

On deriving definiteness effects in locative resultatives in Mandarin

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This paper studies definiteness effects (henceforth DEs, as in Safir, 1982; Huang, 1987) in locative resultatives (i.e. sentences consisting of locative phrases and meanwhile having result interpretations, as described in Sybesma, 1999; Zhao, 2011) in Mandarin. I find that in Mandarin there are DEs in locative double object constructions – the theme DP must be indefinite – whereas this kind of DEs does not exist in locative prepositional constructions, as contrasted below.

- (1) a. ta fang-zai-le zhuozi-shang yi-ben shu
 he put-at-LE table-up one-CL book
 ‘he put a book on this table’
- b. *ta fang-zai-le zhuozi-shang zhe-ben shu
 he put-at-LE table-up this-CL book

- (2) a. ta fang-le yi-ben shu zai zhuozi-shang
 he put-LE one-CL book at table-up
 ‘he put a book on this table’
- b. ta fang-le zhe-ben shu zai zhuozi-shang
 he put-LE this-CL book at table-up

This observation is against the argument by Sybesma (1999) as well as Mulder and Sybesma (1992) who consider Chinese locative prepositional constructions to exhibit DEs and who assume that there is an empty *there* in the complement of the matrix verb that result in the DEs that are similar to existential sentences in English. I show that such an analysis cannot cover all data found regarding the two above constructions and cannot capture the correct way of deriving Chinese locative double objects. Rather, I show that if we assume there is an empty *you* ‘have’ in Chinese locative double objects as found in existentials, all pieces of the puzzle seem to fall in place. According to Huang (1987) and Li (1990), etc, similar DEs can be found in Chinese existentials (i.e. the DP after *you* ‘have’ is obligatory indefinite), as shown in the following examples:

- (3) a. a. you liang-ben shu zai zhuozi-shang
 have liang-CL book at table-top
 ‘there are two books on the table’
- b. *you zhe-ben shu zai zhuozi-shang
 have this-CL book at table-top

In this paper, I adopt the event-structure analysis (Hale & Keyser, 1993; Levin & Rappaport Hovav, 1994; etc) to tackle the above DE issues. The analysis proposed in this paper also shed some light on the syntactic status of *zai* ‘at’ – evidence suggests that in locative double objects *zai* ‘at’ is a verb rather than a preposition, which is against the traditional analysis of *zai* ‘at’, as in, for example, Li & Thompson (1981).

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