

Copula stranding in Mandarin *shi...de* clefts

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Topic & goals: This paper adopts a cartographic approach to the derivation of a special form of Mandarin *shi...de* clefts, namely, those with a “stranded” copula. While standard *shi...de* clefts feature some focused element immediately following the copula (as in 1), *shi* can also appear stranded at the end of the sentence (as in 2). Based on recent analyses of V *de* O clefts and right dislocation in Mandarin, we propose that copula stranding as in (2) is derived through the “Chinese-style” right dislocation, aided by the presence of a *pro*-predicate in the cleft structure (as schematized in 3). This derivation demonstrates a synergy of two distinct Focus projections, one in the low periphery associated with the cleft copula and the other in the high left periphery involved in right dislocation. The co-occurrence of two FocusPs in the same hierarchy is rendered possible by the fact that the high one can target the whole low FocusP, without causing any freezing effect.

(1) *Wo shi zai zheli mai de mianbao.*
1SG be at here buy DE bread

‘It was here that I bought the bread.’

(2) *Wo zai zheli mai de mianbao shi.*
1SG at here buy DE bread be

‘It was here that I bought the bread.’

(3) [ForceP [TopicP *Wo zai zheli mai de mianbao*] Force⁰ [GroundP [IP *pro shi*] Ground⁰ t_{TopicP}]]

Analysis: The two *shi...de* clefts in (1) and (2) are semantically identical and only differ in terms of the position of the copula. We assume the more marked order in (2) to be derived from the default order in (1).

We further observe that epistemic adverbs can appear in the right part together with the copula:

(4) *Wo zai zheli mai de mianbao yiding shi.*
1SG at here buy DE bread definitely be

‘It was definitely here that I bought the bread (although I don’t remember it clearly).’

The non-constituency of the final *yiding shi* “definitely be” in (4) is reminiscent of the “Chinese-style” right dislocation, where the right-dislocated part is a remnant instead of forming a constituent itself. We thus argue that cases like (2/4) are the result of “Chinese-style” right dislocation.

Given that the right-dislocated part can be omitted in general, this analysis can also provide a natural explanation for the so-called copula drop in Mandarin clefts (also known as bare-*de* sentences):

(5) *Wo zai zheli mai de mianbao (shi).*
1SG at here buy DE bread be

‘It was here that I bought the bread.’

Derivation: 1. Project PredP to represent a small clause (SC), with FP in SpecPredP as the SC subject and *pro* in CompPredP as the SC predicate. 2. Move FP to the specifier of Focus1P, which sits immediately above PredP and is selected by the specificational copula *shi*, the head of BeP. 3. Move the *pro*-predicate to SpecIP. 4. Move the entire low Focus1P to the specifier of the high Focus2P. 5. Move the complement of Focus2P, i.e., IP, to SpecGroundP. 6. Move TopicP, which contains Focus2P, to SpecForceP. Steps (1-3) derive the basic specificational copular structure and (4-6) derive the outer right dislocation structure.

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