A SUPPRESIONIST APPRAOCH TO ARGUMENT-FUNCTION MISMATCHES

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This paper employs the Lexical Mapping Theory of LFG in dealing with the problem of some of the argument-function mismatches observed in Mandarin Chinese, as seen in (1)-(3) below.

(1) a. Liang ge ren chi yi bang rou. <*x y*>
two CL person eat one pound meat S O
'Two people eat one pound of meat.'
b. Yi bang rou chi liang ge ren. <*x y*>
'One pound of meat feeds/serves two people.' O S

(2) a. Zhangsan zuo zai tai-shang. <*x y*>
John sit at stage-top S OBL_θ
'John is sitting on the stage.'
b. Tai-shang zuo zhe Zhangsan. <*x y*>
'On the stage is sitting John.' O S

(3) Zhangsan zhui-lei-le Lisi.
John chase-tired-ASP Lee
a. 'John chased Lee and made Lee tired.' <*x y*>
S O
John Lee
b.*'Lee chased John and John got tired.' < *x y*>
*O *S
Lee John
c. 'John chased Lee and (John) got tired.' < *x y*>
S O
John Lee
d. 'Lee chased John and was made tired.' <*x y*>
O S
Lee John

I will demonstrate with syntactic tests that the 'inverted' mappings all display minute semantic differences from the canonical mapping. To fully account for the semnatic differences as well as the mismatches, the paper proposes that each of the argument structure in (1)-(3) actually involves a composite role, which is the *x* role in (1) and (2) and either *x* or *y* in (3). The two composing roles in a composite role compete for syntactic realization, due to the strict one-to-one mapping principle, which thus entails the necessary suppression of one of the ocmposing roles. The two-way argument-function mapping in (1) and (2) are due to the two possible outcomes of competition and the three-way mapping in (3) is due to three well-formed outcomes out of four logical possibilities.

In short, this suppresionist approach employs only existing grammatical concepts within the Lexical Mapping Theory and fully accounts for the entire range of data observed. This account can be extended to other similar types of argument-function mismatches

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