

# COMMUNICATIVE EXCHANGES



## Guófáng Yǔyán Xuéyuàn de Shēnghuó (Life at DLI)

David (D), a DLI graduate meets with a schoolmate, Lánsī (L), in a university and tells her about his school life at DLI.

### Frame 1

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | L: Kuài wǔdiǎn le. Chīfàn de shíhou dào le.              | It will soon be five o'clock. It is time to eat.                     |
| 2 | D: Shítáng jiù yào kāi mén le. wǒmen yìqǐ qù, hǎo bùhǎo? | The dining hall is just about to open. How about our going together? |
| 3 | L: Hǎo a. Wǒmen lìkè zǒu ba.                             | OK. Let's go right away.   |

### Notes:

1 The time is up (now). In the sentence Chīfàn de shíhou dào le, the main clause shíhou dào le, "the time is up, the time has arrived" is further specified by the subordinate clause chīfàn de, "to eat." Other examples:

|                          |                                      |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Xiàkè de shíhou dào le.  | It's time for class to be dismissed. |
| Xiězì de shíhou dào le.  | It's time for writing characters.    |
| Huíjiā de shíhou dào le. | It's time to go home.                |

1 & 2 Pattern of Imminent Action. In the sentence Kuài(dào) wǔdiǎn le, "It will soon be five o'clock," the key word of the pattern is the adverb kuài, "soon." There are a limited number of adverbs that can be used in this pattern. The adverbs in our vocabulary to date are:

|          |                          |
|----------|--------------------------|
| kuài     | soon                     |
| yào      | is about to ...          |
| jiù      | right away               |
| jiù yào  | soon (just about to ...) |
| kuài yào | soon (just about to ...) |

## Examples:

Tā kuài lái le.  
 Tā yào lái le.  
 Wǒmen jiù chīfàn le.  
 Huǒchē jiùyào kāi le.

Wǒmen kuàiyào chīfàn  
 le.

He will come soon.  
 He is about to come.  
 We'll eat right away.  
 The train is just about to  
 start.  
 We'll soon be eating.

Imminent Action compared with an Action-whose-Time-is-Up pattern:

## (1) Imminent Action (with an adverb)

Shàngkè de shíhou kuài  
 dào le.

It's almost time to go to  
 class.

## (2) Action-Time is Up (without an adverb)

Shàngkè de shíhou dào le.

It's time to go to class.

## Frame 2

(At a table in the dining hall)

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 4 | L: Nǐ de Zhōngwén zài nǎr<br>xué de? Nǐ shuō Zhōngguó<br>huà shuō de hěn hǎo.   | Where did you study (your)<br>Chinese? You speak Chinese<br>very well.   |
| 5 | D: <u>Ná li, ná li.</u> Wǒ shì zài<br><u>Měiguó Guófáng Yǔyán Xuéyuàn</u><br>niǎn de Zhōngwén.                              | Not at all, not at all. I<br>studied Chinese at the United<br>States Defense Language Insti-<br>tute.                    |
| 6 | L: Nǐ zài Yǔyán Xuéyuàn de<br><u>shēnghuó zěnmeyàng?</u>  | How was (your) life at the<br>Language Institute?  |
| 7 | D: Wǒ yǐqián shì <u>jūnrén,</u><br><u>shēnghuó hěn jǐnzhāng.</u><br>Wǒ qǐde hěn <u>zǎo,</u> (shuì jiào)<br>shuì de hěn wǎn. | Previously, when I was a ser-<br>viceman, my life was very<br>tense. I got up very early<br>and went to sleep very late. |

Notes:

4 Pattern of Description of Manner of Action (See the second sentence 4.) This first pattern of description has three elements: An action, the particle de, and a description.

| <u>Action (Verb)</u> | <u>de</u> | <u>Description (SV)</u> |                    |
|----------------------|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Nǐ shuō              | de        | hǎo.                    | You speak well.    |
| Wǒ zǒu               | de        | kuài.                   | I walk fast.       |
| Tā xiě               | de        | màn.                    | She writes slowly. |
| Tā chī               | de        | duō.                    | He eats a lot.     |

In addition to the basic description, another adverb can be added to further clarify the description:

|                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| shuōde <u>hěn</u> hǎo | speak very well      |
| zǒude <u>bù</u> kuài  | doesn't walk fast    |
| xiěde <u>zhēn</u> màn | writes really slowly |
| chīde <u>tài</u> duō  | eats too much        |

The second pattern of description is VO, Vde (description,) as in:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Tā shuō Fàwén shuōde <u>hěn</u> hǎo.      | He speaks French very well.                 |
| Nǐmen xiě Hànzì xiěde <u>zhēn</u> màn.    | You write Chinese characters really slowly. |
| Nèige hái'zi chīfàn chīde <u>tài</u> duō. | That child eats too much.                   |

It is not correct to have a VO-de plus a description construction:

(INCORRECT) Tā shuō Zhōngguó huàde hěn hǎo. (INCORRECT)

The correct construction is

|                                      |                              |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Tā shuō Zhōngguó huà shuōde hěn hǎo. | He speaks Chinese very well. |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|

5 Náli, náli "not at all, not at all." Literally, náli means "where." In this usage as an Idiomatic Expression it may be construed as an abbreviation of nálide huà (nǎrde huà). This is a very common polite remark. However, it does have different meanings under different circumstances.

