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Data citation with permission from UCLA Corpus of Written Chinese (Tao and Xiao, 2007).

CALPER LEX

Chinese

Contributed by Haiyang Ai (Penn State), Professor Xiaofei Lu (Penn State) and Professor Hongyin Tao (UCLA).

yizhi / shizhong

Learners often find it difficult to tell the difference between Mandarin Chinese words and phrases that are similar in meaning, especially adverbs which are notoriously elusive. An example of this is the pair of *yizhi* (一直) and *shizhong* (始终), which share the meanings of ‘from beginning to end’. Look at the two sets of concordance lines (with word boundaries marked) taken from UCLA Corpus of Written Chinese and see if you can work out the rule.

yizhi

1	那封分手信比平时慢了三天，而这三天里	一直	在淅淅沥沥的下着小雨。
2	从收到这个盒子至今，西西	一直	没打开过这个盒子，因为蝴蝶结已深深印在了她的心里。
3	只是这么多年，我	一直	辜负她，我有什么脸面去见她？
4	摇头晃脑地思索着，文织雨提出了这三个月来	一直	都徘徊在脑海中的愿望：“我回家！”
5	在近一年的时间里，新闻界	一直	都在报导有关肖歌博士发回的小型无人飞船。
6	而雪儿回程时	一直	玩手机，一直未说过什么。
7	由于其独特的地理位置，在漫长的历史长河中，阆中	一直	是川北政治、经济、军事、文化中心。
8	而楼上也有人那么站着，男人就被踩在他们的下面，	一直	抑郁。
9	一段是在罗拉和男友曼尼抢银行出来后逃跑，接着被警察围困，	一直	到罗拉被警察误杀的枪声响起音乐声才嘎然而止。
10	在一个岔路口，村妇和我们挥手告别，并告诉我们	一直	向前走就到了浪石村。

Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research

shizhong

1	当时我说了很多温存的话，但她	始终	没有反应。
2	台湾问题	始终	是中美关系中最重要、最敏感的核心问题。
3	因为今年非典的原因，我的假期	始终	未知。
4	我使劲回忆着小洁给我的每一封信的内容，但	始终	搜索不到任何说明她将出国的迹象。
5	武汉商业发达，却	始终	陷于“紧跟潮流之后、搏击于潮流之中”的尴尬两难之境。
6	只是基于种种原因	始终	难以真正具体落实。
7	却	始终	透露着迷恋孤独的神色。
8	幸福和微笑	始终	挂在脸上。
9	因为人类	始终	相信言传身教的力量，相信学校的教育。
10	让我内心	始终	保持着柔软和温暖，不因为挫折和现实而冷漠起来。

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yizhi / shizhong

Answer:

As we can see, *yizhi* and *shizhong* differ in several aspects. Syntactically, *yizhi* typically requires a prior temporal/spatial phrase, while *shizhong* typically stands alone. Semantically, *shizhong* has a near 50% probability of being used in a negative environment, while *yizhi* is usually not associated with negative connotations. In terms of textual functions, *yizhi* can be said to be backward oriented, in the sense that its semantic interpretation is determined to a large extent by the temporal/spatial phrase preceding it; *shizhong* stand by itself or project more clauses after it.

Reference:

Tao, Hongyin and Richard Xiao (2007). *The UCLA Chinese Corpus*. UCREL, Lancaster.