1. The “shift” parameter


1. MC: [+Shift]

2. AmE: [-Shift]
   *John [novels] read.

In this study, we provide evidence in favor of a global “shift” parameter.

(3) PP shift schema
   \[ ... [pP ... , VP ... V_{2} ... ] ... \]

This parameter affects object shift, as well as PP-shift. Specifically, MC allows PP-shift, but AmE does not.

2. Ambiguity of locative PP

There is a subset of locative verbs (e.g., write, hang, etc.), which give rise to ambiguities that inform us about the nature of PP-adjunction.

American English

Post-verbal PPs lead to a “cause” reading as well as a “non-cause” reading, while pre-verbal PPs only give rise to the non-cause reading.

(4) Mary is writing letters on the train. (post-verbal PP)
   a. Cause: Mary is writing letters onto (some part of) the train.
   b. Non-cause: Mary is on the train and she is writing letters (on paper).

(5) Mary is on the train writing letters. (pre-verbal PP)
   a. *Cause: Mary is writing letters onto (some part of) the train.
   b. Non-cause: Mary is on the train and she is writing letters (on paper).

Mandarin Chinese

Pre-verbal PPs lead to a “cause” reading as well as a “non-cause” reading, while post-verbal PPs only give rise to the cause reading (Zhu 1981).

(6) Lisi xie zi [zai huachu shang].
   Lisi write character at train on

   Lisi at train on write character

The word order differences above result from a single parametric difference; MC allows PPs to “shift” from a low position to a higher adjunction site, while AmE does not.

3. Syntactic analysis

Proposal

- The “non-cause” reading is derived by merging pP with VP.
- The “cause” reading is derived via locative verbs selecting for small clause pP complements, in a manner similar to some analyses of double object constructions (Kayne 1984, Guéron 1986).
- Pre- and post-verbal “cause” sentences in MC are transformationally related.

4. Adjunction & Double Object Constructions

MC and AmE differ in where PP and Temporal modifiers adjoin:

14) Zhangsan zuotian gei mama da dianhua *(zuotian)
   Zhangsan yesterday give Mother hit telephone *(yesterday)
   ‘Zhangsan called his mother yesterday.’

The shift parameter extends to double object constructions; (16) can be derived from (15), following Tang (2003) and contra Li (1990).

15) Lisi song-le yi-ben-shu [gei Zhangsan]
   Lisi send-AOMP one-CL-book to Zhangsan
   ‘Lisi gave a book to Zhangsan.’

16) Lisi [gei Zhangsan] song-le yi-ben-shu
   Lisi to Zhangsan send-AOMP one-CL-book
   ‘Lisi gave to Zhangsan a book.’

5. Clauses are islands for PP-shift in Mandarin

PP-shift and Double Object shift are like object shift because they cannot cross clausal boundaries.

(17) *Zhangsan [xiaoshuo], renwei [\(pP\) Lisi kan-wan-le \(t_{1}\)]
   Zhangsan novel think Lisi read-finish-Asp (int.)
   ‘Zhangsan thinks that Lisi finished reading novels.’

18) Zhangsan [zai che shang] shuo Lisi xie-le zi.
   Zhangsan at train on say Lisi write-Asp characters
   a. *Cause: Zhangsan says Lisi wrote characters onto the train.
   b. Non-cause: Zhangsan says Lisi was on the train and he wrote characters.

19) *Libai [gei Zhangsan] shuo Lisi write-le \(t_{1}\).
   Libai to Zhangsan say Lisi write-Asp characters
   a. *Cause: Libai says Lisi wrote characters onto the train.
   b. Non-cause: Libai says Lisi was on the train and he wrote characters.

6. Conclusion

- MC allows objects and PPs to “shift”, while AmE does not.
- In MC, PP-shift and double object-shift are clause-bounded, like object shift.
- Future Directions: MC is similar to other object shift languages (e.g., Dutch and German; Koster & Zwart 2000) in that it has object shift in existential constructions.

REFERENCES