

Degree adverbs in spoken Mandarin A behavioral profile corpus-based approach to language alternatives

[中文口語程度副詞：以語料庫為本之行為型態分析法探究語言近義結構之選擇]

Pei-Wen Huang [黃佩文] and

Alvin Cheng-Hsien Chen [陳正賢]

National Taiwan Normal University [國立臺灣師範大學]

Managing near-synonymous morphosyntactic constructions in language is often at the core of a speaker's grammatical competence. This study investigates the usage patterns of four near-synonymous degree adverb constructions (i.e., *hěn*, *tài*, *mán*, and *chāo*) in the Taiwan Mandarin Corpus in TalkBank. After retrieving the concordance lines of these four constructions from the corpus, we manually annotated their co-occurring linguistic patterns/structures at multiple linguistic levels. In particular, we utilized a corpus-based behavioral profile approach to determine the interrelationship of the four constructions based on their distributional patterns and identified their distinctive behavioral patterns, producing a comprehensive delineation of their functional differences. Our analysis suggests that these four constructions fall into two super-clusters, i.e., *chāo-mán* and *tài-hěn*. *Chāo* and *mán* differ mainly in the pragmatic sentiments of their associated predicates, their co-occurrences with the nominalization structure, and their productivity in lexicalization. *Tài* and *hěn* differ mainly in their co-occurrences with the final particle *-le*, the semantic and pragmatic functions of their associated predicates, and the semantics of their associated head nouns. We have also connected these corpus-based distributional patterns to previous research findings, demonstrating the effectiveness and applicability of the behavioral profile approach for the analysis of near-synonymous morphosyntactic alternations in language.

Keywords: degree adverbs, behavioral profile, hierarchical cluster analysis, spoken Mandarin, near-synonyms

關鍵詞：程度副詞，行為型態分析，階層分群法，口語，近義詞

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