

Restrictions on the Co-occurrence of the Ancient Chinese Adverb “Po” and Sense Words¹

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ABSTRACT. *The issue of the meaning and the usage of the Chinese adverb “po” is confusing but tempting. Based on the previous research results, this paper, by combining metaphor theory and synaesthesia theory, explores the restrictions on the co-occurrence of “po” and sensory words to find the sensory words that can co-occur with “po” and those cannot. This study finds some common grounds of sensory words that can co-occur with “po”, and the related restraining factors on their co-occurrence.*

Keywords: “po”, sensory vocabulary, semantics, metaphor, co-occurrence

1. **Introduction.** The issue of the meaning and the usage of the Chinese adverb “po” is confusing but tempting. [1] Take the use of “po” as a degree adverb as an example. Liu [2] states that “po” can express both the meaning of “much (higher degree)” and the meaning of “little (lower degree)”. Kousaka [3] and Ota [4] believe that “po” does not mean “much (higher degree)” or “little lower degree”, but means “deflection” or “leaning towards one side”. Wang [5] believes that “po” always means “little (superficial or low by degree)”. When discussing specific examples, people may hold different views and often give two opposite interpretations of one sentence with “po”.

“Po”² as a degree adverb first appeared in *Historical Records*³, and became popular in

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the Middle Ages. As to its grammatical function, “po” is an atypical degree adverb [6]. Though there is not much academic research on it, “po” is covered in many treatises and dictionaries. We can find that “po means the tilting of one’s head” in *Shuowen jiezi*⁴, that “po means little” in *Guangya shigu II*, and that “po means ‘not enough’ since ancient times” in *Chinese Grammar Theory* by Wang. We also find that “Yan is a little proficient at interpreting *the Book of Rites*, but not well enough at performing rituals and ceremonies.” in *Rulin Liezhuan of Historical Records*. When “po” is used as a predicate modifier, its meaning is the same as “shao”⁵. For example, I would like to learn some of the ancient rituals and integrate them with those of the Qin’s (Chen yuan po cai gu li, yu qin yi za jiu zhi) in *Shu Sun tong Liezhuan of Historical Records*. When the predicate includes an objective position, “po” seems to modify the scope of this objective position. For instance, “*po cai gu li*” (learn some old rites) means “adopt some ancient rituals”. Sometimes, “po” can be used in descriptive sentences. For example, “pojia”⁶ is equivalent to good enough (not very good) in English and *assez bon* (not *tres bon*) in French. I don’t think that the interpretation of “po” as “shen ye” (very)⁷ in *Zhengzi Tong* is appropriate. Judging from the language habit for thousands of years, “po” just means dissatisfaction or humbleness, and it has never been used for hyperbole [5]. Ota Tatsuo says, in *Chinese Historical Grammar*, that “po” means “shen ye”, “shao ye”⁸. However, Wang Li thinks it is not correct that “po” indicates both the intensity and weakness. He believes that “po” is simply used to show direction and has nothing to do with strength or weakness [4].

Xia [7], Hong [6], Gao [8] and Meng [1] has done some specific research. Xia [7] discussed the use of “po” as the scope adverb in ancient Chinese which have been neglected in the long run. Hong [6] studied the semantic issue of the adverb “po” in *the Historical Records*, and made it clear that at least until the Tang dynasty, “po” had only one meaning of degree “weak”. Gao [8] discussed the various uses of the adverb “po” in ancient Chinese, and analyzed the source and historical development of these uses. Meng [1] combined the unearthed literature and the literature handed down, and, by adopting the contemporary grammaticalization and subjectivation, discussed fully the source and the development of the adverb “po”. Though these arguments help to recognize and understand the meaning and the source of the adverb “po”, they have not touched the issue of the co-occurrence of “po” and sensory words in Ancient Chinese. We believe that, though it is important to examine the specific meanings and sources of “po”, it is more important to completely understand the real state and the characteristics of the adverb “po” from the perspective of collocation.

² “Po” is the pinyin for the Chinese character “颇”.

³ Written by Sima Qian , a great Chinese historian, in about 95 B.C.

⁴ A dictionary about words and expressions compiled by Xu Shen (58 A.D-147 A.D.), a famous Chinese linguist.

⁵ The pinyin for the Chinese character 稍.

⁶ Pinyin for Chinese character 颇佳.

⁷ Pinyin for Chinese character 甚也.

⁸ Pinyin for Chinese character 稍也.

Therefore, based on the previous research, this paper, by combining metaphor theory and synaesthesia theory, explores the restrictions on the co-occurrence of the adverb “po” and sensory words. We will try to find the sensory words co-occurring with the adverb “po”, and the sensory words which can't co-occur with “po”, and understand the common grounds of the sensory words that can co-occur with the adverb “po”, and the constraints of their co-occurrence.

The corpus data of this paper comes from the *Ancient Document Corpus* (CCL) of the Chinese Linguistics Research Center of Peking University.

