is even more evident with the second person pronoun. The object, as a comment, gives new information and is quite naturally occupied by the pronoun 我. In the case of inversion of pronoun objects in negative sentences, there appears to be a choice between 吾 and 我.

Essential in our analysis is that we distinguish three functions: subject, adjunct (i.e. possessive), and object. Different from the analyses by B. Karlgren and A.C. Graham is that we also see the subject of a nominalized verb phrase as subjects, not as possessives. The advantage of such an analysis is that it not only explains why the subject and possessive are predominantly occupied by 吾 and the object predominantly by 我, but also explains why the pronoun 我 is found in the subject position. In a later stage, 我 pushes aside 吾, as this is more and more the case in the *Mencius*⁸⁸. Still later, 吾 disappears completely.

The linguistic situation of the pronouns 我 and 吾 in the *Mencius* has been studied by R.H. Gassmann ("Eine kontextorientierte Interpretation der Pronomina *wu* und *wo* im *Meng-tzu*", *Asiatische Studien*, XXXVII.2. 1984, pp.129-153). Gassmann claims that the pronouns *wo* and *wu* are elements of a system of self-reference that is differentiated on grounds of status, focused on the notion of courtesy (Höflichkeit/Unhöflichkeit) and

88 According to Karlgren, B., 1920, pp.212-213 this should be explained as the 'cas régime' (*ngâ) that encroaches on the nominative (*ngo), as it is the case in many Indo-European languages. As the French 'moi,' the Chinese *ngâ first pushed aside *ngo when *ngâ is 'emphatic', i.e. phonetically stressed. Even without qualifying the object as 'cas régime' and the subject and the possessive as nominative, and without taking any phonetic stress into account, we can still see that the pronoun *ngâ that, as new information, quite naturally occupies the object position, encroaches on *ngo that, as old information, occupies the subject and the possessive positions. *ngâ first pushes aside *ngo when *ngâ gives prominent information. This seems to be in accord with the evolution in the Indo-European languages. E.G. Pulleyblank, who qualifies *ngâ as stressed and *ngo as unstressed – a theory that has been refuted by Graham, A.C., 1969(b), pp.35-51 – sees this evolution as an example of "a tendency for unstressed forms to be replaced by stressed forms" (Pulleyblank, E.G., 1960, p.66).

the notion of contrast.⁸⁹ The relation, according to Gassmann, is that every case of discourtesy implies contrast, whereas not every contrast automatically implies discourtesy.⁹⁰ As will be shown in the below analysis of the *Analects*, the above findings for the *Mencius* are likely to represent that logical linguistic situation of the Chinese language that naturally stems from the language of the *Analects*.

An essential difference between the figures in the following scheme and the figures for the distribution of 吾 and 我 in the *Analects* as given by B. Karlgren, A.C. Graham and Chou Fa-kao⁹¹ (see p.1), is that we consider the two pronouns 我 in Bk.19, Ch.3 (see Ex.19) and the two pronouns 吾 in Bk.7, Ch.3 and in Bk.15, Ch.24⁹² as the subject of a nominalized verb phrase. B. Karlgren further counted the 吾 of sentence 7,3 twice: once as subject, and once as possessive.

	<i>subject</i>	<i>possessive</i>	<i>object/noun predicate</i>
吾	96	13	3
我	18	2	26

1.1 The subject in the *Analects*

As a rule, the subject gives old information and is, in these cases, occupied by the pronoun 吾.

89 Gassman, R.H., 1984, p.152.

90 *ibid.*, p.148.

91 Karlgren, B., 1920, pp.208-211; Chou Fa-kao, 1959, p.24; Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.19.

92 7,3: 子曰，德之不脩，學之不講，聞義不能徙，不善不能改，是吾憂也。 Legge, J., 1971, p.195: The Master said, 'The leaving virtue without proper cultivation; the not thoroughly discussing what is learned; not being able to move towards righteousness of which a knowledge is gained; and not being able to change what is not good: - these are the things which occasion me solicitude.'

15,24: 子曰，吾之於人也誰毀，誰譽，如有所譽者，其有所試矣。 Legge, J., 1971, p.301: The Master said, 'In my dealings with men, whose evil do I blame, whose goodness do I praise, beyond what is proper? If I do sometimes exceed in praise, there must be ground for it in my examination [of the individual] ...'

Ex.1: Bk.1, Ch.4

會子曰，吾日三省吾身，爲人謀，而不忠乎，與朋友交，而不信乎，傳不習乎。

J. Legge, p.139: The philosopher Tsâng said, 'I daily examine myself on three points: - whether, in transacting business for others, I may have been not faithful; - whether, in intercourse with friends, I may have been not sincere; - whether I may have not mastered and practised the instructions of my teacher.'

Ex.2: Bk.2, Ch.4

子曰，吾十有五，而志于學。

J. Legge, p.146: The Master said, 'At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning.'

Ex.3: Bk.3, Ch.14

子曰，周監於二代，郁郁乎文哉，吾從周。

J. Legge, p.160: The Master said, 'Châu had the advantage of viewing the two past dynasties. How complete and elegant are its regulations! I follow Châu.'

Karlgren⁹³ saw this third sentence as a clear example of an emphasized pronoun 吾. However, nothing verifies this statement; one could also read 'I follow *Châu*'. The two other examples where Karlgren saw an emphasized pronoun 吾 present similar problems:

Ex.4: Bk.5, Ch.5

子使漆雕開仕。對曰，吾斯之未能信。子說。

J. Legge, p.174: The Master was wishing Ch'î-tiào K'ái to enter on official employment. He replied, 'I am not yet able to rest in the assurance of *this*.' The Master was pleased.

In this sentence, nothing justifies a phonetically emphasized 吾. On the other hand, we do see an exposure of the object, placed in the front and repeated by 之.

93 Karlgren, B., 1920, p.213.

Ex.5: Bk.11, Ch.1

子曰，先進於禮樂，野人也，後進於禮樂，君子也，如用之，則吾從先進。

J. Legge, p.237: The Master said, 'The men of former times, in the matters of ceremonies and music, were rustics, [it is said], while the men of [these] latter times, in ceremonies and music, are accomplished gentlemen.' 'If I have the occasion to use those things, I follow the men of former times.' (This sentence is similar to Ex. 3.)

According to our hypothesis, the subject can only be occupied by the pronoun 我 if it gives prominent information. Below, we consider the eighteen examples of the *Analects* where the subject position is occupied by the pronoun 我. We first list the examples where the subject is 'new, not given,' followed by the examples with internal contrast and by the examples with external contrast.

