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SLA of Mandarin Nominal Syntax: Early Stages

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Outline

- Structures studied: nominals, sentences
- Processability: Theory & Methodology
- PT account of Mandarin emergence order
- Evaluation
 - Only partial success
- An alternative
 - Emergent Functional Grammar
- Conclusions
 - Contributors to processing demands

Nominal structures

Pronoun	wo, nimen etc	我, 你们
Noun	hua, shu, haizi	画, 书, 孩子
Incorporated Locative	hubian	湖边
'Adj'-N	da shu	大树
Poss 0 (Affine)	wo mama	我妈妈
de (Poss/Gen)	nide hua	你的画
de (Att)	riben de shouyinji	日本的收音机
de (Loc)	shu de houbian	树的后边
de (Adj)	hen da de zixingche	很大的自行车
de (RC)	da zuqiu de ren, ta chang de ge	达足球的人 他唱的歌
Num-Class N	yi ben shu	一本书
Dem-Class N	na zhang zhuozi	那张桌子

Sentence structures

SVO	<i>tā hěn piàoliàng</i>	她很漂亮
ADV/PP 1 st	<i>míngtiān wǒ qù dàxué.</i>	明天我去大学
	<i>wǒ zài tūshūguǎn kàn shū.</i>	我在图书馆我看书
Top	<i>wǒ Bēijīng méi qù</i>	我北京没去
	<i>biéde wǒ dōu bú zhīdào</i>	别的我都不知道
Ba	<i>Tā bǎ xìn jìle</i>	他把信寄了
Aspect		
1. Experiential	<i>wǒ qù-guò Bēijīng</i>	我去过北京
2. Progressive	<i>Zhèngzài kàn shū</i>	正在看书

