



An analysis of fixed expressions based on the verb ‘看’ in Chinese

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Abstract: This article analyzes the grammatical and semantic features of commonly used fixed expressions containing the Chinese character “看。” It examines how the meaning of the verb “看” changes depending on tone, focusing on expressions such as “看你,” “看上,” “看笑话,” and “看样子。” Each expression is analyzed using contextual examples from real texts, with explanations of their syntactic function, word order, prosodic elements, and emotional coloring. The communicative functions of each expression—such as reproach, threat, irony, encouragement, and evaluation—are highlighted. The article also determines how these “看”-based expressions can be translated into Uzbek, their functional load in speech, their grammatical roles, and conversion features. This research may be useful for linguists, translators, and teachers interested in Chinese construction grammar.

Keywords: “看” character, Chinese grammar, fixed expressions, construction grammar, semantic analysis, translation methods, pragmalinguistics, stylistics.

Introduction: Among fixed expressions in Chinese, the use of the character “看” is relatively widespread. Before analyzing such expressions, it is appropriate to first consider the lexical and semantic meanings of “.”

The character 看 in Chinese can be pronounced in the first or fourth tone. Below, we will first look at 看 kān in the first tone:

1. To protect, look after, or take care of (守护照料)
Example: 看门 | 一个工人可以看好几台机器。
2. To guard, watch, or monitor (看押 ; 监视 ; 注

视)

When 看 kàn is pronounced in the fourth tone, it encompasses the following meanings:

1. To see a person or object with the eyes (使视线接触人或物) Example: 看书 | 看电影。

2. To observe and make a judgment (观察并加以判断) Example: 我看 he is a reliable person | You see this办法好不好。

3. To visit, to call on (访问) Example: 看望 | 看朋友。

4. To treat or regard (对待) Example: 看待 | 另眼相看。

5. To diagnose (诊治) Example: 王大夫把我的病看好了。

6. To take care of (照料) Example: 照看 | 衣帽自看。

7. Placed before a verb or verb phrase to indicate foreseeing a change or to warn of a possible negative event. Example: 别跑！看摔着！ | 看饭快凉了，快

吃吧。

8. Placed after a verb or verb phrase to mean "try doing." The preceding verb is often in a reduplicated form. Example: 想想看 | 找找看 | 等一等看 | 评理看 | 先做几天看。

[看你] kàn nǐ This expression conveys reproach or annoyance toward someone's action or behavior, but often carries undertones of affection or sincere concern.

1. 方玄瑶端着一个大饭盒进来：“看你，又忘了吃饭！” Fang Xuanyao entered carrying a large lunch box: “Look at you, you've forgotten to eat again!” (From a TV series)

2. 涂朝忧伤地望着她：“我……完了，今后……”

夏璐接着笑了：“看你，你这么年轻，才刚刚开始生活，你的路还长，不该说这些话。” Tu Chao looked at her sadly: “I... it's over for me, from now on...” Xia Lu continued with a smile: “Look at you, you're so young, your life is just beginning, you have a long road ahead—you shouldn't be saying things like this.” (From a TV series)

3. “瞧你，满头是汗！你歇歇，我给你倒碗茶去！” “Look at you, your head's covered in sweat! Rest a bit, I'll pour you a bowl of tea!” (From Ding Wen's selected works)

4. 彩虹多从碗里拿了一个熟鸡蛋，搁在女儿面前：“来，补养补养你！” 彩虹嫂：“看你把女儿宠的！” Caihong took a boiled egg from the bowl and placed it in front of her daughter: “Here, have something nourishing!” Caihong's sister-in-law: “Look at you, spoiling your daughter like that!” (From Ya Jimeng's Xiaoyang Memoirs)

5. “亲家，这几个月影响你休息了。” “亲家，看你这嘴儿去了！” “Neighbor, we've disturbed your rest these past few months.” “Neighbor, look at the way you talk!” (From a TV series)

6. “爸爸，祥子回来了。” “回来就回来呀，看你这么大惊小怪的。” Dad, Xiangzi is back.” “So he's back—look at you, making such a fuss about it.” (From Camel Xiangzi)