1.1.1 'new, not given'

Ex.6: Bk.14, Ch.31

子貢方人，子曰，賜也賢乎哉，夫我則不暇。

J. Legge, p.287: Tsze-kung was [in the habit of] comparing men together. The Master said, 'Tsze must have reached a high pitch of excellence! Now, I have not leisure [for this].'

我 clearly is the prominent information. Two particles confirm this: 夫, an introductory particle announcing a topic⁹⁴; and 則, a particle marking the exposure of the subject⁹⁵. These particles are not found with the pronoun 吾. And further:

Ex.7: Bk.18, Ch.8

我則異於是，無可無不可。

J. Legge, p.337: [an enumeration of men having retired from the world] 'I am different from all these. I have no course for which I am predetermined, and no course against which I am predetermined.'

94 Pulleyblank, E.G., 1995, p.74.

95 *ibid.*, p.72.

Ex.8: Bk.12, Ch.5

司馬牛憂曰，人皆有兄弟，我獨亡。

J. Legge, p.252: Sze-mâ Niû, full of anxiety, said, '[Other] men all have their brothers, I only have not.'

In this sentence, 我 is, without any doubt, the new information, restricted by the particle 獨⁹⁶, particle which is not found with the pronoun 吾.

Ex.9: Bk.7, Ch.10

子謂顏淵曰，用之則行，舍之則藏，惟我與爾有是夫。

J. Legge, p.197: The Master said to Yen Yüan, 'When called to office, to undertake its duties; when not called to office, to lie retired; – it is only I and you who have attained to this.'

Particular of this sentence is that the subject pronouns 我 and 爾 are introduced by the particle 惟, a particle used to introduce and restrict the subject or an exposed element⁹⁷. It is clear that in the above example 我 is the new information. Also the particle 惟 is not found with the pronoun 吾. It is further to be noticed that in Ex. 6, 7, 8 and 9 我 is contrasted to other elements in the context. In Ex.6 我 is explicitly contrasted with 'Tsze-kung;' in Ex.7 there is an explicit contrast with 'the men who have retired from the world;' in Ex.8 我 is explicitly contrasted to '[other] men;' in Ex.9, there is an implicit contrast with the others than 'I and you'.

Ex.10: Bk.14, Ch.30

子曰，君子道者三，我無能焉，仁者不憂，知者不惑，勇者不懼。

J. Legge, p.286: The Master said, 'The way of the superior man is threefold, but I am not equal to it. Virtuous, he is free from anxieties; wise, he is free from perplexities; bold, he is free from fear.'

It seems safe to say that 我 is the 'new' information ('As for me ...'), 我 also being clearly opposed to 'the superior man'. The next example is similar:

96 *ibid.*, p.133.

97 *ibid.*, p.131.

Ex.11: Bk.7, Ch.27

子曰，蓋有不知而作之者，我無是也。

J. Legge, p.203: The Master said, 'There may be those who act without knowing why. I do not do so ...'

Here, 我 is the subject of the verb phrase 無是, nominalized since placed in a noun predicate construction. In such a construction, the subject is not separated from the verb by the particle 之.⁹⁸ It is clear that in the context of this example, the pronoun 我 is the new information: 'As for me ...'. Moreover, 'I' is clearly opposed to 'those who'.

Ex.12: Bk.9, Ch.12

子貢曰，有美玉於斯，韞匱而藏諸，求善賈而沽諸。子曰，沽之哉，沽之哉，我待賈者也。

J. Legge, p.221: Tsze-kung said, 'There is a beautiful gem here. Should I lay it up in a case and keep it? or should I seek for a good price and sell it?' The Master said, 'Sell it! Sell it! But I would wait for one to offer the price.'

It is clear that in this sentence the Master can be seen to put himself in a prominent situation: 'As for me, I ...'. However the lack of context does not permit us to further verify this statement. This is also the case in the next two examples:

Ex.13: Bk.7, Ch.19

子曰，我非生而知之者，好古，敏以求之者也。

J. Legge, p.201: The Master said, 'I am not one who was born in the possession of knowledge; I am one who is fond of antiquity, and earnest in seeking it [there].'

Ex.14: Bk.7, Ch.29

子曰，仁遠乎哉，我欲仁，斯仁至矣。

J. Legge, p.204: The Master said, 'Is virtue a thing remote? I wish to be virtuous, and lo! virtue is at hand.'

98 *ibid.*, pp.62-63.

In both sentences 13 and 14, the 'I' can be seen as the new information ('As for me, ...'), however, the lack of a larger context avoids us to say that this is necessarily the case.

Ex.15: Bk.5, Ch.11

子貢曰，我不欲人之加諸我也，吾亦欲無加諸人。

J. Legge, p.177: Tsze-kung said, 'What I do not wish men to do to me, I also wish not to do to men.'

In this example, the context does not seem to force us to translate 我 as 'As for me ...'. Moreover, there is no internal or explicit external contrast between 我 and anyone not acting as 我. Still, it seems safe to say that the whole statement is focused on the *first* 'I,' Tsze-kung clearly exposing himself as the 'new' point of reference.

1.1.2 Internal contrast

Ex. 16: Bk.3, Ch.17

子貢欲去告朔之餼羊。子曰，賜也，爾愛其羊，我愛其禮。

J. Legge, p.161: Tsze-kung wished to do away with the offering of a sheep connected with the inauguration of the first day of each month. The Master said, 'Ts'ze, you love the sheep; I love the ceremony.'

In this example 爾 and 我 are contrasted in syntactically parallel phrases. There is no such contrast possible with the pronoun 吾.

1.1.3 External contrast

External contrasts are difficult to verify, especially since the *Analects* very often only presents a very reduced context. Still, verbal parallelism and the repetition of the first person subject in short parallel phrases are identified as strong signs of external contrast.⁹⁹

Ex.17: Bk.4, Ch.6(ter)

子曰，我未見好仁者，惡不仁者，好仁者，無以尚之，惡不仁者，其爲仁矣，不使不仁者，加乎其身。有能一日用其力於仁矣乎，我未見力不足者。蓋有之矣，我未之見也。

J. Legge, p.167: The Master said, 'I have not seen a person who loved virtue, or one who hated what was not virtuous. He who loved virtue, would esteem nothing above it. He who hated what is not virtuous, would practise virtue in such a way that he would not allow anything that is not virtuous to approach his person. Is any one able for one day to apply his strength to virtue? I have not seen the case in which his strength would be insufficient. Should there possibly be any such case, I have not seen it.'

