

**Conceptualization of CONTAINMENT in Chinese: A corpus-based study of the Chinese space particles *lǐ*, *nèi*, and *zhōng***

[中文容納語意認知：以語料庫方法研究  
中文空間詞「裡」、「內」、「中」]

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**Abstract**

This study investigates the semantic variations of three near-synonymous space particle constructions of CONTAINMENT in Chinese: [zài NP *lǐ/nèi/zhōng*]. While previous work has mostly applied qualitative analyses of the semantic differences between these particles, this study presents a corpus-based analysis examining the relationship between space particles and their co-occurring landmarks in the locative construction. Two quantitative analyses were conducted: a multiple distinctive collexeme analysis and a post-hoc semantic analysis. Our results suggest the following. First, *lǐ* is a more unmarked particle in encoding CONTAINMENT, co-occurring with both canonical landmarks and a wider range of entities. Second, *nèi* shows a strong preference for landmarks denoting temporal concepts; this metaphorical use often implies a preplanned objective in the proposition, with the landmark as an intended deadline. Finally, *zhōng* shows a strong connection to landmarks denoting high-dynamicity events. This extended use often comes with a marked aspectual reading of the landmark.

Keywords: cognitive semantics, quantitative corpus linguistics, space particles, containment, collocation analysis, distinctive collexeme  
關鍵詞：認知語意學，量化語料庫語言學，空間詞，容納概念，搭配構式分析法，區辨共現詞

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