The puzzles of Mandarin *mei-dou* co-occurrence

Zeqi Zhao

University of Göttingen
zeqi.zhao@uni-goettingen.de

Mandarin *mei* and *dou* have been considered as lexical counterparts of English *every* and *all*. However, they behave semantically more complicated than prototypical universal quantifiers or distributor. One long-standing puzzle is *mei*-NPs in pre-verbal positions seem to require the presence of *dou*.

(1) a. *mei-ge   haizi *(dou) hui jia   le*
         every-CL kid   DOU   go   home ASP

         'Every kid went home.'

     b. Every kid (*all) went home.

The fact that Mandarin allows *mei-dou* co-occurrence challenges the standard generalized quantifier analysis. This motivates the idea to treat *dou* as an alternative sensitive operator that is truth-conditionally vacuous (Liu 2017; Xiang 2020). The obligatory presence of *dou* with *mei* could thus be explained by pragmatic principles (*Maximize Presupposition* account in Liu 2017). In this talk, I will argue that this approach suffers from various theoretical problems and fails to predict the cases where the presence of *dou* with *mei* makes truth-conditional differences.