2. The Grammatical Functions of Chinese Adverb “Po”. From the perspective of coinage, “po” is a Chinese phonogram. Xu Shen’s analysis was that “po means the leaning head” in *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*. According to the annotation made by Duan Yucai, “po” extended to all phenomena of inclination. In this way, the function of “po” is extended from a noun to an adjective [8]. “po” is similar to inclining in *Guangya shigu II*, “po” means “uneven” or “inclining” in *Yu Pian Chapter Ye*, and “po” is rendered as slanting in *Jiyun Guoyun*. Based on the previous research available, especially the generalization of the functions of the adverb “po” in *Jiyun*, which was made by Meng [1] according to the excavated literature and handed-down literature, the adverb “po” carries the functions as follows:

A. The scope adverb

“Po” is put before a verb (if a verb has a negative adverb, “po” should be put before the negative adverb) to represent the scope, referring to the part of the whole, and it can be translated into “a part of”, “some”, “more” or “for the most part”. For example:

(1) 其颇不得，失之旁郡国。(Qi po bude, shi zhi pang jun guo; Some criminals who have not been caught fled to the nearby county) (Records of the Historian: Biographies of Cruel Officials)

(2) (太后)尝与安国少季通，其使复私焉。国人颇知之，多不附太后。(chang yu Anguo Shaoji tong, qi shi fu si yan. Guoren po zhi zhi, duo bu fu taihou; (Empress Dowager) once fornicated with Anguo Shaoji, an official in Western Han Dynasty. When he came to Nanyue State as an emissary, she committed adultery with him again. For the most part of people in Nanyue knew about it, they did not trust in the Empress Dowager.) (Historical Records: Biographies of Nanyue State)

B. The degree adverb

(a) Indicating a low degree

When “po” indicates the low degree (shallow and light), it is the synonym of Chinese characters 稍 (shao) and 略 (lve), which simply means “slightly”. If “po” modifies adjectives or abstract verbs with weak mobility, such as 得 “De(get)” and 知 “Zhi(know)”, it cannot be interpreted as scope.

(3) 今厄会已度，府帑虽未能充，略颇稍给，其以六月朔庚寅始，赋吏禄皆如制度。(Jin e’hui yi du, futang sui wei neng chong, lve po shao ji, qi yi liuyue shuo gengyin shi, fu li lu jie ru zhidu; Now that the difficult period has passed, though the treasury reserve is not enough and it is slightly more abundant, salaries should be given to officials according to the official system since June.) (Book of Han: Biography of Wang Mang II)

(b) Indicating a high degree

Sometimes “Po” is used before verbs and adjectives with weak mobility to show the high degree (deep and profound), and is approximately equal to the modern Chinese degree adverb “Xiangdang(quite)”. For example:

(4) 绛侯得释，盎颇有力。(Jianghou de shi, Ang po you li; Yuan Ang made quite great effort to release Wang Bo, the Jiang marquis.) (Historical Records: Biography of Yuan Ang and Chao Cuo)

(5) 奇计或颇秘，世莫能闻也。(Qi ji huo po mi, shi mo neng wen ye; Some of these wonderful tricks are quite secret, no one in the world has known it.) (Historical Records: Aristocratic Family of Imperial Chancellor Chen)

C. The frequency adverb

(a) Indicating the low frequency

“Po” sometimes can be translated into Chinese phrases “Ou er (once in a while)” or “Jian huo (now and then)”.

(6) 自以为应制作，颇改定古文。(Zi yiwei ying zhizuo, po gai ding guwen; In order to show his effort to meet the standard of rituals, ancient writing was changed once in a while during this period.) (The Introduction of Shuo Wen Jie Zi)

(b) Indicating the high frequency.

“Po” is often translated into “Chang (often)” or “Changchang (usually)” in modern Chinese.

(7) 风雨之后，景气明净，颇闻山上有鼓吹声，即山都木客，为其舞唱。(Feng yu zhihou, jing qi ming jing, po wen shanshang you gu chui sheng, ji shandumuke, wei qi wu chang; After raining, the landscape becomes bright and the air becomes clean, often the drumbeat and fanfare can be heard from the mountain area. That is Hakka who are singing and dancing for the sunny day.) (Extensive Records of the Taiping Era)

D. The interrogative adverb

“Po” is used in the non-question sentence, in concert with Interrogative words at the end of a sentence like “Hu” and “Ye”, for instance:

(8) (魏文帝)嘲咨曰：“吴王颇知学乎？”(Weiwendi) chao Zi yue: “Wuwang po zhi xue hu?”; (Emperor Wen of Wei, namely Cao Pi) asked Zhao Zi, the emissary from Wu State, with a mockery tone: “Does the king of your state know much about reading?”) (Records of the Three Kingdoms, Records of Wu State, Biography of Sun Quan, which is cited by Pei Zhu from Book of Wu State)

(9) 时波旬曰：“沙门，颇见我四部之众耶？”(Shi Boxun yue: “Shamen, po jian wo sibu zhi zhong ye?”; At that time Papman asked: “Shramana, have you seen my people in Dvipa?”) (Ekottaragama-sutra, The Son of Heaven Named Ma Xue Asked Eight Right Ways)

3. The Adverb “Po” and Sensory Words in Ancient Chinese

3.1. The Adverb “Po” and Gustatory Words

3.1.1. The Adverb “Po” and Gustatory Adjectives. The structure of adverb “po” and gustatory adjectives appeared in the Six Dynasties (229 AD-589 AD), of which the earliest phrase was “po ku”, meaning being pretty bitter. There are 31 cases with this phrase. Here

are some examples.

