

PROVERBS AN

by Yao Shen

This is the last of three related articles by Dr. Yao Shen, Profes

Proverbs and propredicates are features in grammar. Similar to pronouns (pro-nouns) which substitute for nouns, pro-verbs (pro-verbs) substitute for verbs or verb strings, and propredicates (pro-predicates) substitute for predicates. Such substitution is one of the grammatical functions of the auxiliaries and the modals in English. In this article, auxiliaries: *do*, *have*, and *be*; and modals: *can* and *will* are used to illustrate this function of substitution.

Verb

- 1a. My mainland friends *gobble* macadamia nuts the way
b. they *do* peanuts.

Verb

- 2a. John *likes* Hawaii the way
b. he *does* the mainland.

Verb

- 3a. Mary *respected* her teachers the way
b. she *did* her parents.

In each of the following examples, auxiliaries: *do*, *have*, and *be*; and modals: *can* and *will* in the second simple predicate (b) substitute for the verb string in the first one (a).

- 1 a. My mainland friends *do gobble* macadamia nuts the way
b. they *do* peanuts.

- 2 a. John *does like* Hawaii the way
b. he *does* the mainland.

- 3 a. Mary *did respect* her teachers the way
b. she *did* her parents.

- 4 a. Men *have learned* from books they way
b. they *have* from each other.

- 5 a. Men *are living* in houses they way
b. termites *are* in mounds.

- 6 a. Children *are loved* by their parents the way
b. they *are* by their teachers.

- 7 a. Some people *can eat* with chopsticks the way
b. others *can* with knives and forks.

- 8 a. John *would protect* his friends the way
b. he *would* himself.

- 9 a. Mary *has been studying* with Alice the way
b. John *has (been)* with Paul.

D PROPREDICATES IN ENGLISH

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- 10 a. Passengers *are being examined* at the airport the way
b. packages *are* at the post office

- 11 a. Our compositions *would have been graded* by the professors the way
b. our sentences *would (have been)* by the assistants.

In each of the following examples, the auxiliary or the modal which is the predicate of the second simple sentence (b) substitutes for the predicate of the first one (a).

- 1 a. I *think* the way
b. you *do*.

- 2 a. Martha *studies English* the way
b. Mary *does*.

- 3 a. John *felt adversely toward smoking* the way
b. Paul *did*.

- 4 a. John *has lived frugally* the way
b. you *have*.

- 5 a. I *am flying to the mainland* the way
b. everyone else *is*.

- 6 a. The windows *were closed securely* the way
b. the door *was*.

- 7 a. Martha *can do anything here*
b. if Mary *can*.

- 8 a. John *will catch the bus to school*
b. if Jim *will*.

- 9 a. John *has been calling Mary as frequently as*
b. you *have (been)*.

- 10 a. Students *are being taken care of as much in detail as*
b. their papers *are*.

- 11 a. John *could have gone farther than*
b. you *could (have)*.

- 12 a. Martha *would have been studying as hard as*
b. Mary *would (have)*.

- 13 a. The women *would have been paid as adequately as*
b. the men *would (have been)*.

Five different kinds of situations (A-E) in which propredicates often occur are given below. Needless to say, they are not the only five in the English language in which a propredicate may occur.

A. Answers to yes-no questions usually occur with a propredicate.

Yes-no questions

Answers:

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. <i>Did Peter come?</i> | 1. Yes, he <i>did</i> . | No, he <i>didn't</i> . |
| 2. <i>Do you speak English?</i> | 2. Yes, I <i>do</i> . | No, I <i>don't</i> . |
| 3. <i>Hasn't Mary done the dishes?</i> | 3. Yes, she <i>has</i> . | No, she <i>hasn't</i> . |
| 4. <i>Was the door closed on time?</i> | 4. Yes, it <i>was</i> . | No, it <i>wasn't</i> . |
| 5. <i>Aren't they finishing their work?</i> | 5. Yes, they <i>are</i> . | No, they <i>aren't</i> . |
| 6. <i>Could Larry give me a ride?</i> | 6. Yes, he <i>could</i> . | No, he <i>couldn't</i> . |
| 7. <i>Will they be on the plane?</i> | 7. Yes, they <i>will</i> . | No, they <i>will not</i> . |