In this example, we three times have 我未見, i.e. 我 repeated in short parallel phrases. This can be seen as a strong sign of an external contrast. Compare the next example where there is no such repetition and no explicit contrast to other elements in the sentence:

Ex.18: Bk.5, Ch.10

子曰，吾未見剛者。

J. Legge, p.177: The Master said, 'I have not seen a firm and unbending man.'

A similar repetition of the first person pronoun subject is also to be found in the next example:

Ex.19: Bk.19, Ch.3(bis)

子張曰，異乎吾所聞，君子尊賢而容衆，嘉善而矜不能，我之大賢與，於人何所不容，我之不賢與，人將拒我，如之何其拒人也。

J. Legge, p.340: Tsze-chang observed, 'This is different from what I have learned. The superior man honours the talented and virtuous, and bears with all. He praises the

⁹⁹ Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.43.

good, and pities the incompetent. Am I possessed of great talents and virtue? - who is there among men whom I will not bear with? Am I devoid of talents and virtue? - men will put me away from them. What have we to do with the putting away of others?’

Karlgren considered the pronouns 我 in this example as possessives.¹⁰⁰ We treat them as subjects since they are the subjects of nominalized verb phrases.¹⁰¹ Interesting in this example is further the presence of the pronoun 吾, also subject of a nominalized verb phrase¹⁰². There is no sign that the latter pronoun 吾 should be prominent. The prominence of the 我 pronouns, however, is logical in the context and is verified by the repetition of the pronoun 我 in short parallel phrases. In the other examples of external contrast, this external contrast cannot be verified by the above mentioned repetition. In these cases, however, 我 is explicitly contrasted to other elements in the context:

Ex.20: Bk.2, Ch.5

孟懿子問孝，子曰，無違。樊遲御，子告之曰，孟孫問孝於我，我對曰，無違。

J. Legge, p.147: Mâng Î asked what filial piety was. The Master said, ‘It is not being disobedient.’ [Soon after], as Fan Ch’ih was driving him, the Master told him, saying, ‘Mâng-sun asked me what filial piety was, and I answered him, - “not being disobedient.”’

In this example, 我 can easily be understood as the antagonist of Mâng-sun. This, however, does not seem absolutely necessary in the context: the sentence can very well be read without this contrast. In this example, it is probably only the choice of the pronoun 我 that induces us to see the external contrast. The next example is similar, but, has a much clearer contrast between ‘I’ and another element:

100 See note 89.

101 Pulleyblank, E.G., 1995, p.64 en p.139 (與 = 也乎).

102 *ibid.*, p.68.

Ex.21: Bk.9, Ch.7

子曰，吾有知乎哉，無知也，有鄙夫問於我，空空如也，我叩其兩端而竭焉。

J. Legge, p.219: The Master said, 'Am I indeed possessed of knowledge? I am not knowing. But if a mean person, who appears quite empty-like, ask anything of me, I set it forth from one end to the other, and exhaust it.'

Interesting in this example, is that the Master first uses 吾, and that, later, when he opposes himself to a mean person, he uses 我. This is a clear indication that 我 has to be understood as prominent information.

Conclusion: the above examples display ample evidence to state that 我, when put in the subject position, gives prominent information. It further is evident that there is a clear relation between the 'given' and 吾. There are, however, a few cases where also 吾 could be read as the new information ('As for me, ...'). It is, however, important that in such sentences, no explicit element in the context ever forces us to read the 吾 in such a way. For instance:

Ex.22: Bk.3, Ch.14

子曰，周監於二代，郁郁乎文哉，吾從周。

J. Legge, p.160: The Master said, 'Châu had the advantage of viewing the two past dynasties. How complete and elegant are its regulations! I follow Châu.' (see also Ex. 3)

It might very well be that the only difference between the above example and the examples 12, 13 and 14 is the choice between 吾 and 我, the latter pronoun, as verified in many other examples, being a sign of prominence. Apart from the above sentences, the pronoun 吾 could, in a few cases, also be interpreted as 'externally opposed to other elements in the context'. For instance:

Ex.23: Bk.1, Ch.7

子夏曰，賢賢易色，事父母，能竭其力，事君，能致其身，與朋友交，言而有信，雖曰未學，吾必謂之學矣。

J. Legge, pp.140-141: Tsze-hsiâ said, 'If a man withdraws his mind from the love of beauty, and applies it as sincerely to the love of the virtuous; if, in serving his parents, he can exert his utmost strength; if, in serving his prince, he can devote his life; if, in

his intercourse with his friends, his words are sincere: – although men say that he has not learned, I will certainly say that he has.’

In this example, there is an opposition between the unexpressed ‘men’ and the ‘I’. The choice of 吾 induces us to say that the opposition is not felt to be important, all the more since the opponent ‘men’ is not expressed.

Ex.24: Bk.5, Ch.8

子謂子夏曰，女與回也，孰愈。對曰，賜也，何敢望回，回也，聞一以知十，賜也，聞一以知二。子曰，弗如也，吾與女，弗如也。

J. Legge, p.176: The Master said to Tsze-kung, ‘Which do you consider superior, yourself or Hûi?’ Tsze-kung replied, ‘How dare I compare myself with Hûi? Hûi hears one point and knows all about a subject; I hear one point and know a second.’ The Master said, ‘You are not equal to him. I grant you, you are not equal to him.’

This example may appear as puzzling. The choice of the pronouns 吾 and 女 makes the sentence appear as a mere comparison, not as an antagonism. An antagonism would imply the use of 我 and 爾, indicating prominent information. The answer by ‘The Master’ (‘You are not equal,’ as opposed to ‘You (or Hui) is superior’) justifies this interpretation. (Notice also the difference with Ex.9). Also the next example may appear as a puzzling one:

Ex.25: Bk.16, Ch.1

冉有曰，夫子欲之，吾二臣者，皆不欲也。

J. Legge, p.307: Zan Yû said, ‘Our master wishes the thing; neither of us two ministers wishes it.’

In this example, there is a clear opposition between the master and the ministers. Still, the pronoun 吾 is used. This is to be explained as that the prominent element is 二臣, all the more since 二臣 is followed by the particle 者, particle which occurs as a marker of contrast after nouns in exposed position.¹⁰³

In his above mentioned study of the *Mencius*, R.H. Gassmann claims that in the subject position, *wu* is the courtesy form, used when speaking to

