



香港中文大學  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

# The fine architecture of the DP-shell in Chinese

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## Abstract

This talk provides evidence for *de* in the nominal projection as a functional head, with the NP following *de* as its complement. Given Bare Phrase Structure Theory (cf. Chomsky 1995) where the label of a category is its head, this implies that the projection headed by *de* is a DeP: [<sub>DeP</sub> XP [<sub>De'</sub> *de* NP]]. As a consequence, the sequence 'XP *de* Ø' is not a headless NP, but a complementless DeP.

The central claim of the present proposal is that *de* instantiates different heads within the extended nominal projection, among them light *n* and D, thus accounting for the possibility of more than one *de*. An immediate consequence of this claim is that the feature make-up of *de* is not completely identical in all cases, but partly depends on its position in the hierarchy of the extended nominal projection as well as on the nature of the XP in its specifier (cf. Adger & Svenonius (2011, sect. 2.3) for the variability of (second order) features). This approach incorporates basic insights of previous studies (cf. among others Simpson 2001, 2003; Li 2007, Tang 2007, Cheng & Sybesma 2009, Larson 2009, Huang/Li/Li 2009, Zhang 1999, 2010; Lu & Pan 2013), but avoids their major shortcoming, which consists in extending to all cases of XPs an account working for a subset of XPs only. The often tacit implications of these rejected analyses are spelt out in detail, with special emphasis on why and where they are not compatible with the overall syntax of Chinese.

Importantly, the proposed analysis results in a mixed head directionality for the extended nominal projection in the SVO language Chinese, viz. a head-initial D(e)P with a head-final NP complement: [<sub>DeP</sub> XP [<sub>De'</sub> *de* NP]]. This is also the case for the extended nominal projection in the SOV language Japanese, thus showing that Chinese is not an isolated case. Accordingly, contrary to the current practice in large scale crosslinguistic comparisons such as the *World Atlas of Languages* (cf. [wals.info](http://wals.info)), one cannot conflate NP and DP and invoke the head-final nature of NP/DP for Chinese, but must distinguish between the functional layer(s) and the lexical domain of nominal projections in order to obtain meaningful results.

## Speaker

Waltraud PAUL is a senior researcher at the French National Center for Scientific Research (*Centre national de la recherche scientifique*, CNRS) and affiliated to the *Centre de recherches linguistiques sur l'Asie orientale* (CRLAO), Paris. Her main interest is the syntax of modern Mandarin, with occasional excursions into the diachronic syntax of Chinese. She has worked extensively on a large variety of subjects in Chinese syntax: topic, focus, clefts, split CP, double object construction, verb gapping, adjectival modification, DP, serial verb construction etc. Her recent book *New perspectives on Chinese syntax* (De Gruyter, 2015) is a summation of her research over the past twenty years and sets out to demystify Chinese; it places controversial issues in the context of current syntactic theories and offers precise analyses based on a large array of representative data. (For downloadable articles, cf. her website at: <http://crlao.ehess.fr/index.php?177>.)

With Guido Vanden Wyngaerd, she served as interim editor-in-chief of the new open access journal *Glossa* (<http://www.glossa-journal.org>) in November and December 2015 and ensured the transition from Elsevier's *Lingua*, after *Lingua*'s complete editorial team had resigned. She is now associate editor of *Glossa* and member of the *ad hoc* committee (with Guido Vanden Wyngaerd and the editor-in-chief Johan Rooryck) during the first year of *Glossa*.

**ALL ARE WELCOME**

Enquiries

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