



- (4b) [TP<sub>matrix</sub> { [TP Tā lái bù lái] /\*[ForceP [TP tā lái ma]]/ } méi yǒu guānxī]  
 3SG come NEG come/ 3SG come FORCE NEG have relation  
 ‘Whether he comes or not doesn’t matter.’

Two exclusively non-root Cs have been identified: *de* heading the complement of *shì* ‘be’ in *propositional assertion* (cf. Paul & Whitman 2008) and *dehuà* heading conditional clauses. There is no split CP in non-root contexts, hence the unacceptability of *le* in the complement clause of [-root] Cs. By contrast, *de* as non-root C can co-occur with the low C of the root clause:

- (5a) [C<sub>lowP</sub> [TP Wèntí xiànzài [shì [CP[-root] [ ti néng jiějué] (\*le) de ]]] le ]  
 problem now be can solve CLOW C[-root] CLOW  
 ‘The problem can certainly be solved now.’

- (5b) [TopP [CP[-root] Rúguǒ xià yǔ (\*le) dehuà ] [TP wǒ jiù bù qù]]  
 if fall rain CLOW C[-root] 1SG then NEG go  
 ‘If it rains, then I won’t go.’

The root vs non-root asymmetry in the Chinese C-system is important, because it shows that alongside with other features, SFPs also have to be specified for the feature [ $\pm$  root]. With respect to their feature bundles, Chinese SFPs are thus on a par with C-heads such as English *that* and *if*, which besides their Force feature (declarative or interrogative) also encode [-root]. This challenges Huang, Li and Li’s (2009: 35) view that complex feature bundles are characteristic of functional categories in inflecting languages, but not in Chinese.

Acquisition studies (cf. a.o. Tao Yu 2012) report that children before the age of two years use the low C *ne1*, the Force head *ma* and the “dogmatic assertion” Attitude head *ma*, as well as the two Force heads *ba*, i.e. advisative *ba* in imperatives and the confirmation question *ba*. The acquisition of the appropriate prosodic features seems more complex, although more systematic studies including a larger array of SFPs are needed here (cf. Yang Yu’an 2012).

Time permitting, I discuss TP-internal discourse particles equivalent to so-called *modal particles* in German, including their being homophonous with VP-level adverbs, *inter alia* *yòu* ‘again’, *yě* ‘also’ (cf. Y.-H. Audrey Li & Haley Wei 2018: 197-213). Importantly, as observed for German and English, modal particles are acceptable in peripheral adverbial clauses only, not in central adverbial clauses.

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