



Department of
Linguistics and Modern Languages
語言學及現代語言系

Free-ordering Argument Selection and Object Omission in Chinese

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Date: September 27, 2022 (Tuesday)

Time: 4:30pm - 6:15pm (Hong Kong Time, UTC +8)

***Seminar will be conducted via ZOOM**



Prior registration is required

The Zoom Meeting details will be provided on September 26, 2022



Abstract

This paper studies argument selection and object omission in an attempt to better understand the role that a missing object plays in the computation of free-ordering argument selection in Chinese. Concerning the relationships between argument selection and deletion in Chinese, Li (2014a) argues that only unaccusatives take non-canonical objects (NCOs), focusing on the interaction of thematic hierarchy and deletion. Zhang (2018) argues that only unergatives take NCOs, defined as event kind-classifying elements without paying attention to object omission. Neither the deletion analysis (e.g., PF-deletion and Argument Ellipsis) nor the non-deletion analysis (e.g., True Empty Category (TEC, Li 2014b), Argument Ellipsis as External Merge after Transfer (Landau 2021) and topic-variable) can optimally predict why object omission is (dis)allowed in certain cases. We suggest that the (im)possibility of null object in Chinese might be related to the generalization that the sub-events of a stranded verb with a complex event structure cannot be properly realized if a theme argument is unpronounced (cf. Rappaport Hovav and Levin 2001). We conclude that lexical information and event structure affect the accessibility of object missing in Chinese.

Speaker

Ting-Chi Wei is currently Professor at Graduate Institute of Taiwan History, Culture, and Languages and Department of Indigenous People in Language and Culture, National Kaohsiung Normal University in Taiwan. His research interests focus on syntactic issues in regard to ellipsis, fragments, empty categories, scope and parallelism, word order, adverbial clauses and interrogatives in Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese, and Formosan languages.

All are Welcome

Enquiries

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