
'Think' or 'Want': The Syntax and Semantics of Mandarin *Xiang*.

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The Mandarin Chinese verb *xiang* is usually considered as a hybrid attitude predicate that can mean both 'think' and 'want' as in (1). In this talk, I will also show a third clause-embedding use of *xiang* with an epistemic prospective interpretation such as in (2), which has not been noticed in the previous literature.

- (1) Zhangsan *xiang* Lisi renshi Wangwu.
Zhangsan xiang Lisi know Wangwu.
'Zhangsan **thinks** Lisi knows / **wants** Lisi to know Wangwu.'
- (2) Jintian *xiang* xiayu.
today xiang rain
'It seems to be going to rain today.'

I adopt Grano & Lu's (2021) proposal that the meaning of *xiang* is underspecified while arguing against their treatment of *xiang* as an underspecified attitude that takes the embedded proposition as a modifier. Instead, I suggest that *xiang* denotes an underspecified modal taking the proposition as its direct argument. Since the 'think' reading of *xiang* is also compatible with interrogative complements just as English *think*, I assume that *xiang* selects a set of propositions P as in (3a). The underspecified modal can be specified as three distinct readings: *xiang_{desire}*, *xiang_{think}* and *xiang_{prospect}* as in (3b)-(3d) depending on the context. For the readings 'think' and 'want', I further assume that the attitude holder and the attitude event are extra introduced via the Experiencer (EXP) operator (4).

- (3) a. $\llbracket xiang \rrbracket = \lambda P \lambda e. \text{MOD}(P)(e)$
b. $\llbracket xiang_{desire} \rrbracket = \lambda P \lambda e. \exists p: P = \{p\}. \forall w' \in \text{DESIRE}(e): [p(w') = 1]$
c. $\llbracket xiang_{think} \rrbracket = \lambda P \lambda e. \forall w' \in \text{THINK}(e): [\exists p. p \in P \wedge p(w') = 1]$
d. $\llbracket xiang_{prospect} \rrbracket = \lambda P \lambda e. \exists p: P = \{p\}. \exists w' \in \text{PROSPECT}(e): [p(w') = 1]$
- (4) $\llbracket \text{EXP} \rrbracket = \lambda x \lambda e. \text{ATTITUDE}(e) \wedge \text{EXP}(x)(e)$ (Bogal-Allbritten 2017)

I will also show that there are hierarchical factors in the matrix/complement clause (MC/CC) that may influence the interpretation of *xiang*. For example, aspect markers in the CC often lead to the 'think' reading, suggesting that the 'want' reading prefers a smaller CC (cf. Grano & Lu 2021), but if the matrix predicate *xiang* is negated or modified with a degree adverb such as 'much', the 'think' interpretation is blocked, and the reading is shifted again to 'want'.

References: • Bogal-Allbritten, Elizabeth (2017). Basic pieces, complex meanings: Building attitudes in Navajo and beyond. Talk at DGfS 2017. • Grano, Thomas & Lu, Chan (2021). Mandarin *xiang* and the architecture of attitude reports. Talk at LSA 2021.