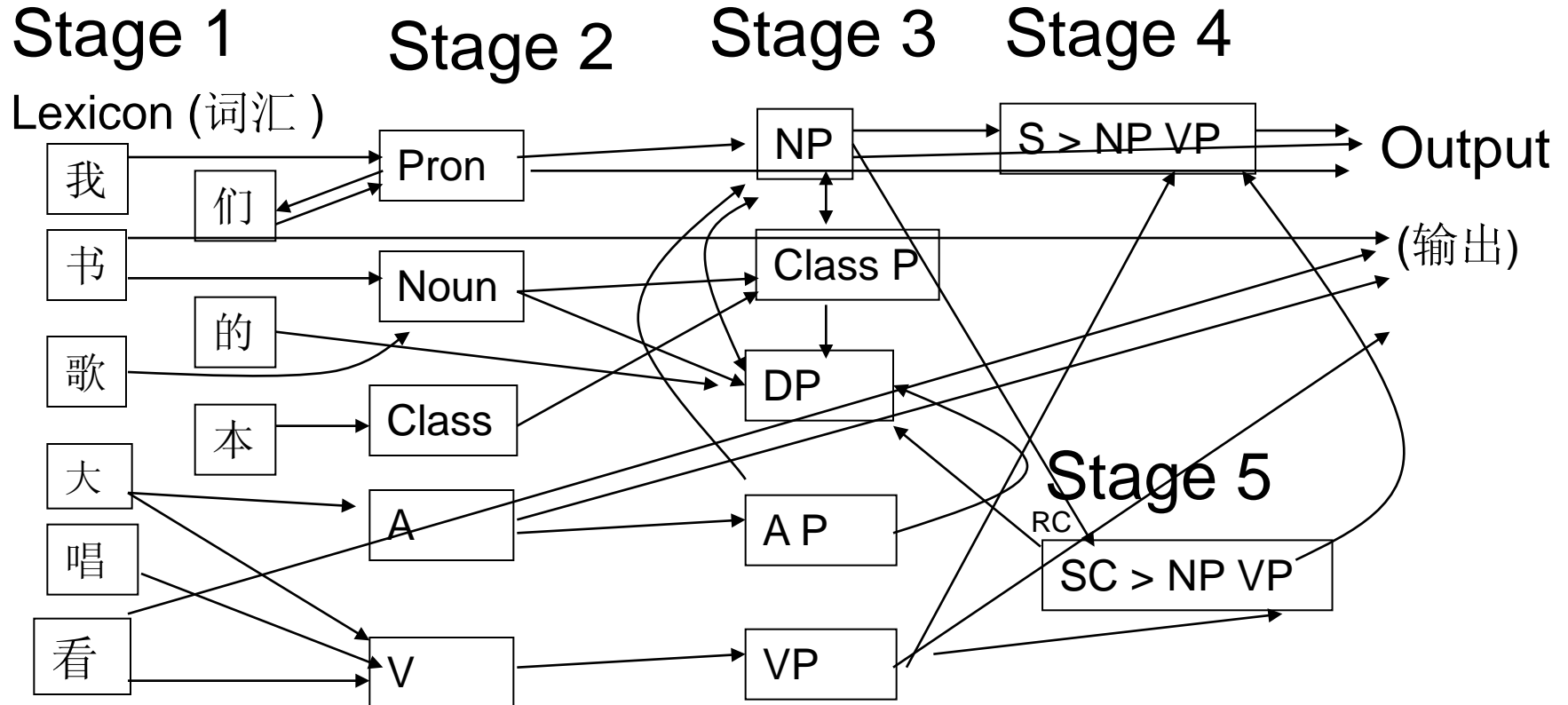


Processability Theory (PT)

- Thinking for speaking (Levelt, 1989)
 - Lexical concepts activate lemmas
 - Lemmas encode syntactic information and link meanings to forms
 - Word forms compete: the best match wins
- Incremental Procedural Grammar (Kempen & Hoenkamp 1987)
 - Distinct procedures for each constituent type
 - Parallel processing
 - Output from one procedure feeds second procedure
- Lexical Functional Grammar (Bresnan, 1987)
 - Words in a structure share information (features)
 - Compatible features = Acceptable structures (unification)

Procedural Grammar

Conceptual content (概念内容)



Developmental Stages: Predictions

Morphology

1. 'Lemma': no variation in form
wo 我; *ni* 你; *hubian* 湖边
2. Bound 'Lexical' morphs & function words
women 我们, 三个
3. Agreement *within* phrase
ben本 ~shu 书
4. Agreement *between* phrases
[他们][互相]了解
5. Complementiser
? 跑得谁都找不到[]

Syntax

1. Basic Alignment: 主题 = 主词
我喜欢汉语
2. Categorical: (词类)
Pron (代) vs N (名)
3. Phrasal (词组): modifier-head
[我爸爸] [三个书]
[三-本书]
4. S-procedure Marked order:
汉语我喜欢[]
Subordinate clauses (从句)
她唱[]的歌很好听



Methodology

- Unplanned spoken output
- Elicitation targets key structures
- All output analysed (TL-like or not)
- Emergence criterion (2+ tokens)
- Tests for productivity (variability in tokens)
- Longitudinal (direct observation of order)
- Implicational scaling (co-occurrence)

Results 1(PT)

