

Indefinites and specificity in Mandarin

Jin Cui (Abstract)

Mandarin is a language without (in)definite article. Generally there are two ways in Mandarin to mark a noun phrase as indefinite: Cl-NP and “one”-CL-NP. It was supposed in the literature (Cheng&Sybesma 1999, 2005) that the previous one is limited to a non-specific indefinite reading, while the latter one may be interpreted specific and non-specific.

In this short talk I will present a current part of an empirical work. With a questionnaire study and a subsequent corpus-analysis I will try to check whether the distinction between Cl-NP and “one”-CL-NP depends essentially on specificity, and what kind of specificity takes the deciding function in this aspect.