

A TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF CERTAIN SYNTACTIC IDIOSYNCRASIES IN MANDARIN


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ABSTRACT

This study examines the complexity of Mandarin syntax and addresses several long-standing problems in the field. To tackle these issues, it proposes a tripartite mixed model of core arguments—nominative, accusative, and absolutive—for Mandarin. Using this model, the paper provides a unified account of ten recurrent syntactic idiosyncrasies. It demonstrates systematic links between these phenomena and absolutive alignment, clarifying the crucial role of the absolutive relation and its grammatical significance in Mandarin. The findings show that Mandarin’s mixed configuration of nominative, accusative, and absolutive goes beyond the traditional subject–object dichotomy. From this broader perspective, many persistent puzzles in Mandarin grammar receive more comprehensive, unified, and robust explanations. It is hoped that this study will contribute to deeper and more systematic research on the Mandarin grammatical system.

Acknowledgments Thanks to Mr. Xiaoping Ao, an old friend from the United States, for providing constructive and detailed revision suggestions. Additionally, gratitude is extended to Professor Bingfu Lu and Mingliang Hu, Wang Wei and Zhongxiang Wang for their contributions to the linguistic improvements made to this paper.

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