

Derivation of Functional Projections in Chinese Peripheral Domain

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In this talk, I will re-examine TopicP and FocusP in Mandarin Chinese. In an ex-situ cleft focus structure, the copula *shi* ‘be’ is not analyzed as a focus marker but as a main verb taking the clefted XP as its complement. The TP [*shi* ‘be’ + XP] occupies the specifier position of the FocP whose head takes a morphologically null form (cf. 1).

- (1) [_{FocP} [_{TP1} *Shi* [_{DP} ni-de taidu]], [_{Foc'} [_{Foc°} ∅] [_{TP2} gongsi-de laoban bu xinshang]]].
be your attitude company-DE boss Neg appreciate
‘It is your attitude that the boss doesn’t appreciate.’

This analysis correctly predicts that the copula *shi* ‘be’ only takes scope over the clefted XP rather than the entire sentence. Therefore, it accounts for the fact that only the clefted DP *ni-de taidu* ‘your attitude’ receives a contrastive focus interpretation as shown in (1). The verbal status of *shi* ‘be’ is further evidenced by the fact that it can be preceded by (complex) adverbials. In (2), the adverb *jiu* ‘exactly’ can only scope over TP1 but not over TP2, and as a result, the contrastive reading can only be realized on the former but not on the latter. The same goes for (3) in that the negation only scopes over TP1.

- (2) [_{FocP} [_{TP1} Jiu shi zuotian na-dun fan], [_{Foc'} [_{Foc°} ∅] [_{TP2} dajia dou chi de hen bu kaixin]]].
exactly be yesterday that-Cl dinner everyone all eat DE very Neg happy
‘It was exactly for the dinner of yesterday that everyone was not very happy (, not for the dinner of the day before yesterday.’

- (3) [_{FocP} [_{TP1} Bu shi ni-de taidu], [_{Foc'} [_{Foc°} ∅] [_{TP2} gongsi-de laoban bu xinshang]]].
not be your attitude company-DE boss Neg appreciate
‘It is not your attitude that the boss doesn’t appreciate (, in fact, it is your way of dressing).’

Furthermore, [*shi* ‘be’ + DP] can even be preceded by modal verbs. In (4), the sequence [Negation + Modal auxiliaries] scopes over [*shi* ‘be’ + DP] but not over the entire sentence.

- (4) {Bu yinggai / bu hui} shi Zhangsan de taidu, laoban hen bu xihuan.
Neg should Neg could be Zhangsan DE attitude boss very Neg like
‘It {should not/ could not} be Zhangsan’s attitude that the boss does not like.’

As for topic structures, I assume that so-called topic markers *ne* or *ba* in Chinese are not real topic markers; instead, they are analyzed as ordinary sentence-final particles (SFP) taking a TP or a DP as complement. These SFPs do not mark an XP as a topic but provide the latter with an additional concrete semantic interpretation. The AttP hosting SFPs occupies the specifier position of the TopicP whose head is null, as shown in (5).

- (5) [_{TopP} [_{AttP} [_{DP} Zhe-ben shu] [_{Att°} ne / a / ba / ma]], [_{Top'} [_{Top°} ∅] [_{TP} xie de hai bucuo]]].
this-Cl book SFP write DE still not.bad
‘As for this book, it is well written.’

Importantly, this analysis successfully accounts for two important facts. First, under the Topic Marker analysis, configurationally, TM only forms a constituent with its TP complement,

contrary to the fact that TM must form a constituent with DP topic phrases. Second, SFPs can even follow the clefted [*shi* ‘be’ + DP] which must be interpreted as a focus phrase given the observed Exhaustivity Effects (cf. 6). This is unexpected under the TM analysis since topics do not give rise to Exhaustivity Effects.

- (6) Shi Zhangsan de taidu {la / ba / ne / a / bei}, laoban hen bu xihuan.
be Zhangsan DE attitude SFP boss very Neg like
‘It is Zhangsan’s attitude that the boss does not like, (# it is also his way of dressing).’