

OPTIONAL *GAI* IN HAKKA ADJECTIVAL MODIFICATION: ITS INTERPRETATION AND STRUCTURE

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the associative marker *gai* in Hakka complex noun phrases, exploring its syntax and semantics. It is argued that *gai* constitutes the formal correlate of a [CLASS] feature that linguistically identifies a class, or a subkind, to a kind denoted by the modified noun. The *gai* marker hosts a functional projection ClassP in the nominal structure and is shown to encode the concept of partitivity, namely denoting a potentially specific subset of a larger set. The analysis of *gai* as a class marker is shown to fit with the cross-linguistic picture regarding classification, partitivity and nominal ellipsis.

KEYWORDS

Associative marker Class marker Partitivity

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