7. “瞧你这一操摸的，还原封没动呢！” “Look at you, fussing over it so much, and it's still unopened!” (From Shen Rong's selected works)

8. “看你这人，嘴上说得那么好，原来都忘了，怪不得回来一个多月了，一回也不上这儿来。” “Look at you, saying such nice things, but it turns out you've forgotten everything. No wonder you've been back for over a month and haven't come here once.” (From Ding Ling's selected works)

9. “那小子不干了？” “不干了？瞧你找的这号 【看你的（了）】 kàn nǐ de (le)

人。” “谁知他怎么变卦了。大哥，怎么办？” “That guy's quit?” “Quit? Look at the kind of person you found.” “Who knew he'd change his mind? Big brother, what should we do?”

Note: After “看你,” a pause often occurs. Without the pause, the tone becomes sharper and more urgent (see examples 1, 5, 7, and 8).

你看你 (nǐ kàn nǐ) This phrase carries the same meaning as “看你.”

1. 子李关上抽屉，看着桌上的饭菜，摸怪着：“你看你，早饭还没吃，帮快吃午饭吧。” Zi Li closed the drawer, looked at the food on the table, and said in surprise: “Look at you, you haven't even had breakfast—come on, eat lunch quickly.”

2. “哎，都快午休了，该休息了，不要再点蚊了。” “Hey, it's almost lunchtime—you should rest now, stop burning mosquito coils.”

“你看你，什么时候，还心浮气躁把蚊拍！” (张世旭《苦音鬼》)

“Āi, dōu kuài wǔxiū le, gāi xiūxí le, bù yào zài diǎn wén le.”

“Nǐ kàn nǐ, shénme shíhou, hái xīnfú qìzhào bǎ wénpāi!”

— “Hey, it's almost lunchtime — you should rest now; stop constantly swatting mosquitoes.” — “Look at you — at any time, you're still so restless and jittery, swatting mosquitoes like that!” (Jiang Shidan, Hardship)

3. “我比你还迷？什么时候你迅速呀？你瞧你，说起话来没头没脑的。”

Wǒ bǐ nǐ hái mí? Shénme shíhou nǐ xùnsù ya? Nǐ qiáo nǐ, shuō qǐ huà lái méi tóu méi nǎo de. — “Am I more confused than you? Since when have you been quick? Look at you — when you start talking, it's all aimless and incoherent.” (Li Pei, Distant Sea)

Explanation (English): This expression expresses the speaker's wish that the addressee will strive and act persistently so as to achieve success; it conveys encouragement and support and carries an encouraging, motivating tone. In colloquial speech it often ends with the particle 了. The pronoun 你 can be contextually replaced by 你们 (you plural) or by other pronouns contrasted with the speaker (as seen in examples 3 and 4 below).

Examples & Translations

1. 贺大师跟我约好了，他们征求观众参加表演时，我就要站起来说——“今晚看你的了”。 Hè dàshī gēn wǒ yuē hǎo le, tāmen zhēngqíu guānzhòng cānjiā biǎoyǎn shí, wǒ jiù yào zhàn qǐlái shuō——“Jīnwǎn kàn nǐ de le.” — Master He agreed with me; when they ask audience members to perform, I'll stand up and say: “Tonight it's up to you (to show us)!”

2. 慧因：“好个十八三妹，真敢亲借炭用，我岂能容得！”罗杰：“法空弄完了，这回就看你的了！” Huì Yīn: “Hǎo gè shíbā sān mèi, zhēn gǎn qīn jiè tàn yòng, wǒ qǐ néng róng de!” Luó Jié: “Fǎkōng nòng wán le, zhè huí jiù kàn nǐ de le!” — Huiyin: “That eighteenth sister, she really dares to borrow charcoal for herself — how could I tolerate that!” — Luo Jie: “Fakong's job is done; this time it's up to you!” (i.e., “Now it's your turn to handle it.”)

