

Behavioral Profile: Quantitative Corpus-Based Study of Temporal Adverbial *Yixia* and *Yihui* in Mandarin

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Temporal adverbials are important in Mandarin as they modify verbs in order to express various temporal relations. Two temporal adverbials, *yixia* and *yihui*, are used frequently and sometimes interchangeably as they both indicate short duration of time when modifying verbs, as shown in (1).

- (1) a. wo xiangyiao xiu-xi *yixia*.
1.SG want rest short time
"I want to rest for a while."
b. wo xiangyiao xiu-xi *yihui*.
1.SG want rest short time
"I want to rest for a while."

As observed in previous studies, V-*yixia* construction is polysemous as it denotes "exact times" of the action as a verbal classifier (e.g., da *yixia*), short period of time, or as a downtoner to mitigate the extent of the action. On the other hand, V-*yihui* is most associated with short duration of the action. Since there are cases where these two terms are not able to be substituted with each other, distinction between these two constructions is worth exploring as to uncover their usage differences.

Previous research explores characteristics of *yixia* and *yihui* from traditional syntactic, semantic perspectives respectively (Gan 2004, 2005; Hsieh 2007; Jiang 2012) and mainly focuses on the description of their restriction and the process of grammaticalization, while fewer attempts are made to compare two terms from all linguistic aspects and/or from a quantitative corpus-based perspective. Therefore, this study investigates differences between constructions of V-*yixia* and V-*yihui* by adopting a quantitative corpus-based method of behavioral profile (Gries & Divjak 2009; Gries 2010).

The present study utilizes corpus data extracted from COCT (Corpus of Contemporary Taiwanese Mandarin) and annotates them with linguistic features discussed in previous studies. In particular, previous studies have suggested that V-*yixia* and V-*yihui* differ in their co-occurrences with varying verb types and speech acts (Gan 2004, 2005; Hsieh 2007). 200 utterances associated with V-*yixia* and V-*yihui* are randomly selected respectively and manually tagged with verb types (Divjak & Gries 2006; Levin 1993) and speech acts types (Searle 1965). The results of our behavioral profile analysis show that compared to speech acts, verb types are the distinctive feature, and among which *yixia* prefers mental verbs and communication verbs, while *yihui* is more likely to co-occur with physical action verbs based on the pair wise difference. In addition, the speech acts they are associated with have similar distributions, suggesting the less distinctiveness of speech act variation. The discrepancy could be due to the fact that both terms function as mitigators in context and they are employed in limited situations. This distinction could be helpful in terms of language pedagogy as clear usage patterns could be provided for language learners so that a correct construction is used in appropriate context. Although the present study considers verb types and speech act types as potential factors distinguishing these two constructions, future study may take into account other features such as registers and styles for analysis.

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