103 Pulleyblank, E.G., 1995, p.74

someone of higher or of equal rank, whereas *wo* is the discourtesy form, i.e., it contains a certain degree of impoliteness when used by someone of lower or of equal rank.¹⁰⁴ This, still according to Gassmann, also explains why *wu* is the predominant form in questions: the person one asks a question to is supposed to possess some knowledge one does not have oneself and which one attempts to gain. The distribution of 吾 and 我 in the *Analects* is as follows:

	吾	我
- Confucius addressing an unknown partner:	49	9
- Confucius addressing a disciple:	24	5
- Confucius addressing a king:	2	
- Confucius addressing a minister:	3	
- Confucius addressing an officer:		1
- Philosopher Tseng addressing an unknown partner:	3	
- Philosopher Tseng addressing disciples:	1	
- a disciple addressing an unknown partner:	1	
- a disciple addressing Confucius:	2	1
- a disciple addressing an envoy:	1	
- a disciple addressing another disciple:	3	2
- a duke addressing Confucius:	3	
- a duke addressing a disciple:	1	
- a disciple addressing Confucius:	1	
- a minister addressing a nobleman:	1	
- a border-warden addressing an unknown partner:	1	

Applying the analysis of R.H. Gassmann to the language of the *Analects*, we are confronted with the following difficulties:

(1) Confucius addressing his disciples uses both 吾 (24 times) and 我 (5 times) to refer to himself, and also disciples refer to themselves both with 吾 (2 times) and with 我 (1 time) when addressing the Master. Some examples:

104 Gassmann, R.H., 1984, pp.134-139.

Bk.17, Ch.8

子曰，由也，女聞六言六蔽矣乎。對曰，未也，居，吾語女。

J. Legge, p.322: The Master said, 'Yû, have you heard the six words to which are attached six becloudings?' Yû replied, 'I have not.' 'Sit down, and I will tell them to you.'

Bk.3, Ch.17

子貢欲去告朔之餼羊。子曰，賜也，爾愛其羊，我愛其禮。

J. Legge, p.161: Tsze-kung wished to do away with the offering of a sheep connected with the inauguration of the first day of each month. The Master said, 'Ts'ze, you love the sheep; I love the ceremony.'

Bk.5, Ch.5

子使漆雕開仕。對曰，吾斯之未能信，子說。

J. Legge, p.174: The Master was wishing Ch'î-tiào K'âi to enter on official employment. He replied, 'I am not yet able to rest in the assurance of *this*.' The Master was pleased.'

Bk.5, Ch.11

子貢曰，我不欲人之加諸我也，吾亦欲無加諸人。

J. Legge, p.177: Tsze-kung said, 'What I do not wish men to do to me, I also wish not to do to men.'

It thus is evident that there is no clear demarcation of status visible in the use of the first person pronouns.

(2) Of the 96 instances in which 吾 is used in subject position, 76 times Confucius refers to himself while instructing. Of these 76 times, 49 instances are unclear as to whom is addressed by Confucius, while in 24 instances Confucius addresses his pupils. Hereby, it is the question whether Confucius would treat the people he instructs, and especially his pupils, as of equal rank, thus justifying the use of 吾 as is implied by the theory of Gassmann. Dukes and ministers who address Confucius, further, use 4 times 吾 to refer to themselves¹⁰⁵, while Confucius uses 5 times 吾 to

105 Bk.12, Ch.9; Bk.16, Ch.1; Bk.18, Ch.3 (bis).

refer to himself when addressing ministers and kings¹⁰⁶. Do we have to conclude that Confucius at the one hand, and dukes, ministers and kings at the other, are of equal rank?

(3) When addressing his disciple Tzu-kung 子貢, Confucius refers to himself as 吾 twice¹⁰⁷ and as 我 4 times¹⁰⁸. When addressing his disciple Yen Yüan 吾 and 我 are both used once¹⁰⁹. When it is difference in rank that determines the use of 吾 and 我, do we accordingly have to suppose that rank has mutually interchanged here?

(4) In the *Analects*, one person is seen to, in one situation, refer to himself both as 吾 and as 我: see Ex.15 (Bk.5, Ch.11) where the disciple Tzu-kung addresses Confucius; Ex.19 (Bk.19, Ch.3) where the disciple Tzu-chang speaks to a disciple of Tzu-hsia who himself is a disciple of Confucius; and Ex.21 (Bk.9, Ch.7) where Confucius is addressing an unidentifiable person.

(5) When referring to someone of equal rank, Gassmann claims that 吾 is the appropriate form of the first person pronoun. However, in the following example where Confucius puts himself on equal level with his disciple Yen Yüan, 我 is used:

Bk.7, Ch.10

子謂顏淵曰，用之則行，舍之則藏，惟我與爾有是夫。

J. Legge, p.197: The Master said to Yen Yüan, 'When called to office, to undertake its duties; when not called to office, to lie retired; – it is only I and you who have attained to this.'

(6) In the following sentence, Confucius speaks to his disciple Tzu-kung:

106 Bk.8, Ch.21 (bis); Bk.11, Ch.23; Bk.16, Ch.1; Bk.17, Ch.1.

107 Bk.5, Ch.8; Bk.14, Ch.18.

108 Bk.3, Ch.17; Bk.9, Ch.12; Bk.14, Ch.30; Bk.14, Ch.31.

109 Bk.11, Ch.22 and Bk.7, Ch.10 resp..

Bk. 14, Ch. 30

子曰，君子道者三，我無能焉。

Legge, p.286: The Master said, 'The way of the superior man is threefold, but I am not equal to it.'

The use of 我, according to Gassmann, implies that Confucius sees himself as of a higher rank than his pupil. Not only is it so that, when instructing, Confucius mostly uses 吾 to refer to himself, the content of what is said shows that Confucius, in this sentence, does not esteem himself very high. This would further plead for the use of 吾.

This evidence, combined with the fact that – as shown – the use of 我 in subject position is combined with peculiar grammatical features that focalize the subject, point to it that in the *Analects* 我 is used in the subject position to indicate prominence. It is, however, not unlikely that the prominent 我 evolved to a discourtesy form in the *Mencius* and, still later, became the only first person pronoun.

1.2. The possessive in the *Analects*

The possessive usually contains old information and should accordingly be occupied by the pronoun 吾. A.C. Graham, examining all the pairs of parallel phrases containing 吾 or 我 as possessive in the *Mencius*, discovered that if the pronoun is contrasted, the pronoun 吾 is used, and if the pronoun is in conjunction with contrasted words, the use of 我 becomes possible¹¹⁰.

