

A Study of Mandarin Ba Constructions from the Perspective of Event Structure

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Abstract : Ba constructions are a special type of constructions in Chinese. Their syntactic behaviors are closely related to their event structural properties. The existing study which treats the semantic function of Ba as causative meets difficulty in treating the discrepancy between Ba constructions and their corresponding constructions without Ba in expressing causativity. This paper holds that Ba in Ba constructions is a functional category expressing affectedness. The affectedness expressed by Ba can be positive or negative. The functional category Ba expressing negative affectedness has the semantic property of being 'expected'. The precondition of Ba construction is the boundedness of the event concerned. This paper, holding the parallelism between motion events and change-of-state events, proposes a syntactic model based on the notions of boundedness and affectedness, discusses the transformations between Ba constructions and the related resultative constructions, and derives the various Ba constructions concerned.

Keywords : affectedness, Ba constructions, boundedness, event structure, resultative constructions

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