3. “这屋长得好，我想在从省里招聘来的研究生。这是孔园样，我们府里管高离的经理。年轻有为嘿，看你们的了。” Zhè wū zhǎng de hǎo, wǒ xiǎng zài cóng shěng lǐ zhāopìn lái de yánjiūshēng. Zhè shì Kǒng Yuányàng, wǒmen fù lǐ guǎn Gāo Lí de jīnglǐ. Niánqīng yǒu wéi hēi, kàn nǐmen de le. — “This place is developing well; I want to entrust it to the graduate students recruited from the province. This is Kong Yuanyang, the manager under Gao Li in our office. Young and promising — now it's up to you (all).” (From a TV series)

4. “哎，这个不要跌掌。我这边也看着期望。 you say!” (i.e., “That's nonsense.”)

看我是这样样不？往后，光要我老辛不行，得看大伙的了。” (房纯如《迷人的乐队》) Āi, zhège bú yào diē zhǎng. Wǒ zhè biān yě kànzhé qīwàng. Kàn wǒ shì zhèyàng yàng bù? Wǎnghòu, guāng yào wǒ Lǎo Xīn bù xíng, děi kàn dàhuō de le.

— “Ah, don't let this collapse. I'm watching it with hope too. See whether I can do it like this. From now on, relying only on me, Old Xin, won't work — it will depend on everyone.” (Fang Chunru, The Charming Band)

【看你说的】 kàn nǐ shuō de

Explanation (English): Used to express disagreement or reproach toward what the interlocutor has just said — “look at what you say!” In some contexts it can also be used modestly or ironically (as in example 4 below). The verb 看 here can often be replaced by 瞧 (qiáo).

The verb 说 can likewise be swapped for other verbs that denote speech or reaction, depending on context.

Examples & Translations

1. 你要打我，还要再打苗苗。看你说的，我正是为了苗苗嘛。nǐ yào dǎ wǒ, hái yào zài dǎ Miáomiáo. kàn nǐ shuō de, wǒ zhèng shì wèile Miáomiáo ma. — “You want to beat me, and also beat Miaomiao? Look at what you're saying — I'm doing this precisely for Miaomiao, you know.”

2. 完克，让人家看着！素静，完克真像你。像我有什么出息。看你说的。 Wánkè, ràng rénjiā kànzhé! Sùjìng, Wánkè zhēn xiàng nǐ. xiàng wǒ yǒu shénme chūxi. kàn nǐ shuō de. — “Vanke — let people watch! Sujing, Vanke really is like you. If he were like me, what achievement would there be? Look at what you're saying.” (i.e., “Don't say that.”)

3. 咱可说明白了。酒得往人肚子里倒。瞧你说的。 Zán kě shuō míngbái le. Jiǔ děi wǎng rén dùzi lǐ dào. qiáo nǐ shuō de. — “I've explained it clearly: the liquor should go into people's stomachs. Look at what

4. 我向周公讲了这件事，他摇起大拇指说：这万金油大王还有未朽的气焰呢。看你说的！ Wǒ xiàng Zhōugōng jiǎng le zhè jiàn shì, tā yáo qǐ dà mǔzhǐ shuō: zhè wànjin yóu dàwáng hái yǒu wèi xiǔ de qìyàn ne. kàn nǐ shuō de! — “I told Zhou Gong about this; he raised his thumb and said, 'This jack-of-all-trades still has undiminished swagger.' Look at what you say!” (i.e., “You've exaggerated my merits.”)

5. 你明儿一回娘家，要不，你是应该告诉着我怎么应对的。这还不答如流。看你说的。 Nǐ míngrī yí huí niángjiā, yào bù, nǐ shì yīnggāi gàosu zhe wǒ zěnme yìngduì de. zhè hái bù dá rú liú. kàn nǐ shuō de. — “You're going home to your mother tomorrow — you should have told me in advance how I should handle it. That wasn't an offhand reply. Look at what you say!” (i.e., “Don't praise or flatter like that.”)

Note: “看你说的” often stands alone as a comment. The verb 看 can be replaced by 瞧; and 说 can be replaced by other speech verbs depending on nuance.

【看上（眼）】 kàn shàng (yǎn)

Explanation (English): After observing a person, event, or thing, 看上(眼) expresses that one finds it/that person appealing or acceptable — literally “to take a liking to (at first sight).” More generally, it indicates that after consideration the object seems fitting, satisfactory, or desirable.

