

Expressing the existence of an event with ‘you(to have) + VP’ in Taiwan

Mandarin A corpus-based investigation

[表示事件的存在：以語料庫方法探討臺灣華語「有字句」]

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The verb you ‘to have’ in standard Mandarin is typically followed by a noun. You can also take a VP as its complement (‘you + VP’) in several varieties of Mandarin. However, the function associated with it is still under debate: ‘you + VP’ has been analyzed as expressing past tense, perfective aspect, perfect aspect, or realis mood. This paper assesses these analyses by conducting a corpus-based investigation of ‘you + VP’ on the PTT platform and by looking at different morphosyntactic environments in which it is used. The data favor analyzing ‘you + VP’ as expressing an assertive modality meaning (the situation is considered true in the real world by the speaker). This analysis corroborates with the high frequency of ‘you + VP’ in assertive environments (e.g., after factual verbs in embedded clauses, with attitudinal adverbs of truth value, among others). Conversely, taking ‘you + VP’ as indicating past tense or perfective aspect is challenged by the present data, and the perfect aspect analysis cannot explain all the environments in which ‘you + VP’ is used. This paper provides new insights regarding the morphosyntactic use of ‘you + VP’ and sheds light on the meaning this construction encodes.

Keywords: Taiwan Mandarin, ‘you + VP’, corpus linguistics, assertive modality, Tense-Aspect-Modality, syntax

關鍵詞：臺灣華語，有字句，語料庫語言學，斷定情態，時態—時貌—情態，句法學

<https://doi.org/10.1075/consl.21046.col>

Concentric 48:2 (2022), pp. 249–284. ISSN 1810-7478 | E-ISSN 2589-5230

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