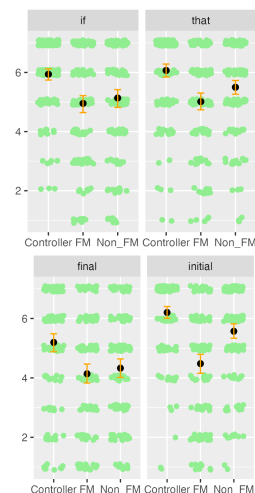


## EXTRACTION OUT OF MANDARIN CLAUSES: TOPIC VS. FOCUS

Ruihua Mao (Université Paris Cité), Anne Abeille (UPC) & Barbara Hemforth (UPC)  
[ruihua.mao@etu.u-paris.fr](mailto:ruihua.mao@etu.u-paris.fr)

One main issue in linguistic theory is constraints on long-distance dependencies (Ross, 1967). Adjunct clauses are supposed to block extraction (Huang, 1982). **Method:** Two Mandarin acceptability judgment experiments were conducted on IBEX. Exp1 crossed Focus-Status(Focus/Topic) and If-Clause-Position (Initial/Final). Exp2 crossed Focus-Status(Focus/Topic) and Clause-Type(if/that clause). Mandarin natives (36 for Exp1; 37 for Exp2) read sentence pairs and rated the second sentence on a 1-7 Likert scale, followed by yes/no comprehension questions (threshold 80% accuracy rate). **Predictions:**

**Processing approach:** shorter linear distance between the filler and the gap favors extraction out of in-initial adjuncts (Exp1), and predicts no differences between if-clauses and that-clauses (Exp2). **Syntactic approach:** higher structural distance with initial if-clauses might lower their acceptability in Exp1 (Haegeman,1994). Extractions from if-clauses should be rated worse than that-clauses in Exp2. **Discourse approach:** Exp1: Focus-Background Conflict Constraint (Abeillé et al., 2020) penalizes extraction of a focused element from a backgrounded constituent because there is a discourse conflict. If initial if-clauses are more backgrounded than final if-clauses, a bigger penalty for focusing out of initial if-clauses is predicted. For Exp2, a penalty for focus extraction out of if-clauses is predicted, if that-clauses are less backgrounded. **Results and Discussions:** Bayesian Analysis for **Exp1** shows a high probability for Focus-Marker effect (lower ratings in focused conditions), if-clause position effect (higher ratings in if-initial sentences), and an interaction (bigger difference between Focus and Topic in if-initial sentence), supporting the discourse approach. If-initial conditions showed significantly higher acceptability, which may be explained by shorter linear distance and frequency: Mandarin if-adverbial clauses usually precede matrix clauses, independently of whether they convey new/given information (Pan & Paul,2018). Results of **Exp2** show a high probability for FM effect (lower acceptability in focused conditions), no Clause-type effect and no interaction(no adjunct island). However, Mandarin if-clauses usually precede the matrix clauses, but if-clauses in Exp2 are if-final conditions, which may influence the results. Regarding the higher acceptability of non-FM extraction out of that-clauses, natives may interpret it as topic-comment structure. The obvious decrease in FM condition of that-clause (compared with non FM condition) may be because FM decreased the possibility of being interpreted as topic-comment structure.



**Ref:** [1]Abeillé et al., Cognition 2020; [2] Huang, Logical Relations in Chinese and the Theory of Grammar 1982; [3] Pan & Paul, The syntax of complex sentences in Mandarin Chinese 2018; [4] Ross,Constraints on Variables in Syntax,1967

**Example items:** Exp1:(±Shi) zheben shu, ta hui feichang gaoxing, ruguo ta renzhen yuedu.  
 (±FM) this-CL book, he will very happy, if she carefully read  
 (±Shi) zheben shu, ruguo ta renzhen yuedu, ta hui feichang gaoxing.  
 (±FM) this-CL book, if she carefully read he will very happy  
 Exp2: (±Shi) zheben shu, ta feichang gaoxing ta renzhen yuedu le.  
 (±FM) this-CL book, he very happy she carefully read-ASP  
 (±Shi) zheben shu, ta hui feichang gaoxing, ruguo ta renzhen yuedu.  
 (±FM) this-CL book, he will very happy, if she carefully read