(10) 魏略曰：时太子在邺，鄢陵侯未到，士民颇苦劳役，又有疾病，於是军中骚动。(Weilve yue: shi taizi zai ye, Yanling wei dao, shi min po ku laoyi, you you jili, yushi jun zhong saodong; It is said in Wei Lve: at that time, the Prince was in Yecheng City while the Marquis of Yanling wasn't there yet. The soldiers and peasants were in pretty painstaking forced labour with diseases and the plague, which caused a great stir in the military.) (The History of the Three Kingdoms by Chen Shou)

(11) 盖橄榄初食味颇苦涩，久之方回甘味。(Gai ganlan chu shi wei po ku se, jiu zhi fang hui gan mei; Probably, the initial taste of the olive is rather bitter, and the sweet taste after lasts long.) (The Marriage of Flowers in the Mirror)

(12) 踞坐哀求，辞颇苦切。(Ju zuo aiqu, ci po kuqie; He squatted on the ground to entreat, with pretty distressed words.) (Extensive Records of the Taiping Era)

(13) 别归，怀思颇苦，敬往祝之，殊无影响。(Bie gui, huai si po ku, jing wang zhu zhi, shu wu yingxiang; Xu Sheng took leave of Ainu and returned home. He missed her very much so he visited her grave with deep love. But he did not see her shadow.) (Strange Tales of a Lonely Studio)

Seen from the syntactic structure, the statistics shows that there are eight examples of “ku” (bitter) used alone with “po”, covering 25.8% of the total, that two are used to coin new words with other words, such as “ku se” and “ku qie”, with the meaning of bitterness, accounting for 6.45%, and that twenty-one are combined with objects, which account for 67.7%.

From the perspective of meaning evolution, only three examples hold the meaning in the domain of gestation, and the rest of examples experience metaphorical shift from the gustation domain to the psychological and emotional domain, referring to bitterness, donkeywork, and words.

“Po gan”, with the meaning of “pretty sweet”, appeared in the Song Dynasty, and there are six examples: “gan”(sweet) is used alone in one example, and it is combined with such characters followed as “fang”, “mei”, “xin”, and “suan” and so on.

(14) 乃尝其粪，颇甘，王氏色愈忧。(Nai chang qi fen, po gan, Wangshi se yu you; Hence, she tasted his stool. And then Wang was much more worried about his health because of his sweet stool.) (History of Yuan Dynasty)

(15) 女令斟绿，味颇甘辛。(Nv ling zhen lv, wei po gan xin; The girl ordered her maidservant to pour Lvling liquid for Zhu Shijun. The liquid tasted rather pungent and sweet.) (Song Yin Man Lu)

(16) 状类小梨，中空，既熟色微红，味颇甘酸，食之大发瘴。(Zhuang lei xiaoli, zhong kong, ji shu se wei hong, wei po gan suan, shi zhi da fazhang; With the shape like a small pear, it is hollow, and slightly red and quite sour after being ripe, which could cause serious malaria.) (Xu Mo Ke Hui Xi)

(17) 有乡人货梨于市，颇甘芳，价腾贵。(You Xiangren huo li yu shi, po gan fang, jia teng gui; The pears sold by a villager in the market tasted rather aromatic and sweet, so the price skyrocketed.) (Strange Tales of a Lonely Studio I)

(18) 这柑子的原种，是从江陵进来，味颇甘美。(Zhe ganzi de yuan zhong, shi cong jiangling jin lai, wei po gan mei; The original species of the tangerine was introduced from Jiangling, with aromatic and sweet taste and smell.) (The Romance of History of Tang Dynasty)

Of the above examples, three “gan (sweet)” from (14) to (16) hold the meaning in the gustation domain, and others in (17) and (18) belong to the metaphorical shift from the gustation domain to the psychological and emotional domain. Both “po ganfang” and “po ganmei” have the usage of transferred meaning showing the implication of aromatic and sweet taste and smell.

The collocation “po tian” (pretty sweet) occurred in Qing Dynasty, of which the three examples are shown as follows:

(19) 一名哑泉，其水颇甜，人若饮之，则不能言，不过旬日必死。(Yi ming yaquan, qi shui po tian, ren ruo yin zhi, ze bu neng yan, bu guo xun ri bi si; The first spring was called Dumb Spring, whose water was quite sweet. If a man drank some water of it, he would be mute and died in ten days.) (Romance of the Three Kingdoms II, a novel in the Ming Dynasty)

“Po suan” (pretty sour) appeared in the Qing Dynasty. There is only one example about this collocation.