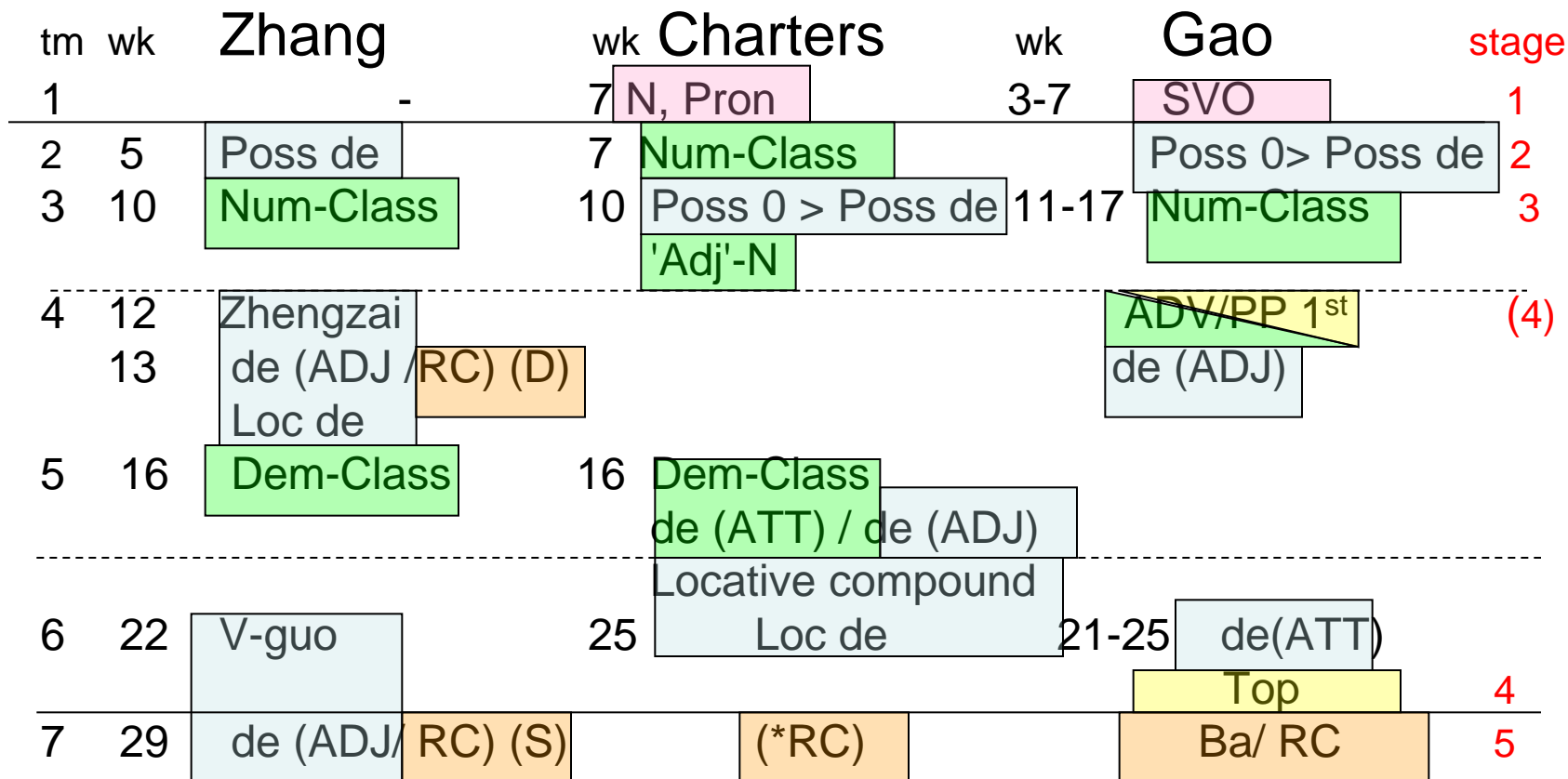
1 lemma

2 category

3 phrasal

4 simple S

5 inter-phrasal





Evaluation of PT account

- What works?
 - Emergence order broadly similar in all studies,
 - Structures emerge in 5 rough steps
 - The stage 5 RC is late (or fails to emerge)
- What doesn't work?
 - PT's Stages 2 ,3 and 4 are not clearly distinct.
 - Stage 2 structures continued to emerge throughout
 - Locative de and V-guo are very late.
 - Same structures group differently
 - Ba and topicalisation emerged alongside RC.



