A SEMANTIC STUDY ON DISTRIBUTIVE EFFECTS IN MANDARIN CHINESE

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation is concerned with the notion of distributivity and the devices for encoding distributivity in Mandarin Chinese. The central claim is that distributivity entails universal quantification but not vice-versa in the following two respects: i) the quantificational mapping of distributive quantification is syntactically restricted; while that of universal quantification may be determined by other factors such as background-focus, and ii) distributive quantification is normally non-trivial, that is, both its restrictor and its scope need to contain multiple members to induce variation; while universal quantification may be trivial. To make this argument, the dissertation presents a detailed investigation and analysis of a series of expressions that are able to induce distributivity in Mandarin, i.e., *dou*, *ge* and *yi-CL-yi-CL*. Also, cross-linguistic comparisons are made with the distributive devices in English and Telugu to further strengthen the claim.

The dissertation centers on *dou* and bases the analysis of the other two expressions, *ge* and *yi-CL-yi-CL*, on the comparison with it. Despite that the expressions under investigation have the same semantic core of universal quantification, they differ in i) the positions where they can appear, ii) the entities that are able to function as the sorting key and the distributed share, and iii) the semantic requirements on the sorting key and the distributed share. To countenance the relevant facts, the dissertation resorts to notions like groups, sums and events to uncover the fine-grained distributive properties of these expressions. All the expressions under investigation are analyzed in a uniform
Neo-Davidsonian framework, which makes visible events as well as how other domains are related with events. Also, a mereological perspective is taken to facilitate generalizations across different domains. The main body of the work is divided into three parts: The first part, Chapter 2, argues extensively against the rival view that *dou* is a unary maximality operator (Giannakidou & Cheng, 2006) and also addresses the problems with the treatment of *dou* as a generalized distributive operator (Lin, 1998a). The second part, Chapter 3 and 4, further pins down the distributive effect of *dou* and deals with its ‘fickleness’ as to its compatibility with various noun phrase and predicate types. The third part, Chapter 5, compares the varieties of distributive effects induced by the three expressions and discusses the interaction among them.

The work contributes to the study of distributivity in Mandarin in the following aspects:

1. The relation and the difference between distributivity and universal quantification are sorted out and *dou* is pinned down as a universal quantifier in the broad sense.

2. The distributive *dou*’s interaction with various noun phrase and predicate types indicates that it primarily distributes down to atoms and that its distributive effect needs to be non-trivial.

3. The semantic and syntactic differences in the stock of Mandarin distributive items are formally represented within a unified conceptual framework, which thus enriches the picture of distributivity.

4. As a preliminary endeavor, a map of universal quantification is proposed to illustrate how notions like maximality, distributivity and exhaustivity, etc., interrelate with each other.
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