

ZHONGGUO YUWEN

STUDIES OF THE CHINESE LANGUAGE

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Abstracts of Major Papers in This Issue

SONG Rou, Stream model of Generalized Topic Structure in Chinese text

This paper analyzes topic structures of Chinese texts from the language engineering perspective. With Punctuation Clause (P-Clause) as the basic unit, it proposes the definition and the representation of Generalized Topic Structure (GTS), summarizes the stack model of GTS, and then extends it to a stream model. There are two crucial properties of GTS: the uncrossability of the topic and the sentence-formability of the Topic Sufficient Sentence. After tagging the texts of various styles over 100,000 words, it shows that GTS analysis is operable and the stream model has a high coverage for Chinese texts.

Key words: Punctuation Clause, Generalized Topic Structure, Topic Sufficient Sentence, stack model, stream model

SI Luohong, The preposed topic marker *jiu* (就) in spoken Chinese

The existence of preposed topic makers in Chinese has been under controversy. This paper proposes that the preposed *jiu* in spoken Chinese can introduce and mark different kinds of topics. The topic marker *jiu* evolves from the preposition *jiu* and displays a series of differences, such as syntactic position, possibility of omission and the properties of followed elements. It argues that *jiu* actually has lost the typical features of preposition, and become a preposed topic marker.

Key Words: *jiu*, spoken Chinese, preposed topic marker

ZHU Jun, “*You shenme X*” (有什么 X) and “*mei (you) shenme X*” (没(有)什么 X): A case study of pragmatic negation in interactive modes

The rhetorical question ‘*You Shenme X*’ is a marked indirect response in interaction environments with a function of pragmatic negation and an epistemic meaning. According to the degrees the directness of response, the construction can be divided into four interactive modes: ‘premise – trigger’ unified mode, derivatized mode, implicated mode, and non-derivatized mode. In narrative and comment styles, it forms a generalized interactive mode by epistemically negating the previous views of the speakers’ or others’, or even the social common ideas. The differences in syntax, semantics and discourse functions between the rhetorical question ‘*You Shenme X*’ and the negative ‘*Mei(you) Shenme X*’ can be uniformly explained with the contrasting concepts ‘interaction vs. non-interaction’ and ‘premise negation vs. direct negation’.

Keywords: rhetorical questions, pragmatic negation, trigger premise, interactive mode

ZHU Guanming, Analyzing some exemplary sentences of Chinese historical grammar

The verity and the exact interpretation of the exemplary sentences are of high importance to the study of historical grammar. The advents of the *bei* (被) passive construction, the *ba* (把) disposal construction, the perfective particle *le* (了), and the verb-result construction are all significant events in the history of Chinese grammar, and have therefore attracted much attention of the researchers. However, because some highly-frequently used examples for these issues may be wrongly interpreted in the previous studies, the conclusions are not entirely reliable. This article challenges the old interpretations and puts forward new ones.

Key words: Chinese historical grammar, exemplary sentence, *bei* (被), *ba* (把), *le* (了), *po* (破)

FENG He, On the location word *suo* (所) and its variant *xu* (许)

In previous studies, location word *xu* with the similar pronunciation of *suo* is usually seen as a replacement of *suo*. Comparing the collocations and distributions of the two words, this paper argues that *xu* is a subset variant of *suo* constrained by structural and semantic factors. Location word *xu* reflects the semantic and functional changes of *suo*, and results from the interplay of clitic tendency and semantic generalization caused by cognitive schema shift.

Key words: *suo* (所), *xu* (许), spatial expression, diachronic change, motivation and mechanism

PENG Guozhen, A typological study on causative constructions in Jingpo

This paper surveys the two causatives in Jingpo and finds that the morphological causative expresses direct causation and the analytic causative expresses indirect causation. Unaccusative verbs and adjectives which describe properties express causation only by morphological changes, while typical transitive verbs only employ analytic causative, and middle verbs can use both. The causatives in Jingpo reflect the hierarchy of directness to bear on the typology of causative constructions.

Key words: morphological causative, analytic causative, direct causation, indirect causation, middle verb

LIANG Linlin, HOU Min, HE Yuyin, A quantitative study on the relationship between corpus size and coverage of common Chinese characters and words

Corpus-based quantitative studies appear to be a new paradigm for linguistic studies. Based on the experiments with progressively increasing corpus size, this paper explores the quantitative relationship between corpus size and coverage of common characters and words. The results show that: 1) Within a certain threshold value of the corpus size, there is a positive correlation between corpus size and coverage of characters/words with high frequency; 2) By the standard of the coverage rate of 90%, the threshold values of the corpus sizes for common characters and common words are 2 million and 60 million characters respectively; 3) Beyond the threshold value, corpus size shows little effect on coverage of characters or words with high frequency.

Key words: corpus size, common characters/words, coverage, quantitative study

