

# *Yībiān* clause in Mandarin Chinese: conjunct or adjunct?

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# Outline

1. Introduction

2. *Yībiān...yībiān...* ≠ coordinate structure

3. Correlative construction *yībiān...yībiān...*  
& adverb *yībiān*

4. Summary

# 1. Introduction

The following constructions in Mandarin Chinese are considered as conjunctive correlative coordinators in the literature (cf. Paris, 2016; Xing, 2001; Zhang, 2008, 2024):

*yībiān* VP1 *yībiān* VP2, *yīmiàn* VP1 *yīmiàn* VP2,  
*yòu* VP1/AP1 *yòu* VP1/AP1, *yě* VP1/AP1 *yě* VP2/AP2,  
*jì* VP1/AP1 *yòu* VP2/AP2, *jì* VP1/AP1 *yě* VP2/AP2.

# 1. Introduction

- **Object of the study**

(1) *Mǎlì yībiān xǐ yīfu yībiān zuò wǎnfàn.*

Mary YIBIAN wash clothes YIBIAN make dinner

‘Mary does/did the laundry and makes/made dinner at the same time.’

- **Claim of the study**

The construction *yībiān VP1 yībiān VP2* is not a coordinate structure. The first “*yībiān + VP*” should be analyzed as an adjunct.

## 2. *Yībiān...yībiān...* ≠ coordinate structure

- **Extraction of an element contained in a conjunct**  
(cf. Coordinate Structure Constraint (Ross, 1967; Grosu, 1972, 1973))

- (2) a. \**Nèi ge* [*Mǎlì tàng yīfu* *bìngqiě* *zuò* **ti** *de*] *dàngāo*i...  
that CLF Mary iron clothes and make RL cake
- b. \**Nèi xiē* [*Mǎlì tàng* **ti** *bìngqiě* *zuò* *dàngāo* *de*] *yīfu*i...  
that CLFPL Mary iron and make cake RL clothes
- c. *Nèi xiē* [*Mǎlì féngbǔ* **ti** *bìngqiě* *yùntàng* **ti** *de*] *yīfu*i...  
that CLFPL Mary mend and iron RL clothes  
‘The clothes that Mary mended and ironed...’

## 2. *Yībiān...yībiān...* ≠ coordinate structure

- **Extraction of an element contained in a conjunct**  
(cf. Coordinate Structure Constraint (Ross, 1967; Grosu, 1972, 1973))

(3) a. \**Nèi dùn* [*Mǎlì* *yòu/yě* *děi* *xǐ* *yīfu* *yòu/yě*  
that CLF Mary YOU/YE have\_to wash clothes YOU/YE  
*děi* *zuò* *tì* *de*] *wǎnfàn*<sub>i</sub>...  
have\_to make RL dinner

b. \**Nèi xiē* [*Mǎlì* *yòu/yě* *děi* *xǐ* *tì* *yòu/yě*  
that CLFPL Mary YOU/YE have\_to wash YOU/YE  
*děi* *zuò* *wǎnfàn* *de*] *yīfu*<sub>i</sub>...  
have\_to make diner RL clothes

c. *Nèi xiē* [*Mǎlì* *yòu/yě* *děi* *xǐ* *tì* *yòu/yě*  
that CLFPL Mary YOU/YE have\_to wash YOU/YE  
*děi* *tàng* *tì* *de*] *yīfu*<sub>i</sub>...  
have\_to iron RL clothes  
'The clothes that Mary has to wash and iron...'

## 2. *Yībiān...yībiān...* ≠ coordinate structure

- **Extraction of an element contained in a conjunct**

*Yībiān... yībiān...* is not subject to Coordinate Structure Constraint but observes adjunct island effects.

(4) a. \**Nèi xiē* [*Mǎlì* *yībiān* *xǐ* **ti** *yībiān* *zuò* *dàngāo* *de*]  
that CLFPL Mary YIBIAN wash YIBIAN make cake RL

*yīfu*<sub>i...</sub>

clothes

b. *Nèi ge* [*Mǎlì* *yībiān* *xǐ* *yīfu* *yībiān* *zuò* **ti** *de*]  
that CLF Mary YIBIAN wash clothes YIBIAN make RL

*dàngāo*<sub>i...</sub>

cake

‘The cake that Mary made while doing the laundry...’