A completely different analysis by R.H. Gassmann¹¹¹ revealed that, for the *Mencius*, in the possessive, the focus on the new information is directed towards the nominal phrase and only very seldom on the possessive expression itself. This explains why 吾 is the predominant form for the possessive. This analysis parallels our findings for the subject in the *Analects*: 吾 is the pronoun for information which is not prominent. For the possessive, neither Graham's nor Gassmann's theory can, however, be confirmed in the *Analects* where 吾 occurs 13 times in possessive position and 我 only occurs twice. As for Graham's theory, the two examples of 我

110 Graham, A.C., 1969(b), pp.44-46.

111 Gassmann, R.H., 1984, pp.132-133 and pp.150-152.

as possessives are not conjuncted with contrasted words, and 吾 as a possessive is never contrasted to another element. Moreover, for the subject of a nominalized verb phrase, by Graham considered as equivalent to a possessive¹¹², the *Analects* use the pronoun 我 as prominent information (see Ex. 19) and not 吾 as suggested by Graham's theory. As for Gassmann's theory, in the two examples of 我 in the possessive in the *Analects*, the question does not seem to be one of prominence of the possessive expression itself, but seems to be of a different order. The theory proposed by Gassmann for 吾 in possessive position in the *Mencius*, shows to be applicable also to the *Analects* since all occurrences of 吾 in possessive position in the *Analects* do not imply prominence. Moreover, in case the possessive would imply prominence, it is not unlikely that – indeed – 我 would be used. However, a lack of examples in the *Analects* does not enable us to verify this. In the *Analects*, 吾 is the usual first person possessive pronoun.

Ex.26: Bk.11, Ch.16

子曰，非吾徒也，小子，鳴鼓而攻之，可也。

J. Legge, p.243: The Master said, 'He is no disciple of mine. My little children, beat the drum and assail him.'

A lack of examples avoids us to determine the reason why the pronoun 我 is used in two sentences:

Ex.27: Bk.7, Ch.1

子曰述而不作，信而好古，竊比於我老彭。

J. Legge, p.195: The Master said, 'A transmitter and not a maker, believing in and loving the ancients, I venture to compare myself with our old P'ang.'

This may be a trace of a pre-classical 我, i.e. the collective plural first person, characterized by an unrestricted distribution, but especially common as possessive.¹¹³ In the *Analects* also the pronoun 吾 can be used as a

112 Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.19.

113 Cf. Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.52; Pulleyblank, E.G., 1995, p.76. See also Hu Shih, *Hu Shih Wen-ts'un*, 1925, Vol.2, p.21.

collective.¹¹⁴ The difference is that while 吾 clearly is an exclusive plural in the example below, 我 in example 27 can very easily be interpreted as inclusive:

Ex.28: Bk.13,Ch.18(bis)

葉公語孔子曰，吾黨有直躬者，其父攘羊，而子證之。孔子曰，吾黨之直者異於是，父爲子隱，子爲父隱，直在其中矣。

J. Legge, p.270: The duke of Sheh informed Confucius, saying, 'Among us here there are those who may be styled upright in their conduct. If their father have stolen a sheep, they will bear witness to the fact.' Confucius said, 'Among us, in our part of the country, those who are upright are different from this. The father conceals the misconduct of the son, and the son conceals the misconduct of the father. Uprightness is to be found in this.'

Ex.29: Bk.7, Ch.21

子曰，三人行，必有我師焉，擇其善者而從之，其不善者而改之。

J. Legge, p.202: The Master said, 'When I walk along with two others, they may serve me as my teachers. I will select their good qualities and follow them, their bad qualities and avoid them.'

The reason the pronoun 我 is used in this sentence is obscure. Yet, there seems to be no objection to consider it as an inclusive collective pronoun. This brings us to the following translation: The Master said, 'When three men walk, our teachers are certainly amongst them. Let us determine who is good and follow him, who is bad and change?/avoid? him.'¹¹⁵

Conclusion: 吾 is the neutral possessive pronoun, in accordance with the rule that 吾 is the pronoun for the old information. Still, the possessive should not be treated as parallel to the subject: while the reason the pronoun 我 is used in the subject position is its prominence, this is not so

114 Hu Shih, 1925, Vol.2, pp.17-18.

115 Cp. with ex.26: '吾徒': here, we can safely follow the argument by R.H. Gassmann that the focus is on 徒. The same reasoning would plead for '吾師'. The fact that Confucius is here referring to his masters would all the more plead for the use of 吾 instead of 我. Cp. also Ex.27.

for the possessive. 我 as possessive appears to be a (trace of an older) collective plural pronoun.

1.3. The object in the *Analects*

According to our hypothesis, the object, as a comment, gives new information and is quite naturally occupied by the pronoun 我 (Ex.30). One pronoun 我 which is classified as object by Karlgren (Ex.31) is, actually, a noun predicate¹¹⁶ that equally gives new information.

Ex.30: Bk.5, Ch.6(bis)

子曰，道不行，乘桴浮于海，從我者，其由與。子路聞之喜。子曰，由也，好勇過我，無所取村。

J. Legge, pp.174-175: The Master said, 'My doctrines make no way. I will get upon a raft, and float about on the sea. He that will accompany me will be Yû, I dare to say.' Tsze-lû hearing this was glad, upon which the Master said, 'Yû is fonder of daring than I am. He does not exercise his judgment upon matters.'

Ex.31: Bk.11, Ch.10

子曰，回也，視子猶父也，子不得視猶子也，非我也，夫二三子也。

J. Legge, p.240: The Master said, 'Hûi behaved towards me as his father. I have not been able to treat him as my son. The fault is not mine; it belongs to you, O disciples.'

In three cases, however, we find the pronoun 吾 in the object position. Each of these cases is a negative sentence with inversion of the pronoun object (Ex.32 and Ex.33). According to Graham this pre-classical feature, surviving in the classical language, should, in the classical language, be regarded as an anomaly which creates a dilemma

“as to whether to treat the pronoun as object (although it precedes the verb as though subordinate to it) or as a subordinate (although like the object it is uneliminable from the core). This leaves freedom of choice between *wu* and *wo*.”¹¹⁷

116 Pulleyblank, E.G., 1995, p.17.

117 Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.23.

Even when we do not qualify the subject as subordinate, the same dilemma occurs: an inverted object has its position in front of the verb in common with the subject. A choice between 吾 and 我 when the pronoun object is inverted, is confirmed in the *Analects*:

Ex.32: Bk.11, Ch.25(bis)

子曰，以吾一日長乎爾，毋吾以也。居則曰，不吾知也，...