Examples & Translations

1. 谈恋爱第一印象最重要了，只要她第一眼看了你，啥都能变成优点的。 Tán liànlài dì yī yìnxiàng zuì zhòngyào le, zhǐyào tā dì yī yǎn kàn shàng le nǐ, shā dōu néng biànchéng yōudiǎn de. — “In romance, first impressions are most important. If she likes you at first sight, anything can turn into a virtue.”

2. 现在不准摆摊蛤蟆，各大饭店都缺货，等青蛙差点灭，表早就看上了这一行。今后消息灵通就

可以发财嘛。Xiànzài bù zhǔn bǎitān hámá, gè dà someone to do it.)"

fàndiàn dōu quē huò, děng qīngwā chàdiǎn miè, Biǎo zǎo jiù kàn shàng le zhè yī háng. Jīnhòu xiāoxi língtōng jiù kěyǐ fācái ma.

— “Now it’s forbidden to sell frogs from stalls; big restaurants are out of stock. As frogs nearly disappear, Biao had already taken a liking to this trade. Later, those well-informed will be able to get rich.”

3. 我们寄的是旧金山中田越缆的杰作，很难被时誉的上海人看上眼。Wǒmen jì de shì Jiùjīnshān Zhōngtián Yuèlǎn de jiézuò, hěn nán bì shíyù de Shànghǎi rén kàn shàng yǎn. — “What we sent was a masterpiece by Zhongtian Yuelan in San Francisco; it’s hard for the trend-conscious Shanghaiese to take a fancy to it.”

Note / Collocations:

- **看得上（眼）** **kàn de shàng (yǎn)** — to be able to “take a liking to / approve of.”

- **看不上（眼）** **kàn bù shàng (yǎn)** — to be unable to take a liking to; to find unacceptable or unsatisfactory. These forms often function as the predicate (part of the predicate) of a clause. If 眼 ('eye') is absent, the phrase 看上 may take a complement after it.

4. 你看中了他们中的谁？应该问他们中的谁值得得我看得上。Nǐ kàn zhòng le tāmen zhōng de shuí? Yǐnggāi wèn tāmen zhōng de shuí zhídé dé wǒ kàn dé shàng. — “Who among them did you set your sights on? You should ask which of them is worthy of my approval.” (i.e., “Which one would I actually like?”)

5. 我长大了也开电梯，天天坐。嗨，开这玩意儿有什么劲！没人看得上。娘都嫌难找。Wǒ zhǎng dà le yě kāi diàntī, tiāntiān zuò. Hāi, kāi zhè wán yìr yǒu shénme jìn! Mérén kàn dé shàng. Niáng dōu xián nán zhǎo. — “When I grow up I’ll operate the elevator and ride it every day. Pah — what’s so exciting about running this thing! No one admires it; even my mother thinks it’s hard to come by (or hard to find

someone to do it).”

6. 商量买双软底鞋，给她出去逛逛儿的时候穿。死说说说，是搏着她去了商场，转来转去没有一

双看上眼的。Shāngliang mǎi shuāng ruǎndǐxié, gěi tā chūqù guàng páng de shíhòu chuān. Sǐ shuō shuō shuō, shì bó zhe tā qù le shāngchǎng, zhuàn lái zhuàn qù méiyǒu yī shuāng kàn shàng yǎn de. — “We discussed buying a pair of soft-soled shoes for her to wear when she goes out. Though we urged her and took her to the mall, after wandering around she couldn’t find a single pair she liked.”

7. 厂长自己老婆那么漂亮，哪里看得上桂婆子。Chǎngzhǎng zìjǐ lǎopó nàme piàoliang, nǎlǐ kàn dé shàng Guì pózi. — “The factory director’s own wife is so pretty — how could he take a fancy to Gui Pozi?”

8. 我可瞧不上这种人，假深沉。Wǒ kě qiáo bù shàng zhè zhǒng rén, jiǎ shēnchén. — “I really can’t stand people like that — they’re pretentiously solemn.”

9. 见什么人说什么话，还跟小娟絮絮糟糟的，我最看不上这一点，他不能入党！Jiàn shénme rén shuō shénme huà, hái gēn Xiǎo Juān xùxù zāozāo de, wǒ zuì kàn bù shàng zhè yīdiǎn, tā bùnéng rù dǎng! — “He adjusts what he says to whoever he meets and chatters on with Xiao Juan — that’s the thing I dislike most about him; he can’t be admitted to the Party!”