## 2. *Yībiān...yībiān...* ≠ coordinate structure

- **Extraction of an element contained in a conjunct**

“*Yībiān VP1*” behaves like temporal adjuncts ...*yǐqián* (before), ...*yǐhòu* (after), and ...*de shíhou* (when) regarding extraction tests.

(5) a. \**Nèi xiē* [*Mǎlì xǐ* **ti** *yǐqián/yǐhòu/de shíhou* *zuò dànɡāo*  
that CLFPL Mary wash before/after/RL moment make cake  
*de*] *yīfu*<sub>i</sub>...

RL clothes

b. *Nèi ge* [*Mǎlì xǐ* *yīfu* *yǐqián/yǐhòu/de shíhou* *zuò* **ti**  
that CLF Mary wash clothes before/after/RL moment make  
*de*] *dànɡāo*<sub>i</sub>...

RL cake

‘The cake that Mary made before/after/while doing the laundry...’

## 2. *Yībiān...yībiān...* ≠ coordinate structure

- The first *yībiān* and the predicate to which it attaches can appear at the beginning of a sentence.

- (6) a. *Yībiān tīng*, *tā yībiān zài xiǎng*, “...”  
YIBIAN listen, she YIBIAN PROG think, “...”  
‘Listening, she thought at the same time, “...”’ (*Qīngchūn zhī gē*  
‘Song of Youth’, Yáng Mò, extracted from the CCL corpus)
- b. *Tā* *yībiān tīng* *yībiān* *zài xiǎng*, “...”  
she YIBIAN listen YIBIAN PROG think, “...”

## 2. *Yìbiān...yìbiān...* ≠ coordinate structure

- **The first *yìbiān* and the predicate to which it attaches can appear at the beginning of a sentence.**

(7) a. *Yìbiān jiēshòu jìzhě de cǎifǎng*, *Dǒng Zhèn yìbiān*  
YIBIAN accept reporter RL interview, Dong Zhen YIBIAN  
*dàkǒu hē shuǐ.*

big:mouth drink water

‘While interviewed by the reporters, Dong Zhen gulped some water at the same time.’

(*Xīnhuá Shè xīnwén bàodǎo* ‘News of Xinhua News Agency’, June 2006, extracted from the CCL corpus)

b. *Dǒng Zhèn yìbiān jiēshòu jìzhě de cǎifǎng yìbiān*  
Dong Zhen YIBIAN accept reporter RL interview YIBIAN  
*dàkǒu hē shuǐ.*

big:mouth drink water

## 2. *Yībiān...yībiān...* ≠ coordinate structure

- The first *yībiān* and the predicate to which it attaches can appear at the beginning of a sentence.

This patterns with the adjuncts formed by *yǐqián* (before), *yǐhòu* (after), or *de shíhou* (when).

- (8) a. *Xǐ yīfu yǐqián/yǐhòu/de shíhou*, *Mǎlì shùnbiàn*  
wash clothes before/after/RL moment, Mary in\_passing  
*zuò-le wǎnfàn.*  
make-ACT dinner  
‘Before/After/When doing the laundry, Mary made dinner.’
- b. *Mǎlì* *xǐ yīfu yǐqián/yǐhòu/de shíhou* *shùnbiàn*  
Mary wash clothes before/after/RL moment in\_passing  
*zuò-le wǎnfàn.*  
make-ACT dinner

## 2. *Yībiān...yībiān...* ≠ coordinate structure

- **The first *yībiān* and the predicate to which it attaches can appear at the beginning of a sentence.**

None of the conjuncts of a VP coordination can be moved to the beginning of the sentence.

