N. Zhang. (2015). *Cognitive Chinese grammar*. Shanghai: Fudan Press.

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The large body of existent Chinese grammatical research is mostly pre-theoretical or semi-theoretical. The study of Chinese grammar has been stagnant due to a short of hallmarks of innovation. The book under review is sure to fill the gap and make a new era for the development of Chinese grammar study.

As its title suggests, this book approaches Chinese grammar from cognitive perspectives, explicating various uses of Chinese by resorting to general cognitive abilities and encyclopedic knowledge related to Chinese culture. Although there exist numerous similar titles in the literature (e.g. Shen, 2009; Wu, 2011; Zhang, 2006), this book is absolutely an out-performer in terms of theoretical depth, explanatory force, argumentative strategies, and coverage of language facts. Judging from the extensiveness of the books' survey and citations, I can tell that the author is well-acquainted with the theoretical background and previous research, and that the book is built on a solid foundation. The author's review of previous research is impressive for being boldly and straightforwardly critical. In a number of cases, the author challenged the authoritative views. For instance, Shen Jiaxuan (2005) is criticized for failing to provide a specific definition of "subjective type of dealing with" *Bǎ*-construction, i.e. "how the speaker mentally constructs a situation which he or she frames into a *Bǎ*-construction" (p. 80). The critiques are valid and fair.

The book mirrors the masterpieces of Chinese grammar, and the author, Ningning Zhang, mirrors the masters Li (Liaoyi) Wang and Yuen Ren Chao. I believe that the author, Ningning Zhang, could stand side by side with the masters. Or rather, he has climbed up to stand on the shoulders of these giants. The exquisiteness (in terms of the contents and expressions) of this book warrants the above judgment. I believe other scholars would agree with me after they finish reading this book.

This book refutes the misconception that Chinese has no grammar because of its flexibility. Instead, the author argues that Chinese lexico-grammar is by no means in free variation; the variability is subject to constraints and restriction; the nuance of form-meaning pairing is explainable through knowledge frame and cognitive construal. These arguments are "teased out" through a thorough examination of various idiosyncratic constructions in each chapter.

This book consists of twelve chapters, with ten main body chapters wrapped with the two chapters at both ends (Chapter one *Introduction*, Chapter twelve

Conclusion and Prospectus). Chapter two presents an overview of cognitive linguistic theories on grammar and an inventory of linguistic units of Chinese. Four types of symbolic units are posited from a construction grammar perspective: characters, lexical items, phrases or phrasal-level constructions, clausal-level constructions. These form a continuum, the boundary between the neighboring types being fuzzy. The author did a great job in keeping his "linguistic Occam's razor" sharp by successfully circumventing some notorious long-standing disputes, such as basic units of Chinese (pp. 22–23), the part-of-speech of Chinese words (p. 21).

The remaining nine chapters are concerned with the grammar of Chinese-specific constructions, each in a chapter. Three of the constructions are phrasal-level: instruments as objects (Chapter 3), *Chī*+object construction (Chapter 4), and resultative constructions (Chapter 6). The other constructions are clausal-level, including the *Bǎ*-construction (Chapter 5), the *Bèi*-construction (Chapter 11), double-object construction (Chapter 7), the double-subject construction (Chapter 10), the existential construction (Chapter 8), and nominal predicates (Chapter 9). The topic matters of all the chapters seem to be the non-canonical patterns of Chinese, with the canonical SVO sentence pattern absent. This is puzzling.

In addition, the sequence of chapters appears to be arbitrary, which leaves the impression that each construction seems to be dissociated with other constructions. In each chapter, the analysis of the particular construction mainly follows the same procedures: defining and delimiting the theme, critiquing relevant views, dissecting the construction into slots, classifying the construction into sub-types, and explaining the constructional meaning of each sub-type by resorting to cognitive resources.

The fundamental working principle is the widely-accepted cognitive position that difference in form corresponds to difference in meaning. The meaning differentiation is the most salient feature of this book. The subtlety of constructional meanings is teased out successfully. For instance, in the discussion of existential constructions, the author differentiates the meanings of two sub-types: *shì* (to be)-existentials and *yǒu* (to have)-existentials, in terms of the ground-figure alignment and the cognitive process of search effort. When the figure is readily identifiable in the ground, a *shì* (to be)-existential is preferable to *yǒu* (to have), because the search effort is reduced or eliminated. A *yǒu* (to have)-existential has the "what else" effect, "a ground-figure alignment expressed by means of a *yǒu* (to have)-existential could leave the hearer wondering if there is something else identifiable via that ground, apart from the figure, which the speaker has deliberately or unwittingly left unsaid" (p. 254). As native speakers of Chinese, we must feel excited to see how our unconscious intuition is brought into such an explicit consciousness. What a clever trick!

