

# ABSTRACT

## SCOPE: THE VIEW FROM INDEFINITES

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Indefinites are well-known for their versatile behavior. A natural question that such versatility raises is whether one approach can account for each of the different guises the indefinites may take on, while also allowing for the fact that such versatility exists.

This dissertation analyzes Chinese *wh*-items and argues that the Hamblin 1973 proposal for *wh*-expressions is such an approach—its modest assumptions about the meaning of *wh*-items allows one to maintain that these items have one and the same semantics, *uniform* through the various guises that they take on, while providing an adequate account of their behavior in the individual guises.

Chapter II extends Lin's (1996) proposal for *wh*-items in the scope of the distribution operator *dou*. I propose a full-blown Hamblin take on Lin 1996 that does away with construction-specific interpretation rules.

Chapter III discusses scope and pseudo-scope as they pertain to two classes of indefinites and shows that the kind of scope properties that the two classes exhibit are clearly distinct from those of quantifiers, and furthermore from each other. This split necessitates for each class of indefinites a separate approach, one of which is the Hamblin approach.

Chapter IV discusses *wh*-items which always need to be in the scope of some operator, and shows that these items' polarity sensitivity follows from their Hamblin semantics.

Chapter V examines *wh*-items in their interrogative construal. It has been proposed that these items need to move like their overtly moved counterparts, and that their scope is determined by the position they move into. It is shown that given the Hamblin semantics, *wh*-items need *not wh*-move, and that in fact, exhibit quite different properties from *wh*-moved items.

Mandarin *wh*-items as analyzed here are thus characterized as indefinites in the sense of Heim 1982 in that they lack quantificational force of their own, and are completely at the mercy of their operators. The Hamblin approach we adopt thus allows us to preserve insights from Cheng 1991, which observes that these items' behavior is but the reflection of their operators' effect, while taking into account examples that sometimes led other authors such as Lin 1996 to abandon a uniform approach throughout the various guises of these very versatile items.