

## On Mandarin Potential Complement Constructions

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In this paper, we adopt the framework of Construction Grammar (CG) to discuss the potential complement (PC) constructions, and investigate the types, structures, meanings, and semantic constraints of PC constructions in Mandarin. Taking a corpus-based approach and taking type/token frequency into consideration, we claim that the central meaning of the PC is “GOAL-achieving”. The results show that there are two kinds of PC constructions. One is “GOAL-achieving” PC construction, which expresses “the potential of achieving the goal by carrying out the action”. The other subtypes of PC constructions are related to the main type via polysemous or instance links. The semantic constraints of the construction include “volitionality of the agent” and “predictability of result”. The other kind of PC construction is “MIDDLE-type” (Adjectival) PC construction, which describes the trait of the theme, the trait that is responsible for the result of the action.

Key words: potential complement constructions, Construction Grammar, Mandarin, potential complement “V de/bu C”

