The reviewer's report for

Menzerath-Altmann Law in Chinese

This thesis employs one of famous quantitative linguistic laws, i.e. the Menzerath-Altmann law to investigate the hierarchical relationships between the language units of different levels in Chinese, including sentence, clause, syntactic phrase, word, character/syllable, component/strokes/sound. The study is in-depth and complete. Some new regularities are found, which are quite interesting. Specify below.

a) assessment of the benefit of the dissertation for the relevant field of study;

Compared with previous studies, there are several benefits of this dissertation: 1) studies the phrasal level in Chinese for the first time using the MAL; 2) using a quite new framework to study the Menzerathian hierarchies, i.e. a dependency grammar framework; 3) evaluating construct and constituent lengths based on Miller's 'magical number plus or minus two' (1956), which has rarely been used in previous studies regarding Chinese. 4) several boundary conditions are discussed, as well as controversies regarding the MAL, e.g. the competition between the Menzerath-Altmann law and the Brevity law, and the co-exist of 'shorting and the opposite effects' Altmann (1983).

b) commentary on the problem solving procedure, methods used and the meeting of the set objective;

The methods and procedures are appropriate, meeting the set objective. But there are several small problems which should draw the author's attention: 1) the possible impact of the annotation system, refer to Yan & Liu (2022) (*Semantic roles or syntactic functions: The effects of annotation scheme on the results of*

dependency measures); 2) in Hong Kong, people use traditional Chinese characters, which is quite different from the simplified characters in the Mainland of China, in other words, they belong to two system (and a recent study shows that they differs in the word level regarding the MAL).

c) opinion on the results of the dissertation and the original specific contribution of the dissertation submitter;

The most important contribution of this thesis is corroborating that the (syntactic) phrase should be a language level in Chinese in terms of the MAL, which is the same as in English texts, e.g. as revealed in Wang & Chen (2022) *(The Menzerath-Altmann law on the clause level in English texts)*. As for the hierarchy centered on the "word" level, more work need to be done to decide if word length distributions influence the hierarchy.

d) other commentaries, particularly in relation to the organisation, clarity, formal layout and language of the dissertation;

The thesis is well structured/written and the language is quite clear.

e) your unequivocal statement of either recommending or not recommending the submitted dissertation for defence.

I recommend the dissertation for defence.