**Nandao-Questions as a Special Kind of Rhetorical Questions**

**Introduction.** This paper addresses the syntax and semantics of a special kind of Rhetorical Questions (RQs) in Mandarin, i.e. questions with *nandao* “hard-say” (*nandao*-Q). *Nandao*-Qs necessarily have rhetorical question readings (1, 2). To derive this, I propose that *nandao* is a WH-word which takes a question denoting a single proposition and turns it into a set with the complement proposition. This analysis differs significantly from earlier proposals for deriving RQ meanings as asserting the negation of the proposition denoted by its IP (cf. Sadock [1], Han [2], a.o.).

**The Distribution of Nandao in Mandarin.** First, *nandao* cannot appear in direct declarative sentences (3) nor can it be embedded in [-wh] verbs, e.g. *xiangxin* “believe”, which requires a declarative clause as its complement (4). Secondly, *nandao* cannot appear in A-not-A kind of Y/N-Qs (5). Although *nandao* can appear in (2) which has a WH-word (*shui* “who”) in it, I claim that these are not true WH questions. In Mandarin, many WH-words can have indefinite pronoun interpretations including *shui* “whoever”, *shenme* “whatever”, and so on (cf. Li and Thompson [3]). But there is one WH-word which doesn’t have an indefinite pronoun interpretation, i.e. *weishenme* “why”. Any interrogative sentence with *weishenme* will be a true WH-Q where *nandao* cannot appear (6). Such incompatibility suggests: (2) is not a WH-RQ, but a Y/N-RQ with indefinite WH-word; *Nandao* cannot transfer WH-Q into WH-RQ. The other piece of evidence is found in the distribution of question particles in Mandarin. There are two types of question particles. One is designated for Y/N-Qs including *me* and *ma*. The other type is designated for WH-Qs including *ne* (cf. ibid.). The Q particle *ma* in (2) shows that it is a Y/N-RQ but not a WH-RQ. The incompatibility of *nandao* and *ne* again shows that *nandao* is incompatible with WH-Qs (7).

**The Syntax and Semantics of Nandao.** Guerzoni [4] and George [5] assume there is a covert *whether* or *Q* operator in direct Y/N-Qs. They both mirror the meaning of *whether* or *Q* operator from the semantics of other WH-words. Both of them treat *whether/Q* operator to denote an existential quantifier ranging over the two polarities (positive/negative) [4] or the two truth values (1/0) [5]. Unlike *whether/Q* operator, *nandao* can only exhibit a negative meaning. With this spirit, I propose that in *nandao*-Qs, there is no covert *whether* in SpecCP, and the SpecCP will be filled by *nandao*. The semantics of *nandao* is given in (8) and a compositional analysis of (9) is given in (10). In (10), at CP, *nandao* denotes an existential quantifier to range over only the negative truth value, which makes the proposition denoted by IP be false. This key step reverses the polarity of the question nucleus denoted by IP. And abstraction over *h* makes the complement proposition be the only member of the answer set.

**Explanations of Mandarin Data.** The syntax and semantics of *nandao* suggests that *nandao* be a WH-word with [+wh] feature. So, it cannot appear in declaratives or be embedded under [-wh] verbs. The incompatibility of *nandao* with WH-Qs is due to the fact *nandao* and other WH-words (e.g. *shui*) cannot occupy the same SpecCP. The explanation of incompatibility of *nandao* and A-not-A Y/N-Qs is rather a semantic one. I show in (11) and (12) that a logical clash is responsible for such incompatibility. In the talk, I will also address the possibility of an analysis of A-not-A questions in terms of Alternative Questions and explore the viability of a semantic explanation for the incompatibility of *nandao* and WH-Qs.

**Conclusion.** Denoting a set of singleton answer, *nandao*-Qs confirm what we know about RQs: they are interrogative in form but assertive in force. The analysis of *nandao* given here
explains its interesting distributional patterns. It also locates the switch from question to assertion in the meaning of nandao: if the set of possible answers is necessarily a singleton, the nandao-Qs cannot represent a state of uncertainty that ordinary questions do. In the talk I will further argue that the present proposal derives the RQ effect in a simpler way than the one proposed by Han [2].

(1) Nandao Nandao Zhangsan bu xiang chuqun wan (me)?
    [Hard-say Zhangsan doesn’t want to go out to play] Q
    “Doesn’t Zhangsan want to go out to play?”
    (=Zhangsan wants to go out to play.)
(2) Nandao Nandao shui bang-guo ni (ma)?
    [Hard-say who helped-EXP you] Q
    “Who helped you?”
    (=No one helped you.)

(3) *Nandao *Nandao Lisi hui lai.
    [Hard-say Lisi will come] Q
    “Lisi will come.” (♯Lisi will not come.)
    (=Zhangsan believes that Lisi will come.)
(4) Zhangsan xiangxin (*nandao) Zhangsan hui lai.
    [Zhangsan believe hard-say Lisi will come] Q
    “Lisi will come.” (♯Lisi will not come.)

(5) *Nandao *Nandao Zhangsan chi mei chi fan?
    [Hard-say Zhangsan eat not eat rice] Q
    “Did Zhangsan have meal or not.”
(6) *Nandao *Nandao Zhangsan weishenme qu xuexiao?
    [Hard-say Zhangsan why go school] Q
    “Why does Zhangsan go to school?”
    ((Intended but n/a) There is no reason for
    Zhangsan to go to school.)

(7) Nandao shui bang-guo ni ma/#ne?
    [Hard-say who help-EXP you] Q
    “Who helped you?” (=No one helped you.)

(8) [(nandao)]=λQ,λh,λr[Q(r=0)
    h=λw’(Q(w’)(r))]

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