The Typology of Chinese in Talmy's Verb-framed vs Satellite Framed Languages

FUYIN LI

Beihang University(BUAA)

Suying LI

Beihang University(BUAA)

Abstract: Talmy proposed that languages fall into two types on the basis of where the semantic component of PATH is conflated in a Motion event. In his bifurcation, if the PATH is characteristically represented in the main verb of a sentence, the language is verb-framed, if it is characteristically represented in the satellite of the verb; the language is satellite-framed. In this framework, Chinese falls into Satellite-framed languages. It was argued by other studies suggesting that Chinese does not neatly fit either category. Slobin (2004) proposed a third category of equipollently-framed languages. In this three category typology, Chinese falls into "equipollently framed" languages. This paper intends to make a comprehensive exploration on corpus based data of serial verbs in Chinese, examining their 1) main verb properties; 2) satellite properties; 3) PATH constituent conflation characteristics, in an attempt to delineate a clearer picture for the typological status of Chinese language.