(9) a. *Mǎlì xǐ yīfu bìnqiě zuò wǎnfàn.*

Mary wash clothes and make dinner

‘Mary does the laundry and makes dinner.’

b. \**Xǐ yīfu, Mǎlì bìnqiě zuò wǎnfàn.*

wash clothes, Mary and make dinner

(10) a. *Mǎlì yòu/yě xǐ yīfu yòu/yě zuò wǎnfàn.*

Mary YOU/YE wash clothes YOU/YE make dinner

‘Mary both does the laundry and makes dinner.’

b. \**Yòu/Yě xǐ yīfu, Mǎlì yòu/yě zuò wǎnfàn.*

YOU/YE wash clothes, Mary YOU/YE make dinner

## 2. *Yībiān...yībiān...* ≠ coordinate structure

- *Yībiān...yībiān...* can co-occur with the subordinator *chúle...(wài)* (in addition to, except) just as is the case for temporal adjuncts *...yǐhòu*, *...yǐqián*, and *...de shíhou*.

(11) *Chúle yībiān ānfǔ huāngzhāng shīcuò de wángxiōng*  
besides YIBIAN appease panic lost RL royal:brother  
*wài, yībiān shèfǎ ràng zìjǐ de xīn píngjìng-xiàlai.*  
besides, YIBIAN try make self RL heart calm-down

‘Besides comforting his brother, who is in panic, he tried to calm himself down at the same time.’ (Chinese translation of *The Heroic Legend of Arslan*, extracted from the CCL corpus)

## 2. *Yībiān...yībiān...* ≠ coordinate structure

- *Yībiān...yībiān...* can co-occur with the subordinator *chúle...(wài)* (in addition to, except) just as is the case for temporal adjuncts *...yǐhòu*, *...yǐqián*, and *...de shíhou*.

(12) Chúle kànshū yǐqián/yǐhòu/de shíhou, kàn diànshì  
besides read before/after/RL moment, watch television  
yǐqián/yǐhòu/de shíhou tā yě xǐhuan hē chá.  
before/after/RL moment he also like drink tea  
'He likes to drink tea not only before/after/while reading but also  
before/after/while watching TV.'

## 2. *Yībiān...yībiān...* ≠ coordinate structure

If we add a subordinator to a coordinate structure, the sentence will become ungrammatical or change its meaning.

(13) a. *Mǎlì xǐ yīfu bìngqiě zuò wǎnfàn.*

Mary wash clothes and make dinner

‘Mary does laundry and makes dinner.’

b. \**Mǎlì chúle xǐ yīfu (wài) bìngqiě zuò wǎnfàn.*

Mary besides wash clothes besides and make dinner

## 2. *Yībiān...yībiān...* ≠ coordinate structure

If we add a subordinator to a coordinate structure, the sentence will become ungrammatical or change its meaning.

(14) a. *Mǎlì yòu/yě xǐ yīfu yòu/yě zuò wǎnfàn.*

Mary YOU/YE wash clothes YOU/YE make dinner

‘Mary both does the laundry and makes dinner.’

b. #*Mǎlì chūle yòu xǐ yīfu (wài) hái yòu zuò wǎnfàn.*

dinner

‘Besides doing again the laundry, Mary makes again dinner.’

c. #*Mǎlì chūle yě xǐ yīfu (wài) yě zuò wǎnfàn.*

Mary besides YE wash clothes besides YE make dinner

‘Besides doing the laundry (as another person does), Mary makes also dinner.’

## 2. *Yībiān...yībiān...* ≠ coordinate structure

- “*Yībiān VP1*” as a *vP/TP*-adjunct

(15) a. *Tā néng yībiān pēnsǎ shuǐwù, yībiān xīchén.*  
it can YIBIAN spray water:mist, YIBIAN inhale:dust  
‘It can spray water mist and vaccum up dust at the same time.’

b. *Wǒ mànmande yībiān yòng shǒudiàntǒng zhào-zhe lù,*  
I slowly YIBIAN use flashlight shine-DUR road,  
*yībiān jiǎnchá dàotián-lǐ de shuǐ.*  
YIBIAN check rice:field-inside RL water  
‘I slowly shone my flashlight along the path and checked the water  
in the rice field at the same time.’

