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In Mandarin Chinese, there are three typical locative constructions, which show both semantic similarities on the one hand and syntactic disparities on the other. Two of the three constructions are related in that they involve the same restricted set of verbs. The canonical locative construction has the locative NP in the sentence-initial position and the theme NP in the postverbal position, and the inverse locative construction has the theme NP in preverbal position with the locative NP coming after the verb. The third locative construction, in which both the theme NP and the locative NP turn up in preverbal positions s with the former preceding the latter appears with a rather liberal selection of verbs.

- (1) Keting-(li) zuo/*chang/*han-zhe yi-ge ren.
livingroom-(inside) sit /sing /shout-ASP one-CL person
'In the livingroom is sitting/*singing/*shouting a person.'
- (2) Na-ge ren zuo/*chang/*han zai keting-(li).
that-CL person sit Loc livingroom-(inside)
'That person is sitting/singing/shouting in the living room.'
- (3) Na-ge zai keting-(li) zuo/chang/han-zhe.
that-CL Loc livingroom-(inside) sit/sing/shout-ASP
'That person is sitting/singing/shouting in the living room'

_____ The fact that verbs s select whether they can appear with the different constructions shows that canonical locative construction and inverse locative construction are inherently related but the third locative construction may stand apart. Previous studies on locative constructions either only compare canonical construction and inverse construction or only compare canonical construction and the third construction; no work has ever systematically put all the three constructions together for a systematic analysis.

This paper takes into consideration the three locative constructions all together and argues s that in both canonical and inverse locative constructions, the theme NP and the locative NP are arguments s of the verbs, which are restricted to verbs denoting manner of existence. The third locative construction splits into two subtypes: in the first type, the locative NP and the theme NP are both arguments s of the verb but in the second type the locative NP is not the argument of the verb but an adjunct.

The theoretical analysis of these constructions is developed in the Dynamic Syntax framework (Kempson *et al* 2001; Cann *et al* 2005). In capturing the constraint on the canonical and locative constructions, the lexical action triggered by scanning *zai*, which is assumed to project a metavariable with a particular entailment, plays an important role. On the basis of a principled account of the three locative constructions, the paper concludes by focussing on the lexical properties of the verb *you*, which has both possessive and locative readings s, and explains s why *you* is a typical locative verb that does not allow argument alternation.