(20) 周身骨节，俱颇酸痛，故有伸缩不宁耳!(Zhou shen gu jie, ju po suan tong, gu you shen suo bu ning er; I have aches in the joints of the whole body, so I am restless!) (Ye Sou Pu Yan, Qing Dynasty)

Combination of “tong” and “sour” is mapped from the gustation domain to the tactile domain.

“Po se” (pretty astringent) occurred in Song Dynasty, and there is only one example shown as follows:

(21) 烂紫可食，殊甘美，中有细核，并嚼之，瑟瑟有声，亦颇涩。(Lan zi ke shi, shu gan mei, zhong you xi he, bing jiao zhi, se se you sheng, yi po se; When the fruits get mature and purple, they can be edible, with so aromatics and sweet taste. There are fine cores in them, which are rustling when they are chewed, tasting pretty astringent.) (Qu Wei Jiu Wen)

There are no examples of “xin pungent)” and “xian (salty)” in the five flavors matched to the adverb “po” (pretty or quite) in the ancient literature.

The adverb “po” is an adverb of degree when it is used to modify gustatory adjectives, and “po” with this sense all shows a strong degree.

3.1.2. The Adverb “Po” and Gustatory Verbs. There are only two gustatory verbs following the adverb “po”, “chang (taste)” and “wei (distinguish the taste)”. The verbs, “chang (taste)” and “wei (distinguish the taste)”, are purely gustatory action verbs, possessing strong behavior characteristics.

The phrase “po chang” was firstly used in the Tang Dynasty, which sums up to 10 examples. “Chang (taste)” following the adverb “po” simply expresses the internal time structures of the incidents, which have highly typical generalized meaning of experience aspect.

(22) 阿罗汉曰：“汝颇尝闻波你尼仙制《声明论》，垂训于世乎？”(*Aluohan yue: “ru po chang wen boninixian zhi Shengminglun, chui xun yu shi hu?”*; Arhat asked, “Have you heard that Pāṇini wrote the Theory of Statement to teach the earthling?”) (*The Journey from Da Tang to Western Regions*)

(23) 既出，温问左右：“颇尝见我有如此客不？”(*Ji chu, Wen wen zuo you: “po chang jian wo you ruci ke bu?”*; Having come out, Wen asked people around him, “Have you seen that I had such guests?”) (*A Biography of Xie'an in Book of Jin*)

(24) 虽然，颇尝览千载，观百家，至于圣贤，相似厥众。(Suiran, po chang lan qianzai, guan bai jia, zhiyu sheng xian, xiangsi juezhong; Although Li Bai had already browsed various kinds of books for thousands of years and observed hundreds of masters, and found that similar sages and savants are of a great quantity.) (*Book of Sui, Tang, the Five Dynasties and Jin*)

(25) 仆本亦进士，颇尝究根源。(Pub en yi jinshi, po chang jiu genyuan.; I was also a Chin-Shih, who had already probed into the root) (*Complete works of Li Bai Collected during the Sui, Tang and Five Dynasties*)

(26) 余自幼多病，数与医者语，故于医家书颇尝涉猎。(Yu zi you duo bing, shu yu yizhe yu, gu yu yijia shu po chang shelie; I susceptible to the diseases from childhood, talked with medical personnel so many times, so I had already dabbled in the medical books.) (*The Complete Collection of Tang Poems in Sui, Tang and Five Dynasties period*)

“Po” in the examples (22) and (23) expresses the query, which often echoes with subsequent modal particles like “bu” and “hu” etc. “Po” in the examples (24), (25) and (26) expresses the time state “already”. And “chang” in the examples from (22) to (26) is the experience aspect, which can be translated into “once” or “ever”.

There are many verbs modified by the phrase “po chang”, of which the verbs indicate visual senses “jian(see), wen(hear) and lan(browse)” in seven examples, indicate thought “jiu(investigate) and xue(learn)” in two examples, and indicate tactile sense in one example “she lie (dabble in)”. It means that these verbs have been projected from the gustatory field to the field of visual sense, the field of auditory sense, the field of thought and the field of tactile sense.

The phrase “po wei” was firstly found in the Southern Song Dynasty, which sums up to two examples.

