

Chinese Anaphora: Lexical Encoding, Distributive Alternation and Reference Tracking

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This talk starts with a description of the major types of anaphora in Mandarin Chinese, making special reference to some less studied types as reported in Jiang (2016), for example, subject reflexives, adjunct reciprocals and their distributional alternation with other known types of anaphora such as zero anaphora, pronominals and argument reciprocals. I then present a DS-style representation of these phenomena, taking it as an extension of some existing DS work on Chinese anaphora. Finally, I compare the DS analysis with two other analyses, one being my earlier formulation within the framework of relevance theory, making use of notions such as encoded meaning, explicature and explicating, and top-down construction of anticipatory hypothesis of logical forms; the other as a functionalist analysis by Ping Chen. I will try to show that DS can accommodate the insights provided by these other types of analysis while presenting a more rigorous general formal system of linguistic analysis. I will also argue that while the behaviour of anaphora in Chinese discourse is affected by many factors, structural and pragmatic, they can receive a unitary and streamlined characterization in DS.

Main references

Chen, Ping. 1987. . Zero Anaphora in Chinese Narratives: A Discourse-Pragmatic Perspective, Chinese Language, Issue 5. Also in Chen, Ping. 1991. Studies in Modern Linguistics: Theory, Methodology and Fact. Chongqin Press, 181-209. [in Chinese]

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