

# A Study of the Construction “Zhu Da De Jiu Shi Yi Ge X” in the New Media Context

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**Abstract.** There is an emerging linguistic construction “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge (主打的就是一个) X” in the new media context. By collecting and analyzing relevant linguistic data from three mainstream new media platforms, this paper investigates the syntactic features, semantic characteristics, and pragmatic aspects of this construction from a micro perspective. Additionally, taking into account the current development of new media and linguistic mechanisms, the study conducts a macro-level analysis of the formation pathway of this linguistic data and summarizes the usage characteristics and generation mechanism of this type of linguistic construction “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge X”, aiming to contribute its own perspectives and ideas to the application research of construction grammar and the exploration of regularities and trends in the use of language in new media.

**Keywords:** construction grammar; zhu da de jiu shi yi ge X; usage features; generation mechanism.

Abbreviations, Data Bases and Electronic Corpora	
<b>Abbreviations</b>	
BCC	Beijing Language and Culture University Chinese Corpus
CCL	Center for Chinese Linguistics PKU
CNNIC	China Internet Network Information Center
NP	noun phrase
<b>Data Bases and Electronic Corpora</b>	
BCC	<a href="http://bcc.blcu.edu.cn/">http://bcc.blcu.edu.cn/</a>
CCL	<a href="http://cclpku.edu.cn:8080/ccl_corpus/">http://cclpku.edu.cn:8080/ccl_corpus/</a>

The 50th Statistical Report on the Development Status of the Internet in China released by the CNNIC on August 31, 2022, shows that as of June 2022, the size of China's Internet users was 1.051 billion and the Internet penetration rate reached 74.4%. In the booming new media context, online hot words and hot memes are constantly emerging, and their widespread use has effectively extended the discourse system. Some of these emerging expressions have undergone changes in their original syntax and semantics, which have evolved and become fixed in the process of use, forming new linguistic constructions.

From the theoretical point of view, the development of construction grammar has been nearly forty years since Fillmore, from theoretical research to applied research to interdisciplinary research, and the overall development has been diversified. The studies of construction grammar in the past have mostly focused on the study of special sentences, while interdisciplinary studies have been conducted but not systematically and comprehensively and have not paid enough attention to emerging constructional expressions. From an applied perspective, the study of the structural features and usage characteristics of emerging linguistic constructions is important for an in-depth understanding of the rules of language use and cultural trends in the new media context.

As of April 2023, the construction “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge (主打的就是一个) X” has not yet been included in the CCL and the BCC, but the construction was searched on three mainstream new media platforms, namely *Weibo*, *Tiktok*, and *Bilibili*. After screening the duplicate and similar corpora, a total of 318 valid corpora were compiled. Based on the lexical categories and structural

analysis of the existing corpus, this paper finds that this construction is a common form of spoken Chinese expression in the new media context, especially popular in the fields of advertising, propaganda, entertainment, etc. X can be any noun, adjective, or verb, indicating the most prominent, important, and outstanding aspect of something or a phenomenon, or highlighting or self-deprecating. For example, the phrase “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge Special Forces-style travel (主打的就是一个特种兵旅行)” means that the most common and representative way for university students to travel is to sleep less, walk more, and work around the clock like special forces. With the development of new media, the concept has also taken on new forms.

## 1. The Structural Feature of the “Zhu Da De Jiu Shi Yi Ge X”

Before “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge (主打的就是一个) X” was changed and fixed in its current usage, it was originally composed of three separate parts: “zhu da (主打)”, “jiu shi (就是)” and “yi ge (一个)”. The word “da (打)”, originally means to strike, and metaphorically extends to actions such as transmitting in the case of telegraph communication, and further extends its meaning to launch or introduce, as in the case of advertising. The word “zhu (主)” is combined with the meaning of “the most important” or “fundamental” to form the term “zhu da (主打)”, which refers to emphasizing or promoting something as a key point, followed by an object. The term “zhu da songs (主打歌)” was first coined in Taiwan to refer to a masterpiece used by a singing actor for promotion, and was introduced to the Chinese mainland via Hong Kong, Macao, Singapore, and Malaysia, mainly in advertising and marketing to highlight the characteristics of things, such as “zhu da novels/dishes (主打歌)”. Since then, “zhu da (主打)”+NP has been used regularly as a predicate and adjective, such as “zhu da a product (主打某产品)” and “zhu da a column (主打某栏目)”. “Jiu shi (就是)” is a sequential form formed by the commentary adverb “Jiu (就)” and the linking verb “shi (是)”, mostly expressing an affirmative tone. The most common use of “yi ge (一个)” is as a quantifier, but it can also be used between verbs and complements to indicate degree. After the change has been lexicalized, the “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge X” construction takes on a new structural character.

