



Department of  
Linguistics and Modern Languages

語言學及現代語言系

# Revisiting the Typology of Equation Constructions: Perspectives from Mandarin

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The Chinese University of Hong Kong

**Date:** October 29, 2024 (Tuesday)  
**Time:** 4:30pm - 6:15pm (Hong Kong Time, UTC +8)  
**Venue:** Room 101, Leung Kau Kui Building,  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong



## Abstract

This talk revisits a typological generalization regarding equatives and similatives: languages using a parameter marker (PM) to explicitly express equality in specific equatives (e.g., the first "as" in "John is as tall as Mary") tend not to use PMs in generic equatives ("John is tall like a mountain") or manner similatives ("John danced as Mary did"). Mandarin Chinese appears to be an exception to this pattern, as both equatives and similatives are constructed using PMs such as "yi-yang" and "na-yang." This talk presents novel syntactic, semantic, and phonological evidence to argue that the use of "na-yang" in generic equatives and similatives systematically differs from "yi-yang" in specific equatives. A formal compositional analysis of two equation modes will be proposed, demonstrating how the conceptual distinction between the equation of degrees and the equation of eventuality-kinds is consistently reflected in linguistic forms.

## Speaker

Dr. Yenan Sun is an assistant professor in the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She is interested in semantics, pragmatics, and their interface with syntax, with a particular focus on aspect, degree, and discourse structure. Her research adopts a cross-linguistic perspective and utilizes both theoretical and experimental methodologies. Dr. Sun's work has been published in renowned journals including *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* and *Journal of East Asian Linguistics*, and has been presented at conferences such as the *Amsterdam Colloquium*, *Sinn und Bedeutung*, and the *Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society*.

All Are Welcome

Enquiries

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