## 2. *Yībiān...yībiān...* ≠ coordinate structure

- “*Yībiān VP1*” as a vP/TP-adjunct

(16) a. *Wǒ yībiān gōngzuò huì yībiān tīng yīnyuè.*

I YIBIAN work would YIBIAN listen music

‘I listen to music while working.’

b. *Yībiān chī nǐ děi yībiān tuō mián’ǎo.*

YIBIAN eat you have\_to YIBIAN take\_off cotton:jacket

‘You have to take off your cotton-padded jacket while you eat.’

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- Differences between “*yībiān* VP1” and the temporal adjuncts ...*yǐqián*, ...*yǐhòu*, and ...*de shíhou*

Adjunct clauses formed by *yǐqián* (before), *yǐhòu* (after), or *de shíhou* (when) can be deleted from the sentence while in most cases, the presence of “*yībiān* VP1” is necessary in a sentence containing the construction *yībiān... yībiān...*

(17) a. *Mǎlì (xǐ yīfu yǐqián/yǐhòu/de shíhou) zuò-le wǎnfàn.*

Mary wash clothes before/after/RL moment make-ACT dinner  
‘Mary made dinner (before/after/when doing the laundry).’

b. *Mǎlì ??(yībiān xǐ yīfu) yībiān zuò-le wǎnfàn.*

Mary YIBIAN wash clothes YIBIAN make-ACT dinner  
‘Mary made dinner while doing the laundry.’

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- Differences between “*yībiān* VP1” and the temporal adjuncts ...*yǐqián*, ...*yǐhòu*, and ...*de shíhou*

Adjunct clauses formed by *yǐqián* (before), *yǐhòu* (after), or *de shíhou* (when) can appear in front of an A-not-A predicate while “*yībiān* VP1” cannot.

(18) a. *Mǎlì chīfàn yǐqián/yǐhòu/de shíhou hē shénme?*

Mary eat:meal before/after/RL moment drink what  
‘What does Mary drink before/after/when she eats?’

b. *Mǎlì yībiān chīfàn yībiān hē shénme?*

Mary YIBIAN eat:meal YIBIAN drink what  
‘What does Mary drink while eating?’

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- Differences between “*yībiān* VP1” and the temporal adjuncts ...*yǐqián*, ...*yǐhòu*, and ...*de shíhou*

Adjunct clauses formed by *yǐqián* (before), *yǐhòu* (after), or *de shíhou* (when) can appear in front of an A-not-A predicate while “*yībiān* VP1” cannot.

(19) a. *Mǎlì chīfàn yǐqián/yǐhòu/de shíhou hē chá ma?*

Mary eat:meal before/after/RL moment drink tea INT

‘Does Mary drink tea before/after/when she eats?’

b. *Mǎlì yībiān chīfàn yībiān hē chá ma?*

Mary YIBIAN eat:meal YIBIAN drink tea INT

‘Does Mary eat and drink tea at the same time?’

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- Differences between “*yībiān* VP1” and the temporal adjuncts ...*yǐqián*, ...*yǐhòu*, and ...*de shíhou*

Adjunct clauses formed by *yǐqián* (before), *yǐhòu* (after), or *de shíhou* (when) can appear in front of an A-not-A predicate while “*yībiān* VP1” cannot.

(20) a. *Mǎlì chīfàn yǐqián/yǐhòu/de shíhou hē-bu-hē chá?*

Mary eat:meal before/after/RL moment drink-NEG-drink tea  
‘Does Mary drink tea before/after/when she eats?’

b. \**Mǎlì yībiān chīfàn yībiān hē-bu-hē chá?*

Mary YIBIAN eat:meal YIBIAN drink-NEG-drink tea

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- ***Yībiān... yībiān...: a correlative construction composed of several additive adverbs *yībiān****

(21) *Mǎlì (yībiān) dú-zhe jùběn, yě yībiān / yībiān yě*  
Mary YIBIAN read-DUR script, also YIBIAN / YIBIAN also  
*xiǎng-qǐ-le cóngqián.*  
think-up-ACT past  
‘Mary thought of the past while reading the script.’