A language is viewed as "the structured inventory of conventionalized units" (Langacker, 2000, pp. 8–9). It is necessary to examine the inventory of the symbolic

units of Chinese. The coverage of this book shows that it is mainly focused on phrasal- and clausal-level constructions, other linguistic units, characters, lexical items, and discourse, do not receive due attention, although they are touched upon occasionally (e.g. the analysis of tense-aspect morphemes *zhe*, *le*, and *guo*, on p. 254). The operating principle between different levels of linguistic units are mapped onto each other. Clausal-level constructions reflect lexical combination (Cheng, 2003; Shi, 2004), as well as discourse organization (Shen, 2005). Diachronically speaking, "Today's morphology is yesterday's syntax" and "today's syntax is yesterday's discourse" (Givón, 1979). Synchronic and diachronic facts of morphology could be captured by measuring a morpheme in terms of how far it shifts from its lexical/historical origin in semantics, phonology and boundness (Li, 2014). The study of units under the clausal level should have its proper place in the grammar of Chinese. The author has announced his plan to take up these issues in the sequel (as mentioned on pp. 87, 357)

According to the author's self-report, this book is an emulation of *Cognitive English grammar* (CEG hereafter; Radden & Dirven, 2007), as manifested in the parallel between the titles. I also maintain that, for Chinese grammarians, the dream of China is to compose a counterpart of CEG. It is worth noting that the emulation or counterpart here is not in the sense of imitating rigidly, nor cutting Chinese feet to fit the shoes of English grammar framework. A Chinese grammar should ideally resemble its counterpart CEG by being alike in spirit. In CEG, English grammar is broken down to the strands of usages that are related to nouns, verbs, and clauses, and then the strands are assembled and threaded through a handful of cognitive process, such as "grounding" and "instantiation". The grammar constructed in this way turns out to be unified, organic, systematic, and natural. To construct a Chinese grammar of these features should be the joint goal of Chinese grammarians.

The other issue is how the inventory of linguistic units is structured. We need to show the schematicity of Chinese grammar in different levels. Interconnection among the symbolic units in the network could be established horizontally through category extension and vertically through categorization and instantiation. The top-level schema should be fleshed out with low-level constructions, and, reversely, the low-level ones should be schematized into high-level constructions with sufficient abstractness. In this book, an in-depth examination of low-level constructions is necessary but not sufficient. It would be better if the interconnection among the sub-constructions were explicated. It is also a major problem in the study of Chinese grammar that we produce a lot of beads, but fail to chain them up, or weave them into a network.

In Chinese grammar, what could be the threads that string the linguistic items together? There are numerous titles on the sentence patterns of Chinese, but each pattern is treated as a discrete and stand-alone type. Few would integrate them

into an interrelated system, except for Shi (2003), who proposes a system which is centered on "resultative structures". "Resultativeness" is definitely a fundamental concept that underlies most of Chinese constructions that denote a change of state, including Verb-*de*-constructions, *Bǎ*-constructions, and *Bèi*-constructions. However, "resultativeness" fails to capture the non-change processes.

The possible solution would be treating the clausal-level constructions as a radial category. According to Lakoff (1987, p. 463), a grammar is "a radial category of grammatical constructions, where each construction pairs a cognitive model with corresponding aspects of linguistic form". The category of clausal constructions is radially structured, with a central sub-category and many non-central sub-categories. Non-central clause structures are interconnected rather than discrete and isolated, because their form-meaning correspondence is motivated by their relation to central structures.

What clause patterns are considered central and basic? From a cognitive perspective, basic clause types reflect or mirror basic human experience. "In particular, constructions involving basic argument structure are shown to be associated with dynamic scenes, experientially grounded gestalts, such as that of […] someone causing something to move …" (Goldberg, 1995, p. 5). Therefore, we should begin with exploring what are the basic human experience in Chinese context, and map the basic experience onto clause patterns.