(27) 二公方省是师，遂诣庵所，颇味高论。(Er gong fang xing shi shi, sui yi ansuo, po wei gao lun; The two elders just came to their senses that this was the Buddhist master. Thereupon, they visited to the residence of the master and had an in-depth discussion about those brilliant views.) (*The sayings from Buddhism: Wu Deng Hui Yuan*)

(28) 先生履德养空，宗玄齐物，深晓义理，颇味法门。(Xiansheng lv de yang kong, zong xuan qi wu, shen xiao yi li, po wei famen; Xu Ze held fast to the virtues and moral principles, cultivated the quality of being indifferent to fame and wealth, as a master of great learning and integrity equal to everything, deeply understood philosophical connotations and was adept in helping people realize the approaches.) (*The Histories of the Northern Dynasties*)

3.2. The Adverb “Po” and Visual Words

3.2.1. **The Adverb “Po” and Visual Adjectives.** The adverb “po” plus the adjectives of visual sense originated in the Western Han Dynasty. Here are some examples:

(29) 居顷之，复以鸣镝自射其爱妻，左右或颇恐，不敢射。(*Ju qing zhi, fu yi mingdi zi she qi ai qi, zuoyou huo po kong, bu gan she*; After a period of time, Mao Dun (a Hunnish prince) shot the arrow with a sound at his beloved wife by himself again, which terrified some of people around him very much and made them dare not to shoot arrows like him.) (Historical Records, Biography of the Huns)

(30) 唐、虞既远，所在书散；殷、周颇近，诸子存焉。(*Tang, Yu ji yuan, suo zai shu san; yin, zhou po jin, zhuzi cun yan*; The ages of Tang and Yu had already been far old, so the books of the ages are mostly lost; The ages of Yin and Zhou were quite less old, so the books written by hundred schools of thoughts still remained in the world.) (Lun Heng, the Part of Lost Articles)

(31) 涉浅水者见虾，其颇深者察鱼鳖，其尤甚者观蛟龙。(*She qianshui zhe jian xia, qi po shen zhe cha yu bie, qi youshen zhe guan jiaolong*; People can merely see shrimps when walking in the shallow water, see fishes and turtles in the quite deep water, and see Jiao Long in the much deeper water.) (Lun Heng, the Part Called Bietong)

(32) 颜色悦怿，颇更黠慧胜故。(*Yanse yue yi, po geng xia hui sheng gu*; He looked so joyous and became much more crafty and intelligent than before.) (Extensive Records of the Taiping Era)

(33) 从风既裊裊，映日颇离离。(*Cong feng ji niao niao, ying ri po li li*; The bamboos are flowing in the wind in a slender and graceful manner, and the weeds are very luxuriant in the shining sunlight.) (A Poem called Intoning Bamboos of the Autumn by Xie Tiao in the Qi Period of the Southern Dynasty)

From the above examples, the adjectives which indicate visual sense and can be modified by the adverb “po” are most monosyllables, express visual sense dimension, which is the metaphoric transfer mostly from the field of visual sense to the field of psychological emotion, to convey the inner feelings, like the examples (32) and (33).

The adverb “po” modifying the adjectives of visual sense is the degree adverb in all sentences. Some indicate the low degree, like the examples (20) and (31); some indicate the high degree, like the examples (29), (32) and (33), in which the adverb “po” was used together with the adverb “geng” because of the adverb “po” absorbing the contextual meaning; and some indicate the progressive degree, like the example (33). The adverb “po” in the examples from (30) to (33) is all used in the comparative sentences and the compound sentences.

The frequency of co-occurrence of the adverb “po” and the adjectives of visual sense is related to the semantic color of the adjectives. The commendatory adjectives are of high frequency of co-occurrence in most cases, while the derogatory adjectives are of low frequency of co-occurrence in most cases. These can be seen in Table 1.

According to Table 1, it can be seen that the commendatory adjectives expressing “high, big and many” are of higher frequency of occurrence; on the contrary, the derogatory adjectives expressing “low, small and few” are of lower frequency of occurrence.

TABLE 1: THE FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE OF THE ADVERB “PO” AND THE VISUAL ADJECTIVES, AND SEMANTIC COLOR OF THE ADJECTIVES

“Po”+ a visual adjective	Semantic color	Frequency of co-occurrence(item)
Pogao(quite high)	Commendatory	55
Podi(quite low)	Derogatory	5
Poda(quite big)	Commendatory	49
Poxiao(quite small)	Derogatory	9
Poduo(quite many/much)	Commendatory	676
Poshao(quite few/little)	Derogatory	30

3.2.2. **The Adverb “Po” and Visual Verbs.** The appearance of the collocation of the adverb “po” and visual verbs began in the Six Dynasties. (220 A.D–589 A.D.) Visual verbs are basically characterized by the certain spatial distance existing between the agent and the receiver. Compared with other verbs of action, one of the important manifestations of this characteristic is that visual verbs are weaker in reflecting the feature of behavior. For example, “kan (look)” belongs to the weak durative verbs which cannot represent the state of action. [9]There is no practical connection between the subject and object of visual behaviors; namely, the visual activities of the subject will not cast a physical influence on the object. Due to such a characteristic, visual verbs differ from other common verbs both in semantic features and syntactic functions.