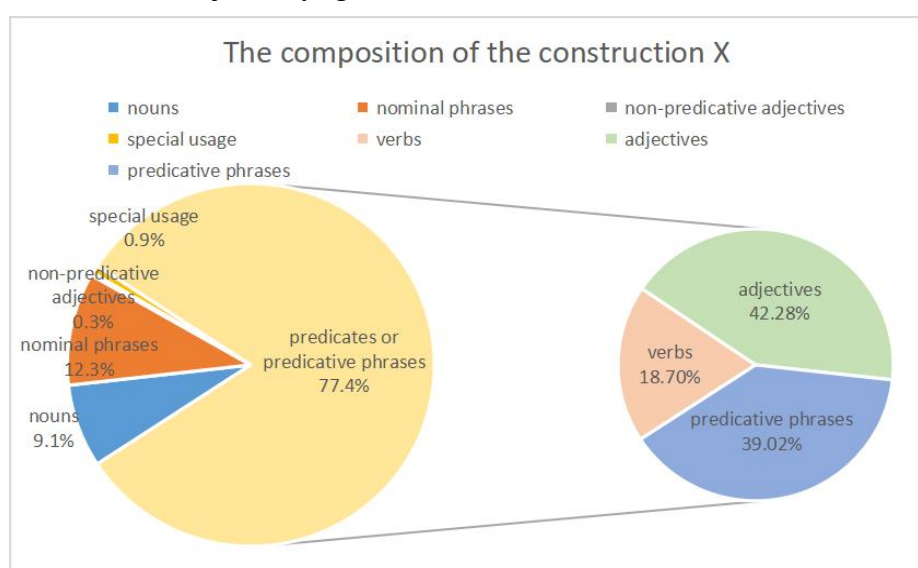


Figure 1 The composition of the construction X

As the left side in Figure 1, which is the analysis of corpus data shows that, the composition of X is divided into four main categories according to the word type: nouns or nominal phrases, predicates or predicative phrases, non-predicative adjectives, and special usage. Of these, as predicates or predicative phrases form X in the majority of cases and have a more complex internal composition, with adjectives and predicative phrases predominating and verbs less frequent, they

are listed separately for greater clarity and intuition, as shown in the pie chart on the right side in Figure 1. In general, the construction is syntactically characterized by a predominance of predicative phrases and a predominance of joint structures, and its evolution is also characterized by linguistic abbreviations.

### 1.1 Original Syntactic Features

1. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge + nouns or nominal phrases. This usage accounts for 21.4% of the valid corpus.

1.1 X can be a noun and is primarily used as an object in this construction. This usage accounts for 9.1% of the valid corpus.

E.g. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge sentiment (情怀). (Bilibili 2023/4/8)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge efficiency (效率). (Tiktok 2023/3/3)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge attitude (态度). (Bilibili 2023/3/21)

1.2 X can be a nominal phrase, which is primarily used as an object in this construction. This usage accounts for 12.3% of the valid corpus.

X is a nominal phrase that can be divided into three structures.

1.2.1 Subject-predicate structures (7.6% of the total valid corpus of nominal phrases)

E.g. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge flower freedom (鲜花自由). (Weibo 2023/3/13)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge time management (时间管理). (Weibo 2023/3/1)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge heartthrob (万人迷). (Tiktok 2023/3/23)

1.2.2 Modifier-noun structures (82.1% of the total valid corpus of nominal phrases)

E.g. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge cultural confidence (文化自信). (Tiktok 2023/2/17)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge academic atmosphere (学习氛围). (Weibo 2023/4/16)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge family status (家庭地位). (Weibo 2023/3/20)

1.2.3 Joint structures (10.3% of the total valid corpus of nominal phrases)

E.g. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge past life and present life (前世今生). (Weibo 2023/4/11)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge worldly wisdom (人情世故). (Bilibili 2023/4/13)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge spring, summer, autumn and winter (春夏秋冬). (Bilibili 2023/4/6)

2. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge + predicates or predicative phrases. This usage accounts for 77.4% of the valid corpus.

2.1 X can be a verb, which is mainly used as an object in this construction. This usage accounts for 14.5% of the valid corpus.