The non-central clause patterns can be considered an extension from the prototypical basic patterns through metaphors or other cognitive processes. Like conceptual metaphors, Event Structure Metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999) interact in the interpretation of utterances and explain similarity among different usage events. For example, in the sentence *Things went from bad to worse*, the working Event Structure Metaphor is: CHANGE IS MOTION (FROM ONE LOCATION TO ANOTHER). Similarly, the conceptualization of TOPIC IS CONTAINER and COMMENT IS CONTENT, can generalize over a number of Chinese-specific constructions, like possessives, double-subject constructions, existential constructions, and even verb-copying resultative constructions. As the individual metaphors in the Event Structure Metaphors work together, they thereby comprise a metaphorical system of grammar.

Methodologically, there are some additional options. For some issues, diachronic evolutionary evidence could be incorporated to enhance the current description and findings (e.g. the discussion of the "NP1+V+Ta+(Numeral) NP2" Template, on p. 220). In this book, the author relies on his native speaker's intuition to differentiate and describe the subtlety of construction meanings, a regular practice for grammar studies. Though there is nothing seriously wrong with this approach, introspection and artificial samples are gradually giving way to real life language uses (corpus data). Findings that are based on corpus data seem to be more reliable

and convincing. The author also makes several invitations to do corpus queries to seek for confirmation (pp. 267, 284, 327). A corpus search is especially helpful in providing extended contexts to explain some issues at the discourse level, which would be unexplainable in stand-alone sentences. In the sample sentence of *Bǎ*-construction (#48, p. 100), the seemingly indefinite pre-posed object *Yipin Jiang Doufu* ("a jar of fermented tofu") violates the constraint that the pre-posed object of Ba-construction is to be definite. According to the author's explanation, the NP *Yipin Jiang Doufu* ("a jar of fermented tofu") does not suggest brand-new information. It is actually partially old information since its referent is related to a pickle store mentioned in the preceding sentence. If the readers were given the preceding discourse and the source of this sentence, the explanation would be more convincing.

Although this book is intended to "amuse the intellect of fellow grammarians" (in the author's words), it is a serious academic work in the fullest sense, as well as an excellent text-book for learning Chinese.

It appears strange that a publisher in China would choose to publish a book on Chinese written by a Chinese author in English. This is the last choice for Chinese publishers, considering the risk of readership reduction. Obviously, the default choice of working language for the communication between Chinese writers and readers is Chinese. Few Chinese readers would choose to read an English book authored by a native Chinese speaker, unless they are compelled to do so. The major reason could be the lack of confidence in the readers' and authors' English proficiency. However, the author's choice of English as the language for *Cognitive Chinese grammar* appears to be well justified. The reason is three-fold. Firstly, the theoretical framework of this book, cognitive linguistics, is saturated with English jargons that have no Chinese equivalents. In other words, Chinese is probably not an appropriate language tool for theorizing (maybe this is a point of language superiority/inferiority). Secondly, English is a Lingua Franca, so an English version publication is more felicitous in the context of Chinese academics going international, despite the risk of losing domestic readership. However, my largest concern is the difficulty of making this book accessible to Chinese readers.

Thirdly, the author's command of English is commendable, as manifested in the wording and style of the book. Generally speaking, this book is written in a formal and rigorous style, given the abundance of long sentences and technical terms (many of which are Latin words). Besides, it also has the flavor of informality and humor, by employing idioms and metaphors in the discussion of grammar. For example, a "cheek-by-jowl" resultative (p. 129) is the nickname for the construction in which the verb and result element occur in an adjacent linear sequence. On another occasion, when discussing the relation between double-object constructions and *Bèi*-constructions, "lexical icing on yet another constructional cake" (p. 201) is used

to describe the fact that a double-object structure with a verb of deprivation can be rewritten as a *Bèi*-structure with the possessor (i.e. Object1 in the double-object construction) in the subject slot. This book contains numerous cases of innovative and instantial uses of idioms and metaphors. Indeed, the readers are amused.

In spite of occasional typos (e.g. the name of Pan Wenguo is mistaken as Pan Guowen on p. 369; the numerals in the running text of para.1, p. 251 mismatch those of the sample sentences enumerated on the previous page), the exquisiteness of this book is self-evident. It is definitely one of most important contributions to the academia of Chinese linguistics.

Acknowledgements

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