

## Putting and taking events in Mandarin Chinese

This study investigates the organization of the semantic components in the domain of placement (putting and taking) events and the semantic extensional patterns of the placement predicates in Mandarin Chinese. These events, such as putting/taking a book in/out of a bag, putting clothes onto body parts, are common in every culture. But languages vary in their use of lexico-grammatical devices to express such events, and how the information about putting/taking is typically distributed across utterance constituents. For example, how Ground (Source/Goal), Figure, and Path information is encoded and what semantic distinctions languages make in placement verbs. The data explored are elicited descriptions of 63 video clips of placement events, which involve a variety of objects and different manners of placement, from 10 adult native speakers of Mandarin Chinese.

The analysis shows that that Ground (Source/Goal) and Figure are encoded as arguments or adjunct coverb phrases and that Path and Motion are frequently encoded with directional verb compounds, such as *fang4-xia4-lai2* ‘put-descend-come’ (put down). A directional verb compound is composed of two or three free verbs in the form of  $V_1V_2$  or  $V_1V_2V_3$ . It as a whole conveys the core event of the (re)location of the Figure, and each of the component verbs encodes only one semantic aspect of this event. The first verb can be either a generic placement verb (*fang4*, ‘put’ and *na2* ‘take’) or a specific verb of manipulation of certain manner (e.g., *sai1* ‘stuff’, *reng1* ‘throw’); the second and the third verb ( $V_2$  and  $V_3$ ) encode the Path of the transference, trajectory in  $V_2$  (e.g., *jin4* ‘enter’, *chul* ‘exit’) and optionally deixis (*lai2* ‘come’ or *qu4* ‘go’) in  $V_3$ .

The two generic placement verbs, *fang4* ‘put’ and *na2* ‘take’, has big extensional event categories, but a specific verb is obligatory for many events that can be typically described with *put* or *take* in English. The choice of a specific verb of manipulation is based on a number of semantic features, such as the property of the Figure (e.g., soft fluffy object vs. longish rigid object) and the Ground (e.g., placement on head or on body trunk), instrument involved (e.g., placement by hand vs. by pliers), the relationship between the Figure and Ground (e.g., tightly fit vs. loosely fit), and the Manner of the manipulation (e.g., placement with force/intention vs. without).

This study contributes to the study of typology of motion events. It supports the refined typology of motion events as proposed by Slobin (2004) that Mandarin, different from the satellite-framed languages (such as English and German), shows features of the “equipollently-framed languages”, in which Path and Manner are expressed by equivalent grammatical forms (i.e., two or three free verbs in the compound).