“Po” can modify such visual verbs as “kan (look)”, “jian (see)”, “du (see)”, “shi (regard)”, “guan (view)”, “kui (peep)”, “lan (browse)”, “wang (look over)”, “gu (turn around and look at)”, “jin (present oneself before)”, “lin (look down from a height)”, “mian (glance sideways)”, “ni (look askance)”, and “xiang(look at and appraise)” and so on, but cannot modify the visual verbs such as “piao (glance)”, “suo (cast a sidelong glance at)”, “pie (glimpse)”, “ding (stare at)”, and “deng (glare)”. As the earliest one of all visual verbs appearing, “po jian (slightly show)” is the most frequently used (127 times altogether, accounting for 68.65% of the total times of the collocations of “po” plus visual verbs). “po lan (read narrowly)” is the second with 25 times, making up 19.73%. “po kan (read a few)” comes third with 18 times and the proportion of which is 13.49%, only lower than “jian (see)” and “kan (look)”. “po yang (look up to and have the figurative meaning of showing a little respect to somebody)” is the last to appear with the lowest frequency of only 1.08%.

Though these visual verbs like “kan (look)”, “jian (see)”, “du (see)”, and “shi (regard)” have senses of action, the degree of action is relatively low, which makes it feasible to be matched with the adverb of degree “po”. Besides, “po” here is all in a low degree. For instance:

(34) 近思之，颇看得透。(Jin si zhi, po kan de tou; I have been thinking about this recently and only thoroughly understand it a little.) (Classified Conversations of Zhu Xi)

(35) 朕听朝之暇，颇观前史。(Zhen ting chao zhi xia, po guan qian shi; When I hold court, I make use of the leisure time to read a few histories of former dynasties.) (Ce Fu Yuan Gui)

(36) 颇窥先志，不复以进取为念。(Po kui xian zhi, bu fu yi jinqu wei nian; Sou, the protagonist of this story, secretly read a few ancestors' records, so he was no longer enterprising.) (Lost Tang Dynasty Writings Gleaned)

Visual verbs are usually characterized by polysemy, which almost developed from the sense of vision at the very beginning to the senses of intelligence, psychology, spiritual activities, namely from the concrete sensory meaning to the figurative meaning of abstract spiritual activities.

Compared with other verbs, the syntax of visual verbs is relatively complicated with the fixed collocations like *po you* + visual verbs, *po ke* + visual verbs, *po you ke* + visual verbs and *po wei* + visual verbs (*po you*, *po ke*, *po you ke* and *po wei* are followed by visual verbs to express abstract senses).

3.3 The Adverb “Po” and Auditory Words

The appearance of the collocation of the adverb “po” + auditory verbs started in the Six Dynasties (220 A.D–589 A.D.). Here are some examples:

(37) 臣少信大法，积习善性，颇闻馀论，仿佛玄宗。(Chen shao xin dafa, ji xi shan xing, po wen yulun, fangfu Xuanzong; When I was young, I believed in great laws. So I studied the nature of goodness for a long time and heard some informed opinions, which was exactly like Emperor of Xuanzong of Tang.) (the Complete Works of Song)

(38) 虽则未学，颇闻前载。(Sui ze wei xue, po wen qian zai; Although I don't learn that, I have heard some previous records.) (the Complete Works of Liang)

“Wen (hear)” of “po wen (hear something a lot)” has both the auditory and olfactory senses, but the former is the major one. The olfactory sense of “wen” started to develop in the Wei and Jin Dynasties and replaced “xiu (smell)” in the Song and Yuan Dynasties, becoming the main olfactory verbs. However, its auditory sense gradually disappeared with the increasing use of the auditory verb “ting (hear)”.

“Po ting (often hear)” appeared in the Northern Song Dynasty, for the auditory sense of “po wen (often hear)” became weak. The examples with “po ting (often hear)” are the merely five. For instance:

(39) 贵稍以言谕之，令勿动仓库及妄杀人，且说之以归顺朝廷，众颇听之。(Gui shao yi yan yu zhi, ling wu dong cangku ji wang sha ren, qie shui zhi yi guishun chaotin, zhong po ting zhi; Zhang Wen, the protagonist of this story, said some words to instruct the soldiers that don't disrupt the warehouse or kill people at will. Besides, he persuaded them to submit to the court and some of them followed his advice.) (The facts of the Song Dynasty)

“Po” used before auditory verbs means a scope which refers to a part of an individual or a group, so it can be translated into “a part of” or “some”. [1]

3.4 The Adverb “Po” and Olfactory Words

The structure of “po” as an adverb and the olfactory words stems from the Song Dynasty, and expressions like “po xing (quite fishy)” and “po xiang (quite fragrant)” came into being. There are two sentences with “po xing (quite fishy)”, one of which is presented as follows:

(40) 但数为水淫，其气颇腥烈，故婆菜中水盘斯为下矣。(Dan shu wei shui yin, qi qi po xing lie, gu po cai zhong shui pan si wei xia yi; However, with the great river and deep water, it smelled quite fishy; therefore the dishes in the plate were after all not particularly superior.) (A Talk on the Iron Fence by Cai Tao in Song dynasty)

The followings three sentences are related to “po xiang (quite appetizing)”:

