Cartographic Study on Postverbal Zai in Mandarin Chinese

Xun Tianqi

School of Chinese Language and Literature, Beijing Normal University

xuntianqi@mail.bnu.edu.cn

The "V+*Zai*+LP" construction in Mandarin Chinese has complex syntactic and semantic properties. This construction can express both static meaning (e.g. 张三睡在沙发上"Zhang San is sleeping on the sofa") and dynamic meaning (e.g. 小猴子跳在（了）马背上"The little monkey jumped onto the horse's back"). The previous researches generally attribute the differences to the verbs. In fact, the postverbal *Zai* in Mandarin Chinese has different sources, which account for the observed differences.

Research has found instances of the "V+Zhe+*Zai*+N" construction in documents from the Ming and Qing dynasties that have the same meaning as the "V+*Zai*+LP" construction in Mandarin Chinese. Based on the CCL Ancient Chinese Corpus, this study retrieved 55 examples of "V+Zhe+*Zai*+N" sentences that can be replaced by "V+*Zai*+LP" in the same contexts. This evidence demonstrates that the "V+*Zai*+LP" construction in Mandarin Chinese derives from the "V+Zhe+*Zai*+N" construction and is not directly related to the "*Zai*+LP+V" construction.

From the perspective of cartographic approach, Wu(2016) treated postverbal *Zai* as the genuine well-behaved preposition, while Sybesma(2022) proposed that locative prepositional phrases are high applicative in Mandarin Chinese. However, neither of them can provide an appropriate explanation for the static meaning of the "V+*Zai*+LP" construction and the syntactic properties of *Zai*. Based on the idea of cartography, this study believes that in the "V+*Zai*+LP" construction that represents the static meaning, *Zai* is generated at $Asp3^0$, which is the position of $Realization^0$ (Sybesma 1997), expressing that the event has not yet been realized and is still in a continuous state. Because *Zai* occupies the position of $Asp3^0$, it also explains why *Zai* with static meaning cannot coexist with other aspect markers.

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