J. Legge, p.246: He said to them, 'Though I am a day or so older than you, do not think of that.' From day to day you are saying, "We are not known."

Ex.33: Bk.13, Ch.14

子曰，其事也，如有政，雖不吾以，吾其與聞之。

J. Legge, p.268: The Master said, 'It must have been [family] affairs. If there had been government business, though I am not [now] in office, I should have been consulted about it.'

Ex.34: Bk.14, Ch.37

子曰，莫我知也夫。子貢曰，何爲其莫知子也。子曰，不怨天，不尤人，下學而上達，知我者其天乎。

J. Legge, pp.288-289: The Master said, 'Alas! there is no one that knows me.' Tszekung said, 'What do you mean by thus saying - that no one knows you?' The Master replied, 'I do not murmur against Heaven. I do not grumble against men. My studies lie low, and my penetration rises high. But there is Heaven; - that knows me!'

Ex.35: Bk.17, Ch.1

謂孔子曰，來，子與爾言，曰，懷其寶，而迷其邦，可謂仁乎。曰，不可。好從事，而亟失時，可謂知乎。曰，不可。日月逝矣，歲不我與，孔子曰，諾，吾將任矣。

J. Legge, pp.317-318: [Ho] said to Confucius, 'Come, let me speak with you.' He then asked, 'Can he be called benevolent who keeps his jewel in his bosom, and leaves his country to confusion?' [Confucius] replied, 'No.' 'Can he be called wise, who is anxious to be engaged in public employment, and yet is constantly losing the opportunity of being [so]?' [Confucius again] said, 'No.' 'The days and months are passing away; the years do not wait for us.' Confucius said, 'Right; I will go into office.'

In the above examples, there seems to be no clear reason why, in some cases, we find 吾 and in other cases 我.¹¹⁸

In his study, Gassmann¹¹⁹ explains the exclusive appearance of 我 in the object position as follows: in a discussion, two speakers of equal rank will refer to their partner as 子 [tzu], and refer to themselves as 吾 (subject), i.e. using the courtesy form. Gassmann supposes that something he calls 'Kopierverhalten' (copy behavior) is active: the person addressed copies the register of speech of his partner, i.e. 我 for the object. This does not imply impoliteness. The occurrence of 吾 in object position (of which no examples occur in the *Mencius*) is explained as the speaker who, because he feels offended or wants to express his contempt, deliberately violates the copy behavior. This, still according to Gassmann, also explains why 吾 in object position especially appears in phrases of the form 不吾 + Verb.¹²⁰ Not only is this theory hard to verify (吾 does not occur in object position in the *Mencius* and only three times (two of which in the same sentence) in the *Analects*), applying this theory to the object 我 in the *Analects* reveals the following difficulties:

- (1) Is copy behavior always possible: what about a sentence where the first person object is 我 without any sentence preceding, as is the case in

118 According to Karlgren, B., 1920, p.209, the use of 吾 is due to an assimilation with a (subject) nominative 吾 figuring in the same sentence. However, in example 35, 我 is used where a subject 吾 figures in the close proximity (be it not in the same sentence).

119 Gassmann, R.H., 1984, pp.139-146.

120 Notice that Gassmann also claims that "Die Äusserungen mit *wu* als Objekt im Verhältnis zur Gesamtzahl der Belege mit einer Pronominalform der ersten Person in Objektposition eine eher seltene Erscheinung sind, hängt wohl damit zusammen, dass man sich nicht immer nach dem Inhalt der Kommunikation richten kann, d.h. dass man die Formen wahren muss, weil z.B. der Gesprächspartner in einer Lage ist (etwa als Fürst oder Dienstherr), die die formale Unhöflichkeit aus verschiedenen Gründen heraus verbieten kann. Es überrascht daher weiter auch nicht, dass zum Ausdruck der Zurücksetzung vorallem die bescheidene Form *pu wu* vorkommt; die Form *pu wo* ist zwar belegt, scheint aber eher der kontrastiven Funktion der Pronomina zuzuordnen zu sein".

Bk.9,Ch.10

夫子循循然善誘人，博我以文，約我以禮。

J. Legge, p.220: [...] ‘The Master, by orderly method; skilfully leads men on. He enlarged my mind with learning, and taught me the restraints of propriety.’

(2) 我 also appears in sentences of the form ‘Negation + 我’, as in

Bk.14,Ch.37

子曰，莫我知也夫。

J. Legge, p.288: The Master said, ‘Alas! There is no one that knows me.’

Conclusion: 我, the pronoun of the new information, quite naturally occupies the object position. Only in negative sentences with an inverted object, a choice between 吾 and 我 appears to be possible.

1.4 General Conclusion:

There is a clear relation between the ‘given’ and 吾. Only for the inverted pronoun object in a negative sentence, there appears to be the choice between 吾 and 我. 我 quite naturally occupies the object position, or functions as a noun predicate. When put in the subject position, it gives prominent information. As a possessive, it appears to be used as a inclusive collective first person.

2. *The second person pronoun*

Is this evidence also verified for the second person pronouns 女 (= 汝) and 爾 in the *Analects*? Although it is not to be excluded that the use of the second person pronouns is influenced by the politeness of the speaker¹²¹, there appears to be enough evidence to say that 汝 is parallel to 吾 and 爾 to 我. For the figures of distribution of 汝 and 爾 in the *Analects* as given

121 See Hu Shih, 1925, Vol.2, pp.11-12.

by B. Karlgren, A.C. Graham and Chou Fa-kao, see p.3.¹²² Essential in the beneath scheme is that, unlike Chou Fa-kao, we consider the four pronouns 爾 in Bk.5, Ch.11; Bk.12, Ch.20 and Bk.13, Ch.2 (see Ex. 39, 40 and 43) as the subject of a nominalized verb phrase¹²³.

	<i>subject</i>	<i>possessive</i>	<i>object/noun predicate</i>
汝	13	–	4
爾	10	3	5

2.1 The subject

The subject gives old information and is, in these cases, occupied by the pronoun 汝:

Ex.36: Bk.6, Ch.12

子游爲武城宰，子曰，女得人焉耳乎。

J. Legge, p.189: Tsze-yû being governor of Wû-châng, the Master said to him, 'Have you got [good] men [there]? ...'

According to our hypothesis, the subject can only be occupied by the pronoun 爾 if it gives prominent information. Below, we investigate the ten examples of the *Analects* where the subject position is occupied by the pronoun 爾. We first list the examples where the subject is 'new, not given,' next the examples with internal contrast and finally the examples with external contrast.¹²⁴

122 As the notions of 'courtesy' and 'discourtesy' are fundamental notions in R.H. Gassmann's article "Eine Kontextorientierte Interpretation ...", we regret that he does not treat the second person pronouns.