(41) 又有树生附石，非椒非榕，冬月作白花，颇香，盖兹源之桂云。(You you shu sheng fu shi, fei jiao fei rong, dong yue zuo bai hua, po xiang, gai zi yuan zhi gui yun; On the stone there grew some trees, neither spice plants nor banyan; in winter they bloom with white flowers, which are quite fragrant and which probably come from cherry bay.) (A New Encyclopedia of Guangdong)

(42) 有老僧应门，延入具茗，颇香洁。(You lao seng ying men, yan ru ju ming, po xiang jie; A senior monk answered the door and led them to the tea utensils, whose scents were quite fragrant and limpid.) (Fantastic Tales By Ji Xiaolan, Qing dynasty, Ji Yun)

(43) 斗得粒三升，颇香滑，多食作气。(Dou de li san sheng, po xiang hua, duo shi zuo qi;

There are three liters of rice grain, quite fragrant and creamy, which are good for health if one takes a great deal of it) (The Summery of Longsha, Qing dynasty, Fang Shiji)

In the example (41), “po xiang (quite fragrant)” concerns the field of olfaction and the second one in the example (42) is collocated with the olfactory adjective “jie (limpid)”, transferring the sense of olfaction to visual sense. The example (43) “po xiang” is collocated with the adjective “hua (creamy)”, a word related to the sense of touch, which means that the description is altered from olfaction to tactile sensation.

“Po” in the above examples is used as the adverb of degree, indicating the degree of intensity. No example of the collocation of “po” and the olfactory adjectives “chou (smelly)” is found in the ancient literature.

The collocation of “po” and olfactory verbs was originated in the Song Dynasty and Yuan Dynasty. After “xiu (sniff)” was replaced by “wen (smell)” in these two dynasties, there was only one example with “xiu” but its meaning was limited.

(44) 从者具述其事，云：“郎君颇闻异香，某辈所闻，但蛇臊不可近。”(Cong zhe ju shu qi shi, yun: “lang jun po wen yi xiang, mou bei suo wen, dan she sao bu ke jin; The servant elaborated the whole story; he said “The gentleman has a relatively eccentric smell, and as far as I can discern, it is so odd that snakes just cannot get near to him.”) (Extensive Records of the Taiping Era)

“Po” applied in the above sentence is an adverb of frequency, which can be interpreted as “changchang” and “wangwang” (both referring to “usually” in English). Although both “wen” and “xiu” belong to olfactory verbs, there is no combination of “po” and “xiu”.

3.5. The Adverb “Po” and Tactile Words. The structure “Po” as an adverb plus the tactile words, originated in the Spring and Autumn period, and the Warring States, and culminated in Qing dynasty. With the reference to the concept of psychology, we can divide tactile adjectives into three types, namely, the semantic field of touch (soft, hard, loose, tight, pointed, blunt, sharp, light, heavy, slippery), the semantic field of temperature (cold, hot, cool, chill, warm, lukewarm, burning, icy etc.) and the semantic field of pain (painful, sore, itchy etc.). [10] Among them, the expression involving the semantic field of pain in ancient Chinese remains only “po tong (quite painful)” while other expressions like “po teng (quite sore)” and “po yang (quite itchy)” are nowhere to be found. Here are some examples:

(45) 颇痛，刺手阳明与额之盛脉出血。(Po tong, ci shou yang ming yu e zhi sheng mai chu xue; When the meridians of hands or forehead bleed, the feeling could be quite painful.)

(The Divine Axis in Huang di's Canon of Medicine)

(46) 余官江苏时，往来丹徒河干甚屡，习见一尼庵，颇冷落。(Yu guan jiang su shi, wang lai dan tu he gan shen lv, xi jian yi ni an, po leng luo; when I was an official in Jiangsu province, I frequently crossed Dantu river, and one day I encountered a Buddhist nunnery, which was quite desolate.) (The Continued Talk of a Wandering Life)

(47) 暮复同舍，斗室甚隘，仅容一榻，颇暖洁，吴以为狭。(Mu fu tong she, dou shi shen ai, jin rong yi ta, po nuan jie, Wu yi wei xia; At night I shared a room with Mr. Wu; the place was so small that only one bed could fit in but was somehow quite warm and clean. Wu thought it was narrow and limited.) (The Strange Tales of Liao Zhai)

In the above examples, “po” was used as an adverb of degree, containing both meanings of high and low degrees. The collocation of “po” and tactile verbs stems from Qing dynasty with only one example recorded:

(48) 在清明之后三日，翠华、莲峰间，冢上挂纸钱者累累矣，颇触春露秋霜之感。(Zai Qing ming hou san ri, cui hua, lian feng jian, zhong shang gua zhi qian zhe lei lei yi, po chu chun lu qiu shuang zhi gan; On the third day after Qingming Festival, among the lush mountains and green peaks there were a great many people spreading their joss papers on the tombs, which was quite common and represented the similar feeling of spring dew and autumn frost.) (The Record of Jiao Xuan)

The “po” used in the above example indicates frequency, which can be rendered as “usually” or “frequently”.

