

Argument realization in Chinese causative expressions

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The goal of the presentation is the description and analysis of argument structure patterns in Chinese causative expressions. The talk is structured as follows: after a general characterization of the syntax and semantics of causative structures, I give a survey of the various means to express causativity in Chinese: on the one hand, Chinese has a productive compounding process for the formation of lexical causatives. On the other hand, a small number of grammatical causative verbs may be used. I will concentrate on the latter type of causatives and show how their use is determined by argument roles and aspectual properties of the lexical verbs. Particular attention will be paid to the *ba*-construction, a structure which has received a lot of attention in Chinese linguistics due to its crosslinguistically unique syntactic and semantic features. I will describe the different possibilities of argument realization and show to which extent they can be accounted for by mechanisms for the explanation of argument structure which are proposed in the literature, such as thematic hierarchies, semantic role decomposition, and causal chains. An analysis of the argument realization patterns will be proposed in the framework of HPSG; the analysis will make use of the mechanisms available in the framework for the representation of argument structures of complex predicates. A combination of a semantic role hierarchy along with a set of selectional restrictions will be used to account for semantic constraints on the possible patterns.

References

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