On *Shi … De* Construction in Mandarin Chinese

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Abstract

In discussing *shi … de* construction, Cheng (2008) argues that *shi* is a copula just like *be* in English, and following Moro (1997), she claims that the construction involves a small clause structure underlyingly. As for *de*, she takes it as a marker of the assertion operator. However, the present thesis shows that this analysis by Cheng has quite a few problems. To be more specific, the thesis points out empirical flaws in Cheng's analysis of focus reading associated with sentences that are said to have *shi … de* construction. It also shows inappropriateness of extending Moro's reverse predication analysis, which is based on Italian data, to sentences that contain *shi* and *de* in Mandarin Chinese. Arguments from statistical data and logical deduction are provided for the purpose of illustrating these weaknesses of Cheng's analysis.