2.1.1 X can be a monovalent verb (30.4% of the total valid verb corpus).

E.g. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge love one's country (爱国). (Tiktok 2023/3/3)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge sleep (睡觉). (Tiktok 2023/4/14)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge reverse (反转). (Tiktok 2023/4/8)

The direct arguments of X sometimes appear directly and sometimes they do not, and there is polysemy.

E.g. (university students/older people/workers ..... ) Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge flash (闪现). The reference to the argument here is unclear and could be a person or thing.

2.1.2 X can be a bivalent verb (69.6% of the total valid verb corpus).

E.g. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge accompany (陪伴). (Tiktok 2023/2/21)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge appreciate (感恩). (Tiktok 2023/3/15)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge trust (信任). (Bilibili 2023/2/7)

This will omit the arguments, but they can be inferred from the semantics and supplemented accordingly.

E.g. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge save (resource) (节约 (资源)). (Bilibili 2023/4/15)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge try (one's best) (拼 (命)). (Bilibili 2023/4/11)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge flaunt (one's meal) (炫 (饭)). (Tiktok 2023/4/14)

2.2 X can be an adjective, which is primarily used as an object in this construction. This usage accounts for 32.7% of the valid corpus.

E.g. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge sincere (真诚). (Bilibili 2023/3/9)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge rebellious (叛逆). (Weibo 2023/4/19)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge elegant (优雅). (Bilibili 2023/1/20)

2.3 X can be a predicative phrase, which is primarily used as an object in this construction. This usage accounts for 30.2% of the valid corpus.

X is a predicative phrase that can be divided into five structures.

2.3.1 Subject-predicate structures (14.6% of the total valid predicative phrase corpus)

E.g. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge emotion stabilize (情绪稳定). (Weibo 2023/4/17)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge culture export (文化输出). (Bilibili 2023/4/19)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge facetious be well considered in every aspect (面面俱到). (Bilibili 2023/4/20)

2.3.2 Verb-object structures (14.6% of the total valid predicative phrase corpus)

E.g. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge come along for the ride (凑热闹). (Weibo 2023/4/2)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge heed advice (听劝). (Bilibili 2023/2/18)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge make empty promises (画饼). (Bilibili 2023/4/19)

2.3.3 Modifier-noun structures (15.6% of the total valid predicative phrase corpus)

E.g. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge chat flexibly (弹性聊天). (Weibo 2023/4/6)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge goes there and back extremely (极限往返). (Bilibili 2023/4/8)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge hurt mutually (互相伤害). (Bilibili 2023/3/22)

2.3.4 Central-complement structures (6.2% of the total valid predicative phrase corpus)

E.g. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge someone honey-lipped (嘴甜). (Tiktok 2023/4/21)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge someone tough (命硬). (Bilibili 2023/4/12)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge something enough (管够). (Weibo 2023/4/4)

2.3.5 Joint structures (49% of the total valid predicative phrase corpus)

E.g. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge work only when one believes in it sincerely (心诚则灵). (Tiktok 2023/2/23)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge make a feint to the east but attack in the west (声东击西). (Weibo 2023/3/22)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge mocking and bitter (阴阳怪气). (Bilibili 2023/4/10)

3. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge + non-predicative adjectives. This usage is relatively rare, accounting for only 0.3% of the valid corpus.

E.g. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge minimally invasive (微创). (Bilibili 2023/4/13)

4. Special usage. This usage is mostly homophonic puns, accounting for 0.9% of the valid corpus.

E.g. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge Zhen's sincerity ("蓁"(真)诚) (because the name Zhen (蓁) of the main female character in the Ode to Joy IV and the true (真) are homophones in Chinese). (Weibo 2023/4/8)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge be ashamed of asking for a salary (问"薪"(心)无愧) (because the salary (薪) and the heart (心) are homophones in Chinese). (Bilibili 2023/4/20)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge low family status (家庭"弟"(地)位) (because the younger brother (弟) and the ground (地) are homophones in Chinese). (Bilibili 2023/4/21)

## 1.2 New Changes: Abbreviations

In the evolution of language, it has become more economical and convenient to use a regular abbreviation or omission of the components of certain terms. In this principle and due to their

lexical and functional characteristics, the words “shi” and “yi ge” in “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge X” can be abbreviated to “zhu da yi ge (主打一个) X”, both at the theoretical level and in realistic usage.

E.g. Zhu da yi ge quality (素质). (Bilibili 2023/3/13)

Zhu da yi ge real (真实). (Tiktok 2023/3/1)

Zhu da yi ge diligent and thrifty in managing the household (勤俭持家). (Bilibili 2023/2/27)

In addition, this abbreviated form also creates a strangeness of expression, allowing users to recreate and redistribute new ideas while chasing hot topics on new media platforms.

