

# Preposed Objects in Mandarin Chinese: An Analysis of the BA-Construction in HPSG

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Chinese is basically an SVO-language. However, the speaker can make use of several constituent order variations in order to express particular pragmatic or semantic needs. There are multiple ways of changing the position of the direct object in a sentence, one of which is the placement of the object in a preverbal position under use of the particle *ba3*. This construction puts the emphasis on the direct object of the verb, which takes the semantic properties of a secondary topic. The sentence structure is changed from [Subj V (X) Obj (X)] to [Subj *ba3* Obj (X) V (X)]. The construction interacts with other word order constraints in Chinese, such as the rule for object preposing which tells that the object must be placed in sentence-initial or preverbal position if the main verb is combined with elements like resultative complements, adverbs of degree etc..

The *ba*-construction has been argued to be one of the most controversial predicate constructions in Modern Chinese. The *ba3*-particle has no equivalent in English or other Indo-European languages, which might be one of the reasons why its grammatical status is still undefined: on the one hand, *ba3* is being analysed as verb or preposition, bearing an independent semantic content and allowing a parallel to Chinese coverbs, which show both verbal and prepositional properties. Other researchers propose to treat *ba3* as Case marker or functional head without an own meaning. I will propose an analysis of the *ba*-construction in the framework of HPSG based on the interaction of syntactic and semantic constraints which the use of *ba3* posits on the compositional and semantic properties of the object NP and the following VP as well as on event structure, the distribution of aspectual roles and the lexical classes of verbs allowing for this construction.

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