4. The Constraints on the Co-occurrence of the Adverb “Po” and Sensory Words. The collocation of “po” and sensory adjectives usually lies in the construction of “objects and quality”. In addition, there are constraints on its sentence patterns, mostly in symmetric sentences or contrast and comparison sentences with “bi (compare)”. The construct of “objects and quality” comes from the cognitive style of Chinese sensory adjectives. The adjectives coming after “po” belong to the category of qualitative adjective. From the perspective of the grammar of scanned recognition, qualitative adjectives are the result of general scanning feature of constancy. However, their relationship of processes demands a temporary quality, which makes the combination of the part of speech and syntactic components unmatched. Yet a pairing pattern weakens the constancy of adjectives and the temporary quality of their relationships, thus counterbalancing the both in a pairing context briefly.

It is generally believed in Chinese Grammarian field that degree adverbs cannot modify common verbs except for psychological verbs. However, according to the previous analysis, we can see that degree verbs “po” can modify visual verbs, and here are some examples:

(49) 近思之，颇看得透。(Jin si zhi, po kan de tou; Now it seems to slightly comprehensible for me.) (Analects of Zhuzi)

(50) 自同辰而冠者，性怀善良，克奉家法，哭泣之节，颇见孝道。(Zi Tongchen er guan zhe, xing huai shanliang, ke feng jiafa, ku qi zhi jie, po jian xiaodao; Since Tongchen was twenty(in ancient China, twenty is the adult age), he had been a person who was kind and observed the domestic discipline, and his Confucian doctrine of filial piety can be seen

from his etiquette of observing mourning.) (Sequels of Collections of Epigraphs in Tang Dynasty)

Then, here comes the question: why visual verbs can be modified by the degree adverb “po”?

Degree adverbs are the symbols of quantity characteristics of adjectives. Generally speaking, degree adverbs can be divided into absolute degree adverbs and relative degree adverbs, while sensory verbs can be modified by relative degree adverbs which indicate the low quantity. [11] Chinese characters “kan (look)” and “jian (see)” in example (49) and (50) can be modified by “ji (extreme)” whose semantics is opposite. For instance:

(51) 你家大王是极看得起我的，时常将我请进寨内讲说讲说。(Ni jia Dawang shi ji kan de qi wo de, shi chang jiang wo qing jin zhai nei jiang shuo jiang shuo; Your lord respects me extremely; he often invites me to talk with him in the stockade village.) (Twenty Swordsmen)

(52) 人情物态，施为作用处，极见得分晓。(Ren qing wu tai, shi wei zuo yong chu, ji jian de fen xiao; Where the state of matter or the emotion of human beings shows themselves, can the final result be seen.) (Analects of Zhuzi)

It is thus clear that visual verbs like “kan (look)” and “jian (see)” are relative, that is, “kan (look)” and “jian (see)” are flexible in their semantic degrees. The flexibility is reflected on the degree of perception, the length of time, the state of subject and object as well as different category degrees of “kan (look)” and “jian (see)”, within different category degrees, and these two can have various hierarchy changes. “kan (look)” and “jian (see)” are equipped with integration in many ways, they can be extended in their measurement, which lead to the viable modification of the relative low degree adverb “po”. In this case, relative degree adverbs with low quantity usually contain the conception of “although with insufficient measurement, they still can be used”.

However, not all visual verbs can be modified by the relative low degree adverb “po”. “piao (glance sideways at)”, “suo (look askance at)”, “pie (shoot a glance at)”, “ding (stare at)”, and “deng (glower)”, and these five visual verbs cannot be modified by the degree adverb “po”. Because the five words are inflexible in their meanings and difference of magnitude, meanings of verbs themselves contain a certain category of degree, like “piao (glance sideways at), and are restricted by visual angle to some degree; “pie (shoot a glance at)” and “ding (stare at)” are the constraints to perception of time caused by visual sense; “deng (glower)” is restrained by the state of person with visual sense. Therefore, these words cannot match the adverb “po” of relative low degree.

This is also the reason why verbs of smell “xiu (smell)” cannot be modified by degree adverbs.

5. Conclusion. According to the description and analysis of the co-occurrence of the adverb “po” and sensory words in Ancient Chinese, the conclusions of this study are as follows:

First, on the basis of the previous research results, though the adverb “po” functions as a degree, scope, frequency, and interrogative adverb, a degree adverb primarily matches

sensory words, and only a few scope, frequency, and interrogative adverbs suitably match sensory words. Moreover, the adverb “po” rarely assort with verbs concerning sense of touch.

Second, the earliest co-occurrence of the adverb “po” and sensory words, such as sense of touch, had started in the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States, then came its combined use with visual sense words, which began in the Western Han Dynasty, and its combined use with senses of hearing, taste, and smell started from the Six Dynasties.

Third, the semantic shift of sensory words after “po” embodies the transformation from outside to inside. That is, external feeling developed toward internal psychological and thinking domains.

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