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- ***Yībiān... yībiān...*: a correlative construction composed of several additive adverbs *yībiān***
  - Lin (2022): *Yībiān* is an additive adverb when indicating the simultaneity of events or actions. Its appearance presupposes the existence of an event whose occurrence overlaps in time with the action designated by the predicate that *yībiān* modifies. This presupposed event must be explicitly mentioned in the context.

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- ***Yībiān... yībiān...: a correlative construction composed of several additive adverbs *yībiān****

*Yībiān* is an independent adverb.

(22) a. *Hán Mèngxiáng (\*yībiān) shuō de hěn chéngkěn, yībiān*  
Han Mengxiang YIBAN say Dc very sincere, YIBIAN  
*jiù wǎn-zhe Liú Yùyīng shùnbù xiàng*  
then hold\_by\_the\_arm-DUR Liu Yuying along:step towards  
*qián zǒu.*  
front walk

‘Han Mengxiang spoke sincerely, and at the same time she held Liu Yuying by the arm and walked forward.’ (Zǐyè ‘Midnight’, *Máo Dùn*, extracted from the CCL corpus)

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- ***Yībiān... yībiān...: a correlative construction composed of several additive adverbs *yībiān****

*Yībiān* is an independent adverb.

- (22) b. *Yánjiūsuo niàn-le yì nián, dì-èr nián wǒ jiù*  
graduate\_school study-ACT one year, second year I then  
*kāishǐ yībiān zài xuéxiào-lǐ zhuàn qián dǎgōng.*  
begin YIBIAN at school-inside earn money do\_part\_time-job  
‘I studied in a graduate school for one year, and from the second  
year I started to do a part-time job in the school at the same  
time.’ (sentence extracted from the CCL corpus)

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- ***Yībiān... yībiān...: a correlative construction composed of several additive adverbs *yībiān****

The event presupposed by *yībiān* must be mentioned explicitly in the context for the sentence to sound complete.

- (23) a. “...” *lǎorén yībiān shuō-zhe, ?(yǎn-zhōng fú-qǐ-le*  
“...” old:man YIBIAN say-DUR, eye-inside emerge-up-ACT  
*lèiguāng).*  
tear:light  
“...” Saying so, the tears appeared in the old man’s eyes.’
- b. *?(Yánjiūsuo niàn-le yì nián,) dì-èr nián wǒ jiù*  
graduate\_school study-ACT one year, second year I then  
*kāishǐ yībiān zài xuéxiào-lǐ zhuàn qián dǎgōng.*  
begin YIBIAN at school-inside earn money do\_part\_time-job

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- ***Yībiān... yībiān...: a correlative construction composed of several additive adverbs *yībiān****

The event presupposed by *yībiān* must be mentioned explicitly in the context for the sentence to sound complete.

- (17) a. *Mǎlì (xǐ yīfu yǐqián/yǐhòu/de shíhou) zuò-le wǎnfàn.*  
Mary wash clothes before/after/RL moment make-ACT dinner  
'Mary made dinner (before/after/when doing the laundry).'
- b. *Mǎlì ??(yībiān xǐ yīfu) yībiān zuò-le wǎnfàn.*  
Mary YIBIAN wash clothes YIBIAN make-ACT dinner  
'Mary made dinner while doing the laundry.'

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- ***Yībiān... yībiān...: a correlative construction composed of several additive adverbs *yībiān****

Some other additive adverbs in Chinese, when expressing certain meanings, also require their presupposition be overtly mentioned in the context.

(24) a. *Wǒ xiǎng #(chī-le zǎocān) zài qù xuéxiào.*

I want eat-ACT breakfast ZAI go school

‘I would like to take a breakfast before going to school.’

(cf. Tovená & Donazzan, 2008, p. 89)

b. *Tā ??(piàoliang) yòu cōngming.*

she pretty YOU smart

‘She is pretty and smart.’

(cf. Liu, 2009, pp. 137-209)

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- *Yībiān... yībiān...: a correlative construction composed of several additive adverbs *yībiān**

Law (2006): most adverbs in Chinese cannot be placed in front of an A-not-A predicate; only temporal, locative, and domain adjuncts can.

