

### Extra possessor arguments in Mandarin Chinese

In Mandarin Chinese, argument positions may be occupied by extra arguments, i.e. by arguments that are neither arguments of overt verbal elements, nor arguments of Kratzer's (1996) agentive Voice head. This occurs with what looks like subject positions of unaccusative verbs (1), like object positions of transitive verbs (2), and like *ba*-phrases (3), *ba*-phrases usually being a heatedly discussed device of Mandarin to license preverbal objects (4) (cf. Li 2001 for an overview of the discussion about *ba*). Portions of such data have been discussed in various frameworks and with differing guiding questions. Data as in (5) were subject to typological studies of external possession (Chappell 1999) or adversity applicatives (Pylkkänen 2001 on parallel data in Japanese), Zhang 1998 couches her analysis of (2) in terms of ditransitive minimalist syntax, and *ba*-phrases with extra arguments are treated alongside *ba*-phrases that do not encode extra arguments, but real objects (Li 2001). These diverse treatments in different semasiologically justified contexts obscure the common semantic core of the phenomenon of extra arguments in Mandarin: An extra argument is in most cases only licensed if it denotes a possessor in a wider sense, and the respective possessum must be the innermost argument in the same clause. Further descriptive generalizations include:

- (i) While S and O extra possessors almost invariably lose something in the course of the event encoded by the verb, BA extra possessor arguments lose or get something;
- (ii) S and O extras are invariably humans, while BA extras are probably restricted to non-humans;
- (iii) S extras occur only with unaccusative verbs, O and BA extras are restricted to sentences with agentive/causative semantics;
- (iv) Extra arguments are not licensed if the undoing of something is encoded.

I take (i) as a justification to split up Pylkkänen's (2001) Applicative Phrase into an Applicative Phrase plus a Lose or Get Phrase immediately below. Pylkkänen's analysis does not fully carry over to Mandarin anyway because it is easily shown that the possessor/the applied argument is neither semantically nor syntactically a modifier of the alleged (6) direct object possessum (passivization (7), ungrammatical drop of typical morphology indicating modificational possessive relationships in post-verbal position (8)). Generalization (ii) raises the question what constitutes a reasonable semantic counterpart of applicative/adverse/favourable semantics in the domain of non-human and inanimate referents. It seems to me that the common denominator is the establishing or the destruction of functional integrity or completeness. Point (iii) probably follows from purely syntactic facts: sentences with causative/agentive semantics will have an Agentive Voice head (Kratzer 1996) above VP, thereby requiring an agent subject and leaving space for extra arguments only in the BA position or the canonical object position. Unaccusatives, on the other hand, do not take agentive subjects, so the subject position may be filled by the extra argument. I do not know why property (iv) holds.

At first blush, the Chinese data (or related phenomena such as external possessors; König 2001) do not seem to contribute anything to the solution of current standard dilemmas concerning the semantic types and the relationality of genitives (Partee & Borshev 2001). Upon closer inspection, however, the following conclusion appears to be warranted: If comparable or even identical polysemy patterns of possessive constructions undoubtedly pop up in highly different syntactic settings with different interpretations of the involved categories – within a single complex DP as in the case of genitives and between major syntactic functions as in Mandarin – the quest for a unifying analysis of all English genitival constructions loses some of its appeal and motivation. Since we need two stories anyway to cover the cross-argumental relations of extra arguments in Mandarin and the intra-argumental ones of genitival constructions, we do not need to push the unification of all genitival constructions to the limit anymore.

- (1) Ta      sǐ-le              mǔqīn le.  
 (s)he    die-PRF            mother LE  
 ‘His mother died on him.’
- (2) Xiao Wáng    chī-le              wǒ      yī-ge    dàngāo.  
 Xiao Wang    eat-PRF            I      1-CL    cake  
 ‘Xiao Wang ate such that I lost a cake.’
- (3) Ta              bā      júzi    bāo-le              pí.  
 (s)he    BA    orange peel-PRF    peel  
 ‘(S)he removed the peel of the orange.’
- (4) a.      Wǒ      chī-wán-le      zhèi-dùn      fàn.  
           I      eat-up-PRF    this-CL      food  
           ‘I’ve eaten up that dish.’
- b.      Wǒ      bā      zhèi-dùn      fàn      chī-wán-le.  
           I      BA    this-CL      food    eat-up-PRF  
           ‘I’ve eaten up that dish.’
- (5) Ta      diào-le            hěn      duō      tóufa.  
 (s)he    fall-PRF            very    much    hair  
 ‘(S)he’s lost a lot of hair.’/‘A lot of his/her hair fell.’
- (6) a.      Xiao Wáng    chī-le              wǒ      yīqian-kuài.  
           Xiao Wang    eat-PRF            I      1000-MU  
           ‘Xiao Wang, by way of eating, made me lose 1000 dollars.’
- b.      ???Xiao Wáng      chī-le              yīqian-kuài.  
           Xiao Wang      eat-PRF            1000-MU  
           ‘???Xiao Wang ate 1000 dollars.’
- (7) Wǒ      bèi      Xiao Wáng    chī-le              yī-ge    dàngāo.  
 I      by      Xiao Wang    eat-PRF            1-CL    cake  
 !‘I was eaten a cake by Xiao Wang.’
- (8) Ta      kànjiàn-le      Lao Wáng\*(-de)      dàngāo.  
 (s)he    see-PRF            Lao Wang-ATTR      cake  
 ‘(S)he saw Laowang’s cake.’