Semantic constraint on preposition incorporation of postverbal locative PPs in Mandarin Chinese

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Other than subcategorized argument locative PPs (e.g. 放在桌子上 fàng zài zhūōzǐ-shàng ‘put on the table’), the postverbal position in Modern Mandarin Chinese can only be filled by limited types of adjunct locative prepositional phrases (e.g. 跳在桌子上 tiào zài zhūōzǐ-shàng ‘jump onto the table’). Among these postverbal adjunct locative PPs, only a small set of PPs permits the incorporation of the preposition into the preceding verb to form a V-P compound (“preposition incorporation”), yielding their previous prepositional object to surface as the object of the compound verb V-P. Previous studies claim that adjunct phrases which quantize an event, such as event delimiters, may behave like arguments (“the delimiter hypothesis”). Yet, our observations find that adjunct locative PPs that are not event delimiters (e.g. directional 向 xiàng/往 wǎng ‘toward’ PPs or non-directional 在 zài ‘at’ PPs) can also allow their prepositional object to appear as the verbal object. This thus calls for a modification of the widely-accepted delimiter hypothesis. We argue that the semantic characterization of the postverbal locative PPs permitting PI can be generalized as being associated with the denotation of a scalar result. Specifically, we understand result from the perspective of scale structure proposed in recent studies and argue that in addition to delimiting an event (that is, introducing a closed scale to the event from the scalar perspective), such PPs can also either add directional information (an open scale) to the event that they modify, or further specify scalar information for the event denoted by the VP. This work not only provides a unified analysis of most types of preposition incorporation that involve the postverbal locative PPs in Mandarin Chinese, but is also the first study that provides a comprehensive analysis of the scalar properties and functions of Chinese locative PPs. Our findings from the Chinese data will also contribute to the cross-linguistic semantic generalization of internal adjuncts and the domain of extended direct case assignment.

**Keywords:** postverbal locative PP, scale, internal adjunct, added argument, preposition incorporation, result, event delimiter, word order

https://doi.org/10.1075/lali.00030.pec
ISSN 1606-822X / E-ISSN 2309-5067 © John Benjamins Publishing Company