NP interpretation and disposal variations among the Mandarin, Cantonese, and Shaoxing dialects

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Corresponding to the Ba construction (S Ba-OVC) in Mandarin, Cantonese prefers a strong SVCO word order, and the Shaoxing dialect adopts an SOVC variation. This paper makes a detailed cross-linguistic study on the structure and semantic interpretations of disposal NPs and highlights the role of the disposal NPs in the formation of disposal construction in the above three dialects. It suggests that the word order variations in disposal constructions among the Mandarin, Cantonese, and Shaoxing dialects result from the different options being adopted to make the object NPs conform to the so called definiteness constraint of a disposal NP, namely, definite, specific, or generic.

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