



# The Differentiation and Analysis of “Ke” And “Li” in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

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**Abstract.** In ancient Chinese, numerals can directly modify nouns, while in modern Chinese, numerals generally cannot. In addition, with a large increase of quantifiers, many quantifiers with similar meanings also appear. Rich quantifiers are one of the characteristics of modern Chinese, leading to the difficulty in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. This thesis topic is for the teaching of foreign Chinese short quantifiers "Ke" and "Li". The Differentiation and Analysis teaching, mainly by understanding the corpus in the learners learned the two quantifiers bias, The significance of the paper lies in providing certain theoretical guidance and useful examples for the teaching of circular quantifiers "Ke" and "Li".

**Keywords:** shape quantifier; quantifier teaching; “Ke” and “Li”

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Study Origin and Research Significance

Quantifiers are a unique class of words in Chinese, which can be divided into two categories: quantifiers and verbs, and there is more research on these two categories. However, there are not many studies about circular quantifiers. The choice of the quantifiers "Ke and Li" as the research object is mainly based on the following two reasons:

First, International students have a higher bias rate of using the circular quantifiers "Ke and Li". By searching the HSK dynamic composition corpus and the corpus of the Chinese Linguistics Research Center of Peking University, we found that "Ke" was used as often as 14980 times and "Li" was used up to 6684 times.

Second, the research on the bias of "Ke and Li" is relatively weak. The related bias analysis is mostly for the macro research of the whole verb or the borrowing of quantifiers, and there are not many studies on the small categories of quantifiers. There were only 13 papers related to quantifiers "Ke and Li"

Strengthening the study of this group of confusing rounded quantifiers can help learners to more accurately grasp and apply this set of quantifiers, and also promotes the professional development of teachers, providing accurate basis for teaching the meaning of momentum related words or sentences.

## 1.2 Review of the Studies

### Ontology research and teaching research of quantifiers "Ke" and "Li".

*The research status of quantifiers "Ke" and "Li".*

Chen Yun Xiang (2010) believed that semantic differences were the essential differences between "Ke" and "Li". Their semantic differences were mainly manifested in four aspects and actively explore the reasons behind the semantic differences.<sup>[4]</sup>

Chai Xiang lu and Gao Can yv (2021) compared the commonness and individuality of noun collocation of "Ke" and "Li" in the CCL corpus and found that most of them could be collocation with "Ke" as well as "Li".<sup>[2]</sup>

*Teaching and research status of quantifiers "Ke" and "Li".*

Wang Xiao lei (2010) mainly focused on the diachronic evolution process of the three quantifiers of "Ke", "Li", and "Mei", as well as a synchronic comparative analysis of their semantics, syntactic characteristics, and semantic colors.<sup>[5]</sup>

Yeoh Lee ying (2019) used a questionnaire survey method to investigate the errors made by Chinese students in the quantifiers "Ke" and "Li" at Seri Jaya Middle School, and classified the students' errors from multiple perspectives and analyzed the students' errors from multiple perspectives.<sup>[1]</sup>

## 1.3 Statistics of Bias in the Corpus

From the HSK dynamic composition corpus, only 5 of them have partial errors, and the error type is pragmatic between "Ke" and "Li". The quantifier "li" is mostly before the noun "rice", and the quantifier "Ke" is mostly before the noun "heart", as many as 30. The combination of this type of quantifier + noun is relatively simple, so it is not very difficult for learners to master it. Here are the five biased statements:

Once I put a bead into my nostrils and I couldn't get it out.

The loser must lose ten glass marbles.

Four-grain missiles were fired.

He begged the doctor to give him some sleeping pills to help him from his pain.

Digging out, trying to dig out the mung bean.

These 5 errors are caused by the failure of making clear the weighing objects of the quantifiers s "Ke" and "li".

## 2 Multidimensional Analysis of Semantic, Syntactic, and Pragmatic Differences of the Quantifiers "Ke" and "Li"

Based on the research results of Chinese round quantifiers and the interpretation of authoritative dictionaries, this chapter analyzes the semantic characteristics of confusable quantifiers "particle" and "particle", and describes the syntactic commonalities and differences caused by the different semantic features, to provide a basis for learners to distinguish the quantifiers "Ke" and "Li".

## 2.1 Difference Discrimination Between the Semantic Level of "Ke" and "Li"

In *Modern Chinese Dictionary*, "Ke" is interpreted as "quantifier, mostly used for granular things", and "Li" is "quantifier, used for granular things".<sup>[8]</sup> The quantifiers "Ke" and "Li" are both used to weigh small, round objects. So, what are the similarities and differences between this pair of near-sense quantifiers?

### Common characteristic.

In modern Chinese, the quantifiers "Ke" and "Li" often can weigh the same nouns. For example, these two quantifiers can be placed before the noun "seed, grain". From the two quantifiers to weigh the noun we can see that whether the "Ke" requires "small/large and round", the "Li" requires "small and round".