10. 虽说工资也不高，却对那五分钱一碗的炒馒头看不上眼了。Suīshuō gōngzī yě bù gāo, què duì nà wǔ fēnqián yī wǎn de chǎo mántou kàn bù shàng yǎn le. — “Although his salary wasn’t high, he began to look down on that five-fen-per-bowl fried mantou.”

Additional notes (English):

- The phrases “看上（眼）” and “看得/不上（眼）” most often serve as predicates in a sentence. If 眼 ('eye') is absent, the phrase can take complements after it.

- “看得上” (to find appealing) is sometimes used

rhetorically to imply the opposite (i.e., not to like), as in example 7. In many cases 看 can be replaced by 瞧 (qiáo), with only minor stylistic differences.

看我】 kàn wǒ

Basic meanings / Use:

1. Expressing self-blame for one's mistake and thereby implicitly apologizing to the interlocutor.

2. Expressing a threatening/warning attitude — used to warn, threaten, or intimidate the addressee.

Examples & translations

1. 原文：“啊呀！大嫂，看我这记性！我给您搞到一张戏票《秦香》是宫！赔笑，晚上迷迷瞪瞪的！我把电视正负极搞反了！”（《电影创作》

1981.7) Pinyin: Ā ya! Dàsǎo, kàn wǒ zhè jìxìng! Wǒ gěi nín gǎo dào yì zhāng xìpiào “Qínxiāng” shì gōng! Péixiào, wǎnshàng mímí dèngdēng de! Wǒ bǎ diànshì zhèng fù jí gǎo fǎn le! Translation: “Ah! Sister-in-law, look at my memory! I got you a ticket to the play ‘Qin Xiang’ at the palace! (Sheepish smile) Last night I was all muddled and dazed — I even mixed up the TV’s positive and negative leads!”

Note: Here the speaker blames themselves for a lapse and softens it as a mild apology/embarrassed remark.

2. 原文：“你们这班打家伙，就是不学好！下不下来？婶的，看我不把你们连队派出去去关黑屋！”（叶之森《我们建国巷》） Pinyin: Nǐmen zhè bān dǎ jiāhuo, jiùshì bù xué hǎo! Xià bu xiàlái? Shěn de, kàn wǒ bù bǎ nǐmen liánduì pài chūqù qù guān hēiwū! Translation: “You bunch of troublemakers — you just won’t behave! Won’t you come down? (Exasperated) Watch me if I don’t send your whole platoon out and lock you in a dark cell!”

Note: Threatening use — the speaker warns of punitive action.

3. 原文：“好呀，票良，你骂我沒原则，原来

走。” Pinyin: Hǎo ya, Piàoliáng, nǐ mà wǒ méi yuánzé, yuánlái shì zìjǐ yí dùzì shǐ. Kàn wǒ bù gāosu nǐ, ràng nǐ chī bù liǎo dōuzhe zǒu. Translation: “Fine, Piaoliang — you call me unprincipled, but it turns out you’re full of crap yourself. See if I don’t tell everyone — you’ll be humiliated and won’t know how to face people.”

Note: Threat / promise to expose someone.

4. 原文：“杀人要是不偿命，我早杀你几万次了！死猪，看我来怎么整治你。” Pinyin: Shārén yàoshi bù cháng mìng, wǒ zǎo shā nǐ jǐ wàn cì le! Sǐ zhū, kàn wǒ lái zěnme zhěngzhì nǐ. Translation: “If killing someone didn’t cost you your life, I’d have killed you tens of thousands of times already! You dead pig — watch how I’ll deal with you now.”

Note: Extremely violent/threatening expression.

Syntactic/pragmatic remarks:

- The phrase “看我” is often used without an explicit grammatical subject (i.e., uttered alone as a speech act).

- In the self-blaming/apologetic usage there typically follows a pause after “看我”; the speaker then explains. In this case 我 may combine with following words/phrases to function as the object or complement of 看.

