The Degree of Constructional Meaning Abstractness of

\textit{chi(EAT)+XP} In Chinese

Ching-Chun Hsiao

\textit{Asia University}

jeff@asia.edu.tw

This study addresses the constructional template of a family of '\textit{chi+XP}' in Chinese and explores the cognitive status and structural constraints of XPs that play a crucial role in lexical processing. Chinese verb \textit{chi} often has other idiomatic meaning than its literal sense of 'eat', particularly when it co-occurs with indefinite NPs and QPs. For example, \textit{chi you 'eat oil'} means not merely '(the car) runs by oil' but 'the car is heavy on oil'. Other examples are like: \textit{chi ren 'eat people'} means 'rip off'; \textit{chi shui liang xun 'eat water mark twain'} means '(the ship) has a draught of 2 fathoms'. The recent study will give an analysis that treats the consuming construct '\textit{chi+XP}' as an argument structure of \textit{EAT} [Edible\textsuperscript{+}, Agent affected\textsuperscript{+}, Theme consumed\textsuperscript{+}]. Firstly, we begin with posting definiteness of core arguments on layered tiers and recognizing their versatilities of roles and constructural design of linking algorithm. Such a multi-layer architecture involves a specific set of semantic entities that can be shared between different conceptual domains. Secondly, we put forward the lexical semantic property of \textit{chi} under cognitive domain model and attempt an explanation of the distinction between multiple senses of \textit{chi}, such as \textit{be}, \textit{consume}, \textit{diet} and etc. The result of semantic decomposition suggests that idiosyncratic constraints of \textit{chi+XP} need not be encoded in lexical entries as syntactic configuration but must be encoded in information template as pairing presetting. Thus, it is argued that, when the process of applying lexical principle, there must be an all-around process of mapping thematic roles into different layers of argument structure of the construct, since the internal relations between semantic arguments leads to the idea that there is a strong influence: the degree of abstractness of thematic representations. One point is that although the quantities of physical entities in \textit{chi+QP} are used to convey different amounts of accumulative theme, they might be regarded as abstract representations, while the more abstract the thematic representations, the higher the fixedness of the constructional property. Therefore, to investigate these discrepancies, we performed an implementation of the constructional framework that draws a parallel resolution of the interface between linguistic features.

\textbf{Key words:} fixed expression, degree, conceptual structure, idiom, information structure