123 These verb phrases are all nominalized by the particle 所 (Pulleyblank, E., 1995, p.68).

124 Note that Graham, 1969(b), p.59, already pointed out that 爾 as a subject is the new or the contrastive element. He did not take into account 爾 as subject of a nominalized verb phrase.

2.1.1 'new, not given'

Ex.37: Bk.7, Ch.10

子謂顏淵曰，用之則行，舍之則藏，惟我與爾有是夫。

J. Legge, p.197: The Master said to Yen Yüan, 'When called to office, to undertake its duties; when not called to office, to lie retired; – it is only I and you who have attained to this.' (See example 9.)

Ex.38: Bk.16, Ch.1

孔子曰，求，無乃爾是過與。

J. Legge, p.307: Confucius said, 'Ch'iü, is it not you who are in fault here?'

E.G. Pulleyblank, 1995, p.144 states that in the combination 無乃, the use of the particle 乃 is probably mainly to prevent ambiguity: it tells us not to interpret 無 as 'not have,' but as the introduction of a rhetorical question implying an affirmative answer. However, he also mentions another use of the particle 乃, i.e. as emphasizing the following noun predicate¹²⁵. In the above example, it seems that [also] the latter use is to be applied, as 乃 emphasizes the following nominalized verb phrase, the more since 無 introducing a rhetorical question is not necessarily followed by the particle 乃. As for the demonstrative 是, Pulleyblank states that it may be used for the resumption of an exposed subject.¹²⁶ We can only conclude that in the above example 爾, subject of an emphasized nominalized verb phrase and resumed by the demonstrative 是, is the new information. It further has to be noted that 'you' in sentence 38 is implicitly contrasted to 'the master of you' (see example 44). No particle marking an exposed subject ever occurs with 汝.

Ex.39: Bk.5, Ch.11

子貢曰，我不欲人之加諸我也，吾亦欲無加諸人。子曰，賜也，非爾所及也。

J. Legge, p.177: Tsze-kung said, 'What I do not wish men to do to me, I also wish not to do to men.' The Master said, 'Ts'ze, you have not attained to that.'

125 Pulleyblank, E.G., 1995, p.75.

126 Pulleyblank, E.G., 1995, p.72.

In the above example, 爾 clearly appears as the new information: ‘as for you (unlike others), you have not attained to that.’ See also example 15.

Ex.40: Bk.12, Ch.20

子張問士何如，斯可謂之達矣。子曰，何哉，爾所謂達者。子張對曰，在邦必聞，在家必聞。子曰，是聞也，非達也。

J. Legge, p.259: Tsze-chang asked, ‘What must the officer be, who may be said to be distinguished?’ The Master said, ‘What is it that you call being distinguished?’ Tsze-chang replied, ‘It is to be heard of through the State, to be heard of throughout his clan.’ The Master said, ‘That is notoriety, not distinction.’

In the above example, ‘you’ is focused on as the bringer of new information, information which will then be refuted by Confucius.

2.1.2 Internal contrast

Ex.41: Bk.3, Ch.17

子貢欲去告朔之餼羊。子曰，賜也，爾愛其羊，我愛其禮。

J. Legge, p.161: Tsze-kung wished to do away with the offering of a sheep connected with the inauguration of the first day of each month. The Master said, ‘Ts’ze, you love the sheep; I love the ceremony.’ (See example 16.)

No internal contrast is found for the pronoun 汝.

2.1.3 External contrast

Ex.42: Bk.11, Ch.25

求，爾何如。[...] 赤，爾何如。[...] 點，爾何如。

J. Legge, pp.247-248 : [Turning to Yen Yû, he said,] ‘Ch’iû, what are your wishes?’ [...] ‘What are your wishes, Ch’ih,’ [said the Master next to Kung-hsî Hwâ]. [...] [Last of all, the Master asked Tsāng Hsî,] ‘Tien, what are your wishes?’

In the above example each ‘you’ is explicitly contrasted with the ‘you’ of the others.

Ex.43: Bk.13, Ch.2

曰，焉知賢才而舉之。曰舉爾所知，爾所不知，人其舍諸。

J. Legge, p.263: [Chung-kung] said, 'How shall I know the men of virtue and talent, so that I may raise them to office?' He was answered, 'Raise to office those whom you know. As to those whom you do not know, will others neglect them?'

Both pronouns 爾 are explicitly opposed to 'others' (=人). Moreover, they stand in short parallel phrases.

Conclusion: The above examples display ample evidence that 爾 in the subject position gives prominent information. It further is evident that there is a clear relation between the 'given' and 汝.

2.2 The possessive

In the *Analects*, there only are three examples of a second person possessive pronoun, each time the pronoun 爾.

Ex.44: Bk.16, Ch.1

[季氏將伐顛臾。冉有季路見於孔子，曰，季氏將有事於顛臾。孔子曰，求，無乃爾是過與。[...]冉有曰，夫子欲之，吾二臣者，皆不欲也。孔子曰，求，周任有言曰，陳力就列，不能者止，危而不持，顛而不扶，則將焉用彼相矣。]且爾言過矣，虎兕出於柙，龜玉毀於櫝中，是誰之過與。

J. Legge, pp. 306-307: [The head of the Chî family was going to attack Chwan-yü. Zan Yü and Chî-lû had an interview with Confucius, and said, '[Our chief], Chî, is going to commence operations against Chwan-yü.' Confucius said, 'Ch'iü¹²⁷, is it not you who are in fault here?' [...] Zan Yü said, 'Our master wishes the thing; neither of us two ministers wishes it.' Confucius said, 'Ch'iü, there are the words of Châu Zân, - "When he can out forth his ability, he takes his place in the ranks [of office]; when he finds himself unable to do so, he retires from it. How can he be used as a guide to a blind man, who does not support him when tottering, nor raise him up when fallen?"] 'And further, you speak wrongly. When a tiger or a rhinoceros escapes from his cage; when a tortoise or piece of jade is injured in its repository: - whose is the fault?'

