

The University of Pittsburgh ~ Department of
Linguistics
Colloquium Series *Presents:*

“dou-(dis)harmony in Chinese”

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My dissertation studies the semantics of the particle *dou* in Chinese. *Dou* is generally taken to be a universal/distributor of some kind, roughly parallel floated *all* as it is in [They all bought a car]. However, there are contexts where *dou* is used but their English equivalents never use *all* and where *dou* seems to go beyond its role as a universal/ distributor. My thesis explores in some depth three such contexts: *dou*-(dis)harmony, *dou* in focus structure and free choice *dou*, concluding in favor of the ambiguity view: *dou* is ambiguous between distributivity and scalarity. Moreover, I propose that these different uses of *dou* have to do with a presupposition that accompanies *dou*.

In this talk, I will focus on *dou*-(dis)harmony issue. It is well known that *dou* co-occurs with quantifiers in Chinese. For instance, the Chinese equivalent of English sentence [Everyone bought a car.] is [Everyone *dou* bought a car.], a phenomenon I call *dou*-harmony. However, *dou* also shows what I call *dis*harmony effect when co-occurring with other quantifiers as in [Some people **dou* bought a car.]. Previous analyses attempted to seek an answer to this puzzle from the perspective of NPs. But I argue that this approach is not adequate. I show that this problem can be handled more satisfactorily from the perspective of *dou*.

Friday, January 23, 2009 at 3:00p.m.

Room G8 ~ Cathedral of Learning