### Distinguishing characteristic.

*Semantic constraints on noun size differ.*

The original meaning of "Ke" is a small head." Take the semantic features of "round and small" in the original semantic "small head" of "Ke", which can measure round and small objects, sometimes it can also weigh relatively large objects, Hong Zhang(2007) Attempted to explore the special usage reasons of the quantifier "particle" in weighing large objects. Therefore, "particle" can also be used to weigh "bullet" compound words.<sup>[10]</sup> The quantifier "Li" because of its original meaning is "rice", it can only limit to weigh like the size of "rice" objects.<sup>[7]</sup>

*"Ke" can measure certain organs of a person or animal.*

A search of the corpus found that "Ke" can weigh the heart, head, liver, teeth, eyes, and so on. The "Li" cannot be weighed.<sup>[3]</sup>

*"Ke" can measure abstract nouns.*

"Ke" can be measured such as "soul", "musical notes", "mind" and so on.<sup>[6]</sup>

## 2.2 Difference Between the Syntactic Level of "Ke" and "Li"

### combination function.

Both "Ke" and "Li" can be combined with numerical words to form quantifiers, which can limit nouns together. It can also be combined with the indication pronoun or question pronoun.

### syntactic function.

The syntactic function is mainly manifested by the overlap of quantifiers. After overlapping can act as subject, attribute, predicate, and adverbial.

I. After overlapping, the subject indicates the meaning of "each."

(I)The stars in the sky are all very shining.

(II)Look at this sunflower, every grain is very full.

II. After the overlap, the attribute means "many."

(I) The trees are covered with individual apples.

(II) The production team is peeling off the full corn kernels into the dustpan.

III. Overlap means "one by one."

I picked out these beans one by one.

### **morphology characteristic.**

In language communication, for the need of expression or structure, the single-tone quantifiers often overlap to express the meaning of "all over". Its grammatical meaning is "every". The quantifiers "Ke" and "Li" often overlap.

## **2.3 Differences Between the Pragmatic Level of "Ke" and "Li"**

Chinese quantifiers not only have image color but also have modal color. Studying the modal color of Chinese quantifiers is an important way to improve students' language expression ability. The quantifier "Ke" often means the "cherished" modal color. in compliance with:

a red star, a pearl, a red heart, and a crystal stone

The quantifier "li" often indicates the "small and cute" modal color. For example: a seed, a tear

## **3 Teaching Strategy of Circular Quantifiers "Ke" and "Li"**

Slavin (1987) proposed a QAIT model for effective teaching, namely, teaching quality, teaching appropriateness, inducement, and time. In this model, all factors are indispensable links in the teaching chain. Based on the model, combining the error types of the circular quantifiers "Ke" and "Li" summarized in the first two chapters, provides some suggestions for teaching Chinese as a foreign language.<sup>[9]</sup>

### **3.1 Teaching Quality**

Teaching quality refers to the effect presented by teachers in class and the quality of the course content received by students after class. The teaching quality of teachers directly affects how much effective information students can receive in class. The five components of the teaching process will directly affect the teaching quality.

#### **Students.**

Students are the direct participants of teaching activities, and their access to classroom information is the direct expression of teaching quality. In the teaching process, teachers should first arrange teaching tasks based on the overall differences of students, while also paying attention to individual differences

#### **Teachers.**

Teachers are the organizers of teaching activities, and their ability and quality, self-teaching methods and other aspects directly affect the teaching quality. Therefore, the first step is to improve their abilities and qualities. Secondly, maintain a positive attitude and flexible thinking.

### **The inducement aspect.**

Inducement is the degree to which teachers motivate students to complete learning tasks. International students who come to China due to external motivation will be bored with the classroom and Chinese language. Currently, teachers need to stimulate students' learning motivation and guide them to complete their learning tasks.

### **Time.**

Time refers to the amount of time teachers spend on teaching and the amount of time students pay attention to class. Therefore, in the teaching of quantifiers "Ke" and "Li", teachers can through questions, games, and other ways to achieve classroom interaction and fun, improve students' attention, increase the amount of time to concentrate on class.

## **3.2 Teaching Appropriateness Aspects**

To enable students to complete the classroom task or the goal of learning Chinese, teachers should choose the appropriate teaching content according to the student's current ability before or after each course. In modern Chinese, when "Ke" and "Li" exist as round quantifiers, constant and numerical words form quantitative phrases to limit nouns.

## **4 Conclusion**

Based on ontology, this paper analyzes the similarities and differences between the circular quantifiers "Ke" and "Li" in semantics, syntax, and grammar. In terms of semantic, both have semantics characteristics of [+ round] and [+ small], but "Ke" can weigh a larger range. In addition to things that can weigh small, they can also be measured like "universe" and "missile" and weigh human organs and abstract nouns. In terms of syntax, the two can form phrases with numerical words, limiting nouns in the sentence, or overlapping as subject, attribute, predicate, and adverbial in the sentence. In terms of pragmatics, "Ke" shows the emotion of cherishing things, and "li" often means rice. Like a "small and cute" modal color.

Finally, based on the effective teaching model of Slavin, combined with the types and sources of bias, this paper puts forward some suggestions on the teaching of "Ke" and "Li" from the teaching quality, teaching appropriateness, inducement, and time.

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