- (1) In response to a compliment, it means "You flatter me."
- (2) In response to thanks, it means "Don't mention it."
- (3) In response to someone offering an apology, it means "Don't mention it; don't worry about it."

#### 7 More examples of Description of Manner of Action.

|               |                         |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| Tā qǐde zǎo.  | He gets up early.       |
| Tā suǐde wǎn. | She goes to sleep late. |

Further modified by adverbs:

Wǒ qǐde hěn zǎo.  
Wǒ shuǐde tài wǎn.

I get up very early.  
I go to sleep much too late.

Additional VO compounds added to the sentence:

Wǒ qǐchuáng, qǐde hěn zǎo.  
Ta shuǐjiào, shuǐde hěn wǎn.

I get up very early.  
He goes to sleep very late.

Additionally, time elements may be added:

Wǒ zǎoshang qǐchuáng,  
qǐde hěn zǎo.  
Wǒ wǎnshang shuǐjiào,  
shuǐde hěn wǎn.

In the morning, I get up very early.  
In the evening, I go to sleep very late.

### Frame 3

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|----|---|--|
| 8  | L: Nèige xuéxiào hěn yǒumíng, wǒ <u>zǎojiù</u> tīngshuōle. Wǒ yào wèn nǐ, nǐ zài nàlǐ de shíhòu yòng méiyòng <u>diànzǐ jìsuànjī</u> xué Zhōngwén? | That school is very famous; I heard about it a long time ago. I want to ask you, when you were there, did you use the computer to learn Chinese? |
| 9  | D: Méiyòng. Tīngshuō xiànzài zhèlǐ yǒu <u>hǎojǐ xī</u> xiǎng lìkè jiù yòng.   | No, I didn't. I heard that now there are many departments that want to use it right away.  |
| 10 | L: Yòng diànzǐ jìsuànjī xué xiě Hànzì kěnéng xuéde hěn kuài.  | If they use the computer to study writing Chinese characters, it is possible they'll learn very quickly.   |
| 11 | D: Kěnéng. Wǒ xiě Hànzì, xiěde hěn màn.   | Possibly. I write Chinese characters very slowly.  |
| 12 | L: Nǐmen dōu xiěde hěn hǎo ba.  | All of you write very well, I presume.   |

### Notes:

8&9 Time When as an Adverb (not a Movable Adverb), with zǎojiù, "long ago," lìkè jiù, "immediately," lìkè, "immediately," and jiù, "right away." Examples:

Tāmen zǎojiù lái.

They came a long time ago./They have been here for a long time.

Tāmen lìkè jiù lái.  
 Tāmen lìkè lái  
 Tāmen jiù lái.

They'll be coming right away.  
 " " "  
 " " "

## Frame 4

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 13 | D: Hǎoxiē xuésheng <u>cháng</u> ( <u>cháng</u> ) <u>liànxí</u> , tāmen xiěde hěn hǎo. Wǒ hěn shǎo liànxí xiě Zhōngguó zì, kěshì cháng liànxí <u>chàng</u> Zhōngguó <u>gē</u> . | A good many students often practice (and) write very well. I very seldom practice writing Chinese characters, but I often practice singing Chinese songs. |
| 14 | L: Nème, nǐ <u>yíding</u> chàngde hěn hǎo. Xiànzài jiù <u>xiǎo shēng(r)</u> chàng yíge ba.   | In that case, you certainly (must) sing very well. Sing one softly now.   |
| 15 | D: Ài chànggē(r)de bù yíding chàngde hěn hǎo. Búguò yào-shì nǐ <u>yíding yào</u> wǒ chàng, wǒmen jiù yìqǐ chàng, zěnmeyàng?  | Those who love to sing don't necessarily sing very well. However, if you insist on my singing, how about our singing together?                            |
| 16 | L: Ò! Wǒde biǎo mànle. Nǐ kàn shítáng de zhōng. (Pointing at the clock) Chifàn de shíjiān <u>zǎo guòle</u> . Wǒmen zǒu ba.   | Oh! My watch is slow. Look at the clock of the dining hall. (Pointing at the clock) Meal time passed long ago. Let's go.                                  |
| 17 | D: Hǎo. Shítáng lìkè jiù yào <u>quānmén</u> le.  | OK. The dining hall will close right away.  |

Notes:

13&16 Changing the subject of conversation with kěshì "but, however", and Ō "Oh." Kěshì was used to change the subject of conversation from writing Chinese characters to singing Chinese songs. Ō changed the subject from singing to eating.

14 A request or suggestion with the particle ba. Without the particle ba, a suggestion could become an order or a command. Of course, the situation, intonation (stress), and gestures can make a difference. Compare the following:

Suggestion or Request

Qǐlai ba.  
 (How about getting up.)  
 Qǐng qǐlai ba.  
 (How about getting up.)  
 Gěi wǒ ba.  
 (How about giving it to me.)

Order or Command

Qǐlai!  
 (Get up!)  
 Kuài qǐlai!  
 (Hurry and get up!)  
 Gěi wǒ!  
 (Give [it] to me!)