127 Confucius addresses himself only to Ch'iü as pars pro toto for the men in the Chî service.

The above example differs from the two following ones in having a noun derived from a verb as head of the noun phrase. As a verb, this noun would have the pronoun 爾 as subject. The use of 爾 is in accordance with our hypothesis for the subject 爾: it is (externally) contrasted to the master of Zan yû and Chî-lû. Not the master is wrong by attacking Chuan-yü, but his servants by saying that they have nothing to do with it and, in this way, escaping their responsibility. This contrast is emphasized by the use of the particle 且, 'moreover'. A lack of examples makes it impossible to determine the reason why in the next two examples the pronoun 爾 is used:

Ex.45: Bk.5, Ch.25

顏淵季路侍。子曰，盍各言爾志。

J. Legge, p. 182: Yen Yüan and Chî Lû being by his side, the Master said to them, 'Come, let each of you tell his wishes.'

In this sentence, 爾 could be seen as a collective plural.¹²⁸ This, however, does not appear to be the case in the next example:

Ex.46: Bk.6, Ch.3

原思爲之宰，與之粟九百，辭。子曰，毋，以與爾鄰里鄉黨乎。

J. Legge, p. 186: Yüan Sze being made governor [of his town by the Master], he gave him nine hundred measures of grain, but Sze declined them. The Master said, 'Do not decline them. May you not give them away in the neighbourhoods, hamlets, towns, and villages?'

Conclusion: In the *Analects*, the use of the second person possessive pronouns is limited. Contrary to the first person where the neutral 吾 is frequently used, we do not find 汝 as second person possessive. In the three sentences where we find a possessive pronoun, 爾 is used. Of these three occurrences, one is subjective¹²⁹ and concords with the use of the subject 爾.

128 See also Hu Shih, 1925, Vol.2, pp.10-11.

129 See Pulleyblank, E.G., 1995, p.76.

2.3 The object

According to our hypothesis, the object, as a comment, gives new information and is quite naturally occupied by the pronoun 爾 (Ex.47 and 48).

Ex.47: Bk.11, Ch.25

子路，曾皙，冉有，公西華，侍坐。子曰，以吾一日長乎爾，毋吾以也。居則曰，不吾知也，如或知爾，則何以哉。

J. Legge, pp.246-247: Tsze-lû, Tsâng Hsî, Zan Yû, and Kung-hsî Hwâ were sitting by [the Master]. He said to them, 'Though I am a day or so older than you, do not think of that. From day to day you are saying, "We are not known." If some [ruler] were to know you, what would you like to do?'

Ex.48: Bk.17, Ch.1

謂孔子曰，來，子與爾言，曰，懷其寶，而迷其邦，可謂仁乎。

J. Legge, pp.317-318: [Ho] said to Confucius, 'Come, let me speak with you.' He then asked, 'Can he be called benevolent who keeps his jewel in his bosom, and leaves his country to confusion? ...'

In four cases, however, we find the pronoun 女 in the object position. Three of these are pivot constructions:

Ex.49: Bk.2, Ch.17

子曰，由，誨女知之乎，...

J. Legge, p.151: The Master said, 'Yû, shall I teach you what knowledge is? ...'

Ex.50: Bk.11, Ch.22

子畏於匡，顏淵後，子曰，吾以女爲死矣。曰，子在，回何敢死。

J. Legge, p.245: The Master was put in fear in K'wang and Yen Yüan fell behind. The Master [on his rejoining him], said, 'I thought you had died.' [Hûi] replied, 'While you were alive, how should I presume to die?'

Ex.51: Bk.17, Ch.21

子曰，食夫稻，衣夫錦，於女安乎。曰，安。女安，則爲之，夫君子之居喪，食旨不甘，聞樂不樂，居處不安，故不爲也，今女安，則爲之。

J. Legge, pp.327-328: The Master said, 'If you were, [after a year], to eat good rice, and wear embroidered clothes, would you feel at ease?' 'I should,' replied Wo. The

Master said, 'If you can feel at ease, do it. But a superior man, during the whole period of mourning, does not enjoy pleasant food which he may eat, nor derive pleasure from music which he may hear. He also does not feel at ease, if he is comfortably lodged. Therefore he does not do [what you propose]. But now you feel at ease and may do it.'

The pronoun acts as a 'pivot' between the two verbs: it is the object of the first verb and the subject of the second. Example 51 shows how small the difference between the pivot pronoun and the subject of the second verb is: in the same context as the pivot construction, 汝 twice figures as the subject of the verb 安. Although no example of the pronoun 爾 in a pivot construction is found, the lack of examples avoids us to state that, in such cases, the pronoun 汝 *always* is the preferred one. It is possible that in these constructions a choice between 汝 and 爾 was permitted, the more since in the one similar example of the first person, the pronoun 我 (the usual object pronoun) is used:

Ex.52: Bk.10, Ch.15

朋友死，無所歸，曰，於我殯。

J. Legge, p.235: When any of his friends died, if he had no relations who could be depended on for the necessary offices, he would say, 'I will bury him.'

One puzzling example of the pronoun 汝 as object remains:

Ex.53: Bk.17, Ch.8

對曰，未也。居，吾語女。

J. Legge, p.322: Yü replied, 'I have not.' 'Sit down, and I will tell them to you.'

Graham explains this example as a common formula.¹³⁰ It is, however, not impossible that the use of 汝 is limited to this construction, due to the presence of the pronoun 吾, pronoun which is very often parallel to 汝. The lack of examples for the second person makes it impossible to verify this further.

130 Graham, A.C., 1969(b), p.59.

Conclusion: There appears to be a parallel between the first and the second person pronouns: 我 and 爾 are the natural pronouns for the object position. Only in a few constructions 吾 and 汝 can occupy the object position: 吾 as an inverted object in negative sentences; 汝 in a pivot construction and in the construction 吾語汝. Since, for the second person, we have no examples of a pronoun in a negative sentence, and since for the first person, we only have one example similar to the pivot construction of the second person, it is not possible to verify to what extent 吾 and 汝 are parallel. We can only say that, as an object, 吾 and 汝 both have a limited use.

Part 3: Conclusion

In the *Analects*:

1. In the subject, old information is expressed by the pronouns 吾 and 汝. Prominent information is expressed by the pronouns 我 and 爾.
2. The possessive is not parallel to the subject. For the first person, 吾 contains old information; 我 is a collective plural. For the second person, only 爾 can be possessive, maybe plural, but lack of examples does not allow to draw further conclusions.
3. The object contains new information and is expressed by 我 and 爾, except for some inverted objects and pronouns in a pivot construction. In these two cases, there appears to be a choice.

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