## 2. The Use Feature of the “Zhu Da De Jiu Shi Yi Ge X”

### 2.1 Semantic Features

Based on the analysis of the syntactic structure of this construction, we can tentatively conclude that it can be combined with nouns, verbs, adjectives, nominal phrases, or predicative phrases, but a comparison of the use of each specific construction shows that not all nouns, verbs, adjectives, nominal phrases, or predicative phrases can be used in combination with it. Further investigation and analysis of the corpus show that the construction “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge X” has the semantic feature of [+abstract].

In terms of quantity, 97.5% of the 318 corpora have the semantic feature [+abstract] in their concrete constructions. For example, the phrase “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge sense of atmosphere (氛围感)” indicates a certain mood or situation created by a thing or phenomenon. In this case, the construction expresses a common and essential property. Conversely, most words or phrases with a specific meaning, as opposed to an abstract meaning, cannot be combined with this construction to indicate that the main focus is on a definite thing or phenomenon with an entity.

E.g. \*Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge he (他).

\*Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge run (跑).

\*Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge film is beginning (电影开幕).

Only in isolated cases can the construction be combined with a word or phrase of specific meaning, but mostly it is a proper noun or a phrase of special construction, denoting the main aspect or main feature of something or a phenomenon.

E.g. Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge talk shows (脱口秀). (Bilibili 2023/4/11)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge Engel's Coefficient (恩格尔系数). (Tiktok 2023/3/18)

Zhu da de jiu shi yi ge disco (复古disco). (Weibo 2023/3/27)

### 2.2 Pragmatic Features

According to the statistics (Figure 2), the most frequently used “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge X” on the three new media platforms are “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge trust (信任)”, “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge real (真实)” and “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge head-turner (回头率)” respectively. The number of content views and discussions of each specific construction’s video or topic creation content has far exceeded one million, which forms a grid-like and enriched chain of usage, imitation, and dissemination of this linguistic construction in the new media context.

Top 5 frequency of use of X on three major new media platforms			
	Weibo	Douyin	Bilibili
1	trust(信任) (210 million times)	real(真实) (14 billion and 720 million times)	head-turner(回头率) (2.6 million times)
2	chat flexibly(弹性聊天) (76 million and 148 thousand times)	honest(诚实) (340 million times)	aggrieved(憋屈) (2.42 million times)
3	be offline(下线) (71 million and 475 thousand times)	companion(陪伴) (26 million and 979 thousand times)	rhyme(押韵) (2.19 million times)
4	sincere(真诚) (27 million and 481 thousand times)	sweet(甜) (12 million and 644 thousand times)	embarrassed(尴尬) (2.11 million times)
5	companion(陪伴) (15 million and 471 thousand times)	flammable(燃) (9 million and 467 thousand times)	reckless and unrestrained(放荡不羁) (1.19 million times)

Figure 2 Top 5 frequency of use of X on three major new media platforms

According to Goldberg, constructions are incompletely predictable and non-combinatory. Moreover, certain linguistic constructions that can be fully predicted can be stored in memory as constructions, provided they occur with sufficient frequency. In the case of the construction “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge X”, the pragmatic features are as follows:

Firstly, from the perspective of stylistic features and context, this construction was created and published by the new media, followed by the stream media, quoted by respective media, and quickly popularized in the new media context, undergoing the processes of emergence, generalization, proliferation, and lexicalization. It also expanded from online communication to daily communication, with the characteristics of both online and spoken language styles. In the process of its use, the construction has been used in a number of ways. In the course of its use, this construction breaks through the limitations of traditional communication contexts and written contexts and is characterized by its constant innovation and flexibility, as well as its visualization, expressiveness, informativeness, and immediacy.

Secondly, in terms of tone and expressive function, the construction is mostly used in declarative sentences or exclamatory sentences, expressing a descriptive evaluation of things or phenomena. For example, “(To fall in love) zhu da de jiu shi yi ge dare to love and hate (敢爱敢恨) (!)” illustrates the current generous and spontaneous view of love and expresses the affirmation of the courageous attitude towards the pursuit of love. In terms of the function of expression, this construction emphasizes and highlights the information focus, i.e. the most prominent and important aspect, advantage, or characteristic. For example, in the construction “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge value for money (性价比)”, “value for money” is the focus of the expression, and the specific construction also emphasizes and highlights the purchasing behavior of such good quality at a low price. In addition, through cognitive processing, the construction is also given a self-deprecating connotation. For example, the construction “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge contrast (反差)” not only emphasizes the contrast effect caused by the inconsistent behavior or attitude of a thing or phenomenon, highlighting the focus of the message “the contrast”, but with a color of self mockery or self comfort, thus achieving the purpose of the expression.]

