
Generalizing linearization: Marking instead of projecting. An attempt in the nominal domain of Mandarin Chinese

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In this study, we focus on the structure of Mandarin Chinese (MC) NPs to show how to constrain linearization by means of a head-functor analysis (HFA) in HPSG (Van Eynde 2021).

In MC, all constituents of the NP precede the head noun. Within the NP, Mod(ifier)s are flexible w.r.t. their linearization: they can appear before or after Dem(onstratives) and CL(assifier)P(hrases)¹, or directly before bare nouns without forcing a different interpretation, see (1) & (2). This behaviour of MC NPs poses a particular challenge to current approaches (Cheng & Sybesma 1999).

Furthermore, that Mod can appear before Dem and that (some subtypes of) CLPs can be modified (3) raises questions about whether Dem and CL can be analysed as specifiers. We show that these categories lack characteristics typically ascribed to specifiers (e.g. in English) and, hence, do not need to be analysed differently from Mods. Our analysis (based on HFA) dispenses with the distinction between specifiers and Mods (to some extent similar to cartographic analyses) by treating Dems, CLPs, and Mods as functors with specific marking values, accounting for the possible linearizations and interpretations in MC NPs, as well as for bare NPs.

- (1) (Mod) Dem (Mod) Num-CL (Mod) N
- (2) guanyu yuyanxue-de na san-ben shu
about linguistics-DE that three-CL_s book
'those three books about linguistics'
- (3) dada-de yi-wan xiao yingtao (Zhang 2011: ex 8)
big-DE one-CL_{m=bowl} small cherry
'a big bowl of small cherries'

References: • Cheng, L. & R. Sybesma (1999). Bare and not-so-bare nouns and the structure of NP. *Linguistic Inquiry* 30(4), 509–542. • Her, O. (2012). Distinguishing classifiers and measure words: A mathematical perspective and implications. *Lingua* 122(14), 1668–1691. • Van Eynde, F. (2021). Nominal structures. In Müller, S., Abeillé, A., Borsley, R. & Koenig, J.-P. (eds.), *Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar: The handbook*. Berlin: Language Science Press, 275–313. • Zhang, N. (2018). The constituency of classifier constructions in Mandarin Chinese. *Taiwan Journal of Linguistics* 9(1), 1–50.

¹ We treat sortal CL, e.g. *ben* (2), and measure CL, e.g. *xiang* 'box' (3), as subcategories of CL, see Her (2012).