- In the threatening usage, there is often no pause after “看我” and it is followed immediately by verbs or adverbial structures such as 不 (“won’t”) or 怎么 (“how...”) that complete the threat (e.g., “看我不把...”, “看我怎么整治你”).

- The verb 看 can sometimes be replaced by 瞧 (qiáo) with similar effect.

【看我的】 kàn wǒ de

Basic meaning / Use: A declaration of one’s resolve, competence, or capability — a “watch me (do it)” expression showing confidence, determination, or the intention to prove oneself.

Examples & translations

1. 原文：“盘老王受到刺激，兴奋起来：‘看我的……。’他根本不同我，倒憋了一口气，嘴对嘴·将剩下的羊精酒咕嘟直灌下去。”（叶蔚林《在没有航标的河流上》） Pinyin: Pán Lǎo Wáng shòudào cìjī, xīngfèn qǐlái: “Kàn wǒ de……” Tā gēnběn bù tóng wǒ, dào biē le yì kǒu qì, zuǐ duì zuǐ, jiāng shèngxià de yáng jīng jiǔ gūdū zhí guàn xiàqù. Translation: “Old Wang Pan was provoked and grew excited: ‘Watch me...’ He didn’t interact with me — instead he held his breath, then, mouth to mouth, gulped down the remaining sheep-spirit liquor.”

Note: The utterance “看我的……” is left as an emphatic independent clause here: “Watch me / just watch what I’ll do.”

2. 原文：“看我的吧，平如！我要不干出点名堂来，断了绝我是不甘心的！” Pinyin: Kàn wǒ de ba, Píngrú! Wǒ yào bù gàn chū diǎn míngtang lái, duàn le jué wǒ shì bù gānxīn de! Translation: “Just watch me, Pingru! If I can’t pull off something noteworthy — if I don’t prove myself — I’d be truly unsatisfied.”

3. 原文：“哼，别看他们现在美，赵经理，要竞争，瞧我的！” Pinyin: Hēng, bié kàn tāmen xiànzài měi, Zhào jīnglǐ, yào jìngzhēng, qiáo wǒ de! Translation: “Hmph — don’t be impressed by how great they seem now. Manager Zhao, if competition comes, watch me!”

Syntactic/pragmatic remarks:

- “看我的” often stands alone as an independent sentence (speech act) and often appears with modal particles like 吧.
- It conveys a performative promise or boast: “I’ll show you / I’ll make it happen.”
- As before, 看 can sometimes be replaced by 瞧, with similar nuance.

【看笑话】 kàn xiàohuà

Basic meaning / Use: To stand by and watch others’ (part of the verb phrase) and can appear in mistakes or embarrassing situations with indifference constructions where it complements or co-occurs with

or even enjoyment — to gawk at, mock, or take pleasure in someone’s misfortune. Often implies not helping and enjoying the spectacle.

Examples & translations

1. 原文：“你这个人哪，真赖好！存心看我的笑话。我说有点面熟——人家是汽车公司来监督我们这个农村干部的吧？”（李国文《开花的树》）

Pinyin: Nǐ zhège rén na, zhēn lài hǎo! Cúnxīn kàn wǒ de xiàohuà. Wǒ shuō yǒudiǎn miànshú — rénjiā shì qìchē gōngsī lái jiāndū wǒmen zhège nóngcūn gànbbù de ba?

Translation: “You’re really something — mean-spirited! You’re intentionally waiting to make a joke out of me. I said they looked familiar — maybe they’re from the car company who came to supervise our rural cadres, right?”

Note: “看我的笑话” = “to wait and laugh/make fun of me.”

2. 原文：蓝霞着急地推着崔云龙：“别说了，别说了，别让人看咱们笑话。” Pinyin: Lán Xiá zhāojí

de tuī zhe Cuī Yúnlong: “Bié shuō le, bié shuō le, bié ràng rén kàn zánmen xiàohuà.” Translation: Lan Xia anxiously shoved Cui Yunlong: “Don’t say any more — don’t say any more — don’t let people make fun of us.”

