



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE FOR CHINESE STUDIES

ICS presents the "China in Transition" Lecture Series

Degree Intensifiers as Expressives in Mandarin Chinese

Friday, September 2, 2016

4:00-5:30 pm

115 Mendenhall Laboratory

125 S Oval Mall



Zhiguo Xie, Assistant Professor

Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures
The Ohio State University

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 ante-

cedents 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.

Bio: Zhiguo Xie is Assistant Professor of Chinese in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures at the Ohio State University. His research primarily focuses on Chinese syntax, semantics, and syntax-semantics interface. He has worked on such topics as questions, modals, and degree expressions. His articles appeared on *The Linguistic Review*, *Journal of East Asian Linguistics*, *Studia Linguistica*, *Language and Linguistics*, and so on.

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Contact: Nathan Lancaster | East Asian Studies Center | lancaster.102@osu.edu | <http://easc.osu.edu>