Abstract: In this lecture, I discuss the empirical behavior of the adverbial use of 好 hǎo '(lit.) good', 老 lǎo '(lit.) old', and 怪 guài '(lit.) strange' in Mandarin Chinese. These adverbs form a small yet theoretically interesting class. Because they manifest certain similarities to canonical degree adverbs like 很 hěn 'very' and 非常 fēicháng 'extremely', in the descriptive linguistics literature they have been generally treated as pure degree adverbs. Empirical evidence shows, however, that these adverbs actually fuse together degree and expressivity. For instance, they convey strong emotions on the part of the speaker, and cannot appear in such contexts as negation, modals, questions, and antecedents of conditionals. Based on the empirical behavior of these adverbs, I propose an analysis by incorporating degree semantics into a multidimensional logic for conventional implicature.

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