### 3. The Generation Mechanism of “Zhu Da De Jiu Shi Yi Ge X”

#### 3.1 The Development of the New Media

Based on the increasing popularity of new media platforms and the development of Internet technology, a number of new linguistic constructions have emerged, such as “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge X”. This construction can express judgment and evaluation, as well as self-deprecation and consolation. The user base and usage scenarios continue to grow and expand, transitioning from niche groups to the broader society as a whole.

In addition, the emergence and the use of this construction align with the psychological pursuit of novelty among the younger generation. Initially, the “joke” “College students do not miss a single class, but do not listen to a single word, thus zhu da de jiu shi yi ge accompany (陪伴) !” cause a sensation online. The new media platforms leverage the popularity of this expression to create a “circle effect” and disseminate it widely. It starts to form a specific user group and usage scenario focused on self-deprecating humor among university students.

With the continuous promotion of new media, an increasing number of users have developed a collective identification with this evaluative or self-deprecating language construction. For example, workers may use “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge mindset (心态)” to express their frustration with work hours or content. Moms may use “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge sense of divorce (离异感)” to comment on their husbands' lack of involvement in their children and family. Even official media may use “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge positive energy (正能量)” to affirm and praise acts of kindness in society. Consequently, this construction has been spread extensively to all of the media platforms and the whole society.

### 3.2 Linguistic Mechanisms

When it comes to the role of linguistic mechanisms in linguistics itself, the focus is primarily on an X, where X serves as the object and is mostly a predicate or a predicative phrase. The creative and selective use of this construction can illustrate the phenomenon of constructional suppression, which involves selecting linguistic phenomena that fit the construction in order to demonstrate its meaning. Based on this, the construction can further highlight information focus and facilitate cognitive integration in the process of linguistic memes.

### 3.3 Linguistic Memes

Language progresses first and foremost through imitation, and the phenomenon of modality is prevalent in language use and communication. A series of the language constructions in the new media context, represented by the construction “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge X”, belong to the expressive type of linguistic memes. Specifically, this construction imitates the known meme information structure “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge accompany (陪伴)” and directly replicates language information that new media users enjoy encountering and leave a profound impression. It then incorporates cognitive and contextual needs to vary the X, forming new variants of linguistic memes through analogical reasoning. On one hand, it strengthens the pragmatic effect, and on the other hand, it deepens the reader's impression, prompting the continued replication, dissemination, and popularity of this construction. Based on this, it eventually leads to the widespread use and extensive circulation of this construction in the current new media context.

### 3.4 Multimodal Discourse

The five different perceptual channels in the evolution of living organisms lead to the creation of five communicative modalities, i.e. visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile. A discourse that uses two or more modalities at the same time or a discourse that involves one modality but contains two or more sign systems is called “multimodal discourse”, and “zhu da de jiu shi yi ge X” belongs to it. Like other emerging language constructions in the new media, its discourse mode involves multiple channels of electronic networks, oral expressions, and written communication. This construction primarily utilizes the three communicative modes of visual(e.g. being made into pictures, videos, and emojis), auditory (e.g. adding voiceovers to videos), and tactile (e.g. using finger clicks) through the dissemination of new media. It achieves the flow of linguistic information and serves the purposes of social communicative finally.

#### 4. Conclusion

From a microscopic point of view, most of the X in the construction "zhu da de jiu shi yi ge X" are predicates or predicative phrases, mostly adjectives when they are predicates, predominantly joint structures when they are predicative phrases, and modifier-noun structures when they are nominal phrases; at the semantic level, it primarily exhibits [+abstract] characteristics. At the pragmatic level, it is mainly used in the context of new media and features the style of online language and colloquial language. It is commonly used in declarative and exclamatory sentences, emphasizing and highlighting the focus or expressing a sense of self-deprecation and comfort.

From a macro perspective, the construction has emerged from the new media platforms, undergone a process of generalization, diffusion, and lexicalization, and is characterized by linguistic memes and multimodal discourse. On the one hand, the study of this construction can enrich and supplement the applied and interdisciplinary studies of construction grammar at the theoretical level, and on the other hand, it can explain and also further explore the laws and cultural trends of the use of language in the new media at the applied level.

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