B. Tag-questions normally occur with a propredicate.

- Kathie *paints, doesn't she?*
- Carol *didn't buy anything, did she?*
- Juliet *hasn't seen her teacher, has she?*
- The letter *was typed by the secretary, wasn't it?*
- Henry *was having fun, wasn't he?*
- Mark *can pick me up, can't he?*
- Joe *will not go away, will he?*

C. Statements are often responded to with a propredicate.

Speaker A:

Speaker B:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Martha <i>dances</i> . | 1. She <i>does</i> . | 1. She <i>does not</i> . |
| 2. John <i>knew English</i> . | 2. He <i>did</i> . | 2. He <i>did not</i> . |
| 3. Mary <i>has finished her work</i> . | 3. She <i>has</i> . | 3. She <i>has not</i> . |
| 4. Dinner <i>is being served</i> . | 4. It <i>is</i> . | 4. It <i>is not</i> . |
| 5. I <i>was thinking of you</i> . | 5. You <i>were</i> . | 5. You <i>were not</i> . |
| 6. We <i>can go home now</i> . | 6. We <i>can</i> . | 6. We <i>cannot</i> . |
| 7. They <i>would laugh at me</i> . | 7. They <i>would</i> . | 7. They <i>would not</i> . |

D. When two affirmative statements with the same simple predicate are joined by . . . *and* . . . *too*, the second statement often occurs with a propredicate.

- Teachers *study*, and students *do too*.
- I *saw John*, and you *did too*.
- Henry *has gone home*, and Carol *has too*.
- The cookies *were baked yesterday*, and the pie *was too*.
- John *is coming to the party*, and Mary *is too*.
- Michael *can take me in his car*, and Larry *can too*.
- Alice *would help me*, and Paul *would too*.

E. When two negative statements with the same simple predicate are joined by . . . *and* . . . *either*, the second statement often occurs with a proppredicate.

1. Teachers *don't study*, and students *don't* either.
2. I *didn't see John*, and you *didn't* either.
3. Henry *hasn't gone home*, and Carol *hasn't* either.
4. The cookies *weren't baked yesterday*, and the pie *wasn't* either.
5. John *isn't coming to the party*, and Mary *isn't* either.
6. Michael *couldn't take me in his car*, and Larry *couldn't* either.
7. Alice *wouldn't help me*, and Paul *wouldn't* either.

In an expanded sentence, the tense in the proverb or in the proppredicate in the second simple sentence need not be the same as the tense in the first simple one.

1. Our parents *loved* us the way they *do* their grandchildren now.
2. Few Hawaiians *live* now the way they *did*.
3. John *called* Mary every week, and he still *does*.
4. Students *have* been studying the way they *had* (been).
5. John *was* teaching, and he still *is*.
6. Mary *could* speak English fluently the way you *can*.
7. I *will* tell Mary the story the way you *would*.

In an expanded sentence, the proverb or proppredicate in the second simple sentence need not be the same auxiliary or modal as that in the first one.

1. I *have* always liked my teachers the way I *do* my parents.
2. Mary *is* teaching conscientiously the way she always *has*.
3. John *can* be asking for you the way he *did* a while ago.
4. I *will* study harder than you *are* now.
5. Alice *would* have finished the shopping sooner than you *have*.
6. Paul *did* work faster than you ever *could*.

In an expanded sentence, the proverb or proppredicate in the simple sentence need not be the same in the affirmative or negative as that in the first one.

1. I *have not* cooked with electricity the way you *have* with gas.
2. John *is* having a good time the way Mary *is not*.

Proverbs and proppredicates help a person's English from being repetitious, cumbersome, and monotonous through grammar. They merit attention in English language learning.