

## Processing non-canonical order

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The current talk presents a judgement study (n=120) in two Chinese varieties: Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese. Participants were asked to rate on the web-based platform Ibox Farm the naturalness of the written stimuli without preceding discourse context. The 3x2 experimental design crosses Order (active vs. passive vs. preposed) and Animacy (animate vs. inanimate) of the agent. (1) is a stimulus example in Cantonese, the same surface linear order is shared by Mandarin Chinese:

- (1) a. Active (Cantonese)
- |          |           |                        |          |
|----------|-----------|------------------------|----------|
| aa-baak/ | naau-zung | giu-sing-zo            | naam-zai |
| old-guy/ | alarm     | awake-ASP <sup>1</sup> | boy      |
- ‘The old guy awoke the boy.’
- b. Passive
- |          |         |                   |             |
|----------|---------|-------------------|-------------|
| naam-zai | bei     | aa-baak/naau-zung | giu-sing-zo |
| boy      | passive | old-guy/          | a alarm     |
- ‘The boy was awoken by the old guy.’
- c. Preposed
- |            |                   |                 |
|------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| nam-zaai(, | aa-baak/naau-zung | giu-sing-zo     |
| boy        | old-guy/          | alarm awake-ASP |
- ‘The boy, the old guy awoke.’

In both Cantonese and Mandarin, active and passive orders were rated similarly to be around 5 on the Likert scale of 1 to 7 (1 means the least natural, and 7 the most). No effects of animacy was found.

The preposed order was rated around 2 in both Cantonese and Mandarin, when there was no comma following the preposed patient; however, the comma improved the ratings of the preposed order in Cantonese by around .8 but it reduced the ratings in Mandarin by around .4.

Further statistical analyses will be run to reveal the additional effects of Comma and Variety/Language.

The results suggest that the preposed order in (1c) might be parsed differently in the two Chinese varieties, and the question of how this particular order is realised in sentence production was raised.

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<sup>1</sup> The abbreviation ASP here stands for ‘aspect marker’.