

THE PROCESSING MECHANISMS OF MANDARIN *WH*-QUESTIONS

Yang Yang¹ Leticia Pablos² Lisa Lai-Shen Cheng²

¹ *Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou*


² *Leiden University, Leiden*

ABSTRACT

Wh-question phrases in Mandarin remain in-situ at their base position (e.g., John bought *what?*). Although theoretical studies show that there is a covert dependency between the in-situ question word/phrase and SpecCP, little is known how this dependency is evidenced in the processing of Mandarin *wh*-in-situ questions. In addition, bare Mandarin *wh*-phrases like *shéi* ‘who’ are different from complex ones like *nǎge tóngxué* ‘which classmate’, as the former are known as *wh*-indeterminates, on a par with indefinites (Cheng 1991), while the latter are considered on a par with definites (Rullmann and Beck 1998). To uncover the

Acknowledgements We thank Professor Xiaolu Yang for assistance in conducting the experiment in Tsinghua University, and Niels Schiller, Stella Gryllia, Jenny Doetjes and Aliza Glasbergen-Plas for their involvement in discussions during the process of experimental design. The studies were presented in various stages at the 3rd East Asian Psycholinguistics Colloquium and the 21st and 22nd Architectures and Mechanisms for Language Processing (AMLaP) conference and we thank Ming Xiang and Masaya Yoshida for their useful comments. We also thank the two anonymous reviewers for their invaluable comments. The research was funded by the NWO project Understanding Questions [No. 360-70-480] on the second author. The first author was funded by the Foundation for Young Talents in Higher Education of Guangdong Province (2018WQNCX024), the Philosophy and Social Science planning Project of Guangdong Province (GD19YYY03) and a research grant (No. BCD202102) from the Bilingual Cognition and Development Lab, Center for Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies.

Yang Yang (杨洋; corresponding author) [yangyanggw@gdufs.edu.cn]; Bilingual Cognition and Development Lab, Center for Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, 2 Baiyun Avenue North, Guangzhou, 510420, China.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9314-5035>

普通话 *wh*-疑问句的加工机制杨洋¹ Leticia Pablos² 郑礼珊²¹广东外语外贸大学 ²莱顿大学

摘要

汉语普通话的特殊疑问句是在位疑问句，即疑问词的位置和陈述句对应名词的位置相同(例如“约翰买了什么? ”)，并不移到句首。理论语言学的研究表明，在位的疑问词与句子左缘的 SpecCP 存在隐性的依存关系，但这种依存关系能否从在线句子加工中找到证据，尚不得而知。除此之外，光杆疑问词(例如“谁”)与复杂的疑问词(例如“哪个同学”)本质不同，因为前者是 *wh*-不定指，类似于不定代词(Cheng 1991)，而后者性质与有定代词类似(Rullmann and Beck, 1998)。为了更好地揭示普通话特殊疑问句的加工机制，文章进行了两个自控步速阅读实验，来对比疑问句和对应陈述句的加工模式。具体说来，根据文献中对光杆疑问词和复杂疑问词的区分，我们分别对比了光杆疑问句和包含了对应不定代词陈述句的加工区别，以及复杂疑问句和包含了对应有定代词陈述句的加工区别。研究结果表明，尽管疑问词的性质有光杆和复杂之分，疑问句整体上都要比对应陈述句加工成本更高(即需要更多的加工时间)。这为普通话特殊疑问句中隐性依存关系的建构提供了在线加工上的证据。此外，实验的结果显示，只要阅读到 *wh*-成分(例如“哪个”、“谁”)，被试就开始了疑问依存关系的建构，不需要读完整个词组(例如“哪个同学”)。

关键词

光杆在位疑问句 复杂在位疑问句 不定代词 有定代词 依存关系