(20) a. *Mǎlì chīfàn yǐqián/yǐhòu/de shíhou hē-bu-hē chá?*  
Mary eat:meal before/after/RL moment drink-NEG-drink tea  
'Does Mary drink tea before/after/when she eats?'

b. \**Mǎlì yībiān chīfàn yībiān hē-bu-hē chá?*  
Mary YIBIAN eat:meal YIBIAN drink-NEG-drink tea

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- ***Yībiān... yībiān...: a correlative construction composed of several additive adverbs *yībiān****

Law (2006): most adverbs in Chinese cannot be placed in front of an A-not-A predicate; only temporal, locative, and domain adjuncts can.

(25) *Nǐ jīntiān qù-bu-qù xuéxiào ?*  
you today go-NEG-go school  
'Do you go to school today?'

(26) a. *Nǐ chīfàn de shíhou (yībiān) kàn diànshì ma?*  
you eat:meal RL moment YIBIAN watch television INT  
'Mary made dinner while doing the laundry.'

b. *Nǐ chīfàn de shíhou (\*yībiān) kàn-bu-kàn diànshì?*  
you eat:meal RL moment YIBIAN watch-NEG-watch television

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- ***Yībiān... yībiān...: a correlative construction composed of several additive adverbs *yībiān****

A single adverb *yībiān*, like *yòu* and *yě*, constitutes neither a coordinate nor a subordinate construction.

(27) a. *Xiǎo Mǎcí fàng'è de shíhou yībiān jiù zài dì-lǐ*  
little Mats herd:goose RL moment YIBIAN then at field-inside  
*gànhuó.*

do:work

‘Little Mats worked in the field while herding geese.’

b. *Tā xiàng wǒmen zǒu-lái, bìngqiě yībiān huī shǒu*  
she towards us walk-come, and YIBIAN wave hand  
*dǎ zhāohu.*

make greeting

‘She walked towards us, waving and greeting.’

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- ***Yībiān... yībiān...: a correlative construction composed of several additive adverbs *yībiān****

A single adverb *yībiān*, like *yòu* and *yě*, constitutes neither a coordinate nor a subordinate construction.

- (28) a. *Mǎlì xǐ-le wǎn yǐhòu, yòu/yě tuō-le dì.*  
Mary wash-ACT bowl after, YOU/YE mop-ACT floor  
‘After doing the dishes, Mary also mopped the floor.’
- b. *Mǎlì xǐ-le wǎn, érqǐě yòu/yě tuō-le dì.*  
Mary wash-ACT bowl, and YOU/YE mop-ACT floor  
‘Mary did the dishes and also mopped the floor.’

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- ***Yībiān... yībiān...*: a correlative construction composed of several additive adverbs *yībiān***

A correlative construction can constitute a syntactic structure independent from the words of which it is composed.

- The adverbs *yībiān*, *yòu*, and *yě* constitute neither a coordinate nor a subordinate construction (they can coexist with a coordinator or a subordinator in a sentence). In contrast, *yībiān...yībiān...* contains an adjunct while *yòu...yòu...* and *yě...yě...* are probably coordinate structures.

### 3. Construction *yībiān...yībiān...* & adverb *yībiān*

- ***Yībiān... yībiān...: a correlative construction composed of several additive adverbs *yībiān****

A correlative construction can constitute a syntactic structure independent from the words of which it is composed.

- Wei & Li (2018): The words *suīrán* (although), *rúguǒ* (if), and *yīnwèi* (because) constitute adverbial clauses while the correlative constructions *suīrán...dànshì...* (although...however...), *rúguǒ...nàme...* (if...then...), and *yīnwèi...suǒyǐ...* (because...therefore...) are coordinate structures.

## 4. Summary

- Contrary to what is commonly assumed, *yībiān...yībiān...* does not constitute a coordinate structure. Instead, the first *yībiān* and the predicate to which it attaches should be analyzed as an adjunct of *vP* or *TP*.
- *Yībiān...yībiān...* is a correlative construction composed of several additive adverbs *yībiān*, which explains why:
  - In most cases the presence of “*yībiān VP1*” is obligatory.
  - *Yībiān...yībiān...* cannot coexist with an A-not-A predicate.

Thank you.

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