3. 原文：“林茜平，过去我有许多事没跟你讲开，就是因为我不愿多惹你哥哥的麻烦。让人看笑话，今天这件事你不要管。”（王海寿《夜行》）

Pinyin: Lín Qiānpíng, guòqù wǒ yǒu xǔduō shì méi gēn nǐ jiǎng kāi, jiù shì yīnwèi wǒ bù yuàn duō rě nǐ gēge de máfan. Ràng rén kàn xiàohuà, jīntiān zhè jiàn shì nǐ bù

yào guǎn. Translation: “Lin Qianping, in the past I didn’t tell you many things because I didn’t want to cause your brother extra trouble. Don’t let people ridicule us — don’t get involved in this matter today.”

Syntactic/pragmatic remarks:

- “看笑话” commonly functions as a predicate

other predicates (compound or serial structures).

- The word 笑话 (joke/mock situation) may be modified (attributes before it) to specify what kind of ridicule or mockery is meant.

【看样子】 kàn yàngzi (also variant: 看样儿 kàn yàngr)

Basic meaning / Use: To assess or infer the likely development, tendency, or state of affairs based on observable facts — “it seems / looks like / judging by the looks of it.” Used to make an inference or conjecture grounded in observable evidence.

Examples & translations

1. 原文：肖义楚的眼睛在晨曦中闪烁着逼人的光：“看样子，你真打算给她手术？”徐彦文无声地点点头。 Pinyin: Xiāo Yǐchǔ de yǎnjīng zài chénxī zhōng shǎnshuò zhe bīrén de guāng: “Kàn yàngzi, nǐ zhēn dǎsuàn gěi tā shǒushù?” Xú Yànwén wúshēng de diǎn diǎn tóu. Translation: Xiao Yichu's eyes flashed a piercing light in the dawn: “It looks like you really intend to operate on her?” Xu Yanwen silently nodded.

2. 原文：“是啊，太不幸了。是哪个名人说的……不幸是一所最好的大学。看样儿，已经被这个大学录取了。但愿早点毕业。” Pinyin: Shì a, tài búxìng le. Shì nǎge míngrén shuō de... búxìng shì yī suǒ zuì hǎo de dàxué. Kàn yàngr, yǐjīng bèi zhège dàxué lùqū le. Dànyuàn zǎodiǎn bìyè. Translation: “Yes — so unfortunate. Some famous person said, ‘Misfortune is the best university.’ It seems he has already been admitted to that university. Hopefully he’ll graduate soon.”

3. 原文：小伙子开动了电梯。看样子他很想跟这个姑娘多搭讪几句。 Pinyin: Xiǎohuǒzi kāidòng le diàntī. Kàn yàngzi tā hěn xiǎng gēn zhège gūniang duō dāshàn jǐ jù. Translation: The young man started the elevator. Judging by the look of it, he really wants to strike up a few more words with that girl.

Syntactic/pragmatic remarks:

- “看样子” (or colloquial “看样儿”) functions as a discourse marker introducing an inference: “it seems/appears that...”
- It signals that the following proposition is a conjecture based on observation rather than a confirmed fact.

CONCLUSION / SUMMARY (ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

This article comprehensively analyzed the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic properties of frozen expressions (set phrases) in which the Chinese character 看 participates. The research demonstrates that 看’s many-sided meanings underlie its frequent use in a variety of fixed expressions that perform different communicative functions in discourse.

For example:

- “看你” and “你看你” can convey irony, reproach, or affectionate admonition depending on intonation and context.
- “看你的（了）” typically signals encouragement, trust, or assignment of responsibility (“it’s up to you now / we’re counting on you”).
- “看样子” is used to make assessments or conjectures based on observable circumstances.
- “看笑话” denotes standing by indifferently (and sometimes with relish) while others suffer embarrassment or failure — a mocking attitude.

The study shows that literal word-for-word translation is often insufficient; translators must account for context, pragmatic function, and prosodic features (tone, stress, pauses) to convey accurate meaning. The article illustrated each construction with examples showing differences in spoken vs. written use, the role of tone and emphasis, and how grammatical tools (particles, pauses, serial predicates) shift meaning.

From the perspectives of construction grammar and functional semantics, these set expressions are important: they illustrate how a single lexical item (看) participates in multiple constructions with distinct

pragmatic functions. Accurate translation therefore requires attention to functional load (what the expression does in discourse), not just lexical meaning.

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