

## Double-subject Constructions in Mandarin Chinese: A Cognitive-discourse perspective

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“The phenomenon commonly referred to as ‘double-subject constructions’ poses numerous descriptive and theoretical challenges” (Kumashiro & Langacker 2003). The expression consists of an outer NP juxtaposed with NP<sub>2</sub> and predicate with the schematic description [NP<sub>1</sub> [NP<sub>2</sub> Predicate]]. This typical Chinese construction has received quite some attention from diverse perspectives, but there is little agreement on the status of the two NPs and on the various types that fall into the construction. These previous analyses face several problems. One problem is their limited data, especially data in genuine discourse. Another is their lack of attention to the construction’s internal semantic properties. The third is the vagueness of the concept of aboutness. Divergent from the previous approaches, this paper argues that diverse Chinese double-subject constructions can be uniformly explained by the conceptual reference-point model proposed in cognitive grammar (Langacker 1993, 1999 etc.). It further argues that the flexibility of the semantic interpretations of these constructions is deeply rooted in their metonymic nature, in line with Park (2011). The goal of this paper is to investigate the internal affinity among all the subtypes that can fall into the schematic description in Mandarin Chinese. Thus a discourse perspective is also adopted with all the data extracted from a parallel corpus of Chinese and English. As the two NPs are not morphologically marked in Chinese, one of the advantages of this methodology is that strong discourse evidence is found with an investigation into the successive minor sentences following the construction. Another advantage is that more NP and predicate subtypes are found with genuine data (to elaborate the concept of ‘aboutness’). Moreover, we find that the Chinese construction has a much wider scope cross-linguistically, and it’s not so correspondent to “the plausible translations with have” in English, as proposed by Kumashiro & Langacker (2003:4). The schema is, NP<sub>1</sub> explicitly adds the information to the common ground, which is then used implicitly in the predicate clause (which has insufficient conceptual autonomy). Multiple NPs juxtaposition is a reflection of human reference point processing ability. In addition, multiple minor sentences juxtaposition is also a typical feature of such constructions in Chinese discourse, which can be well explained as the co-alignment of reference-point relations for the maximization of processing efficiency.

**Key words:** double-subject construction; NP juxtaposition; minor sentence; metonymy; discourse

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