Zhang on De

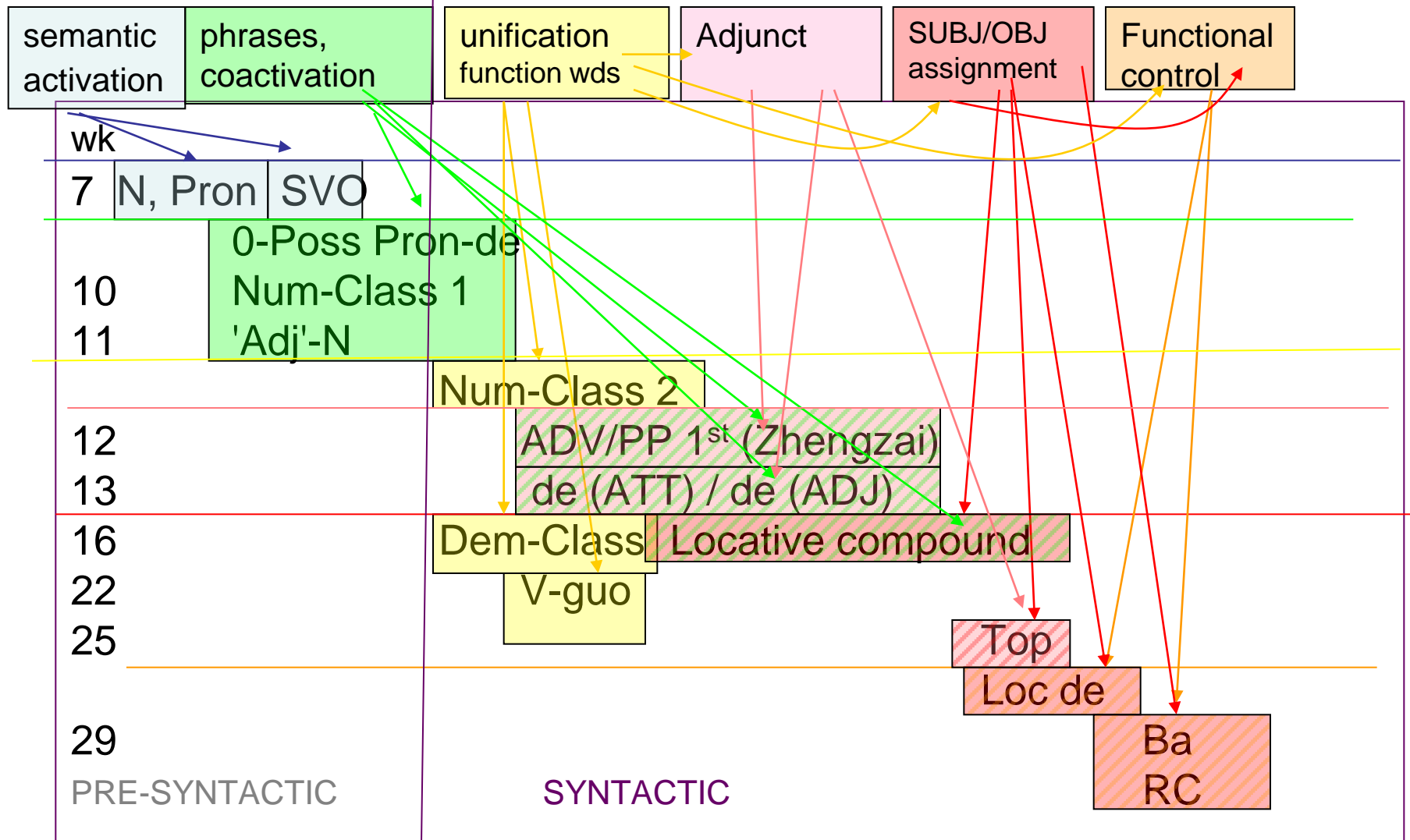
- Stage 2 (lexical morphs)
 - de GEN (possessive N de N)
 - de (Att) (non-possessive N de N)
 - de (Adj) ('Adj' N)
 - "their insertion does not involve any feature unification with other constituents"
- Stage 5
 - de (RC) Clause de N
 - 'Syntactic and semantic information of the RC and the head noun is exchanged *via the particle 'de (RC), making it an inter-phrasal morpheme as the information transfer occurs across phrasal boundaries between a clause and a noun.*
 - 'de' *'represents the head noun* in that it nominalizes the RC'; it is 'related to the within-clause function (or gap) on the one hand, and the head noun on the other.



Charters on De

- Stage 1
 - Possessive suffix
- Stage 3
 - Function word creating De P
 - Introduces an Adjunct Function (modifier)
 - 'Adj' introduces no *syntactic* function, freely fills adjunct slot
- Stage 5
 - Function- linking in DeP:
 - RC - V and Locative Noun introduce Grammatical Functions (SUBJ-OBJ)
 - These must be formally linked to ADJUNCT GF.

Emergent Functional Grammar





Emergent Functional Grammar

- Early processing is semantic
 - Two lemmas may access one categorial procedure: compounds like *hubian*
 - Two lemmas may be activated by the same concept with no comparison in syntax: classifier and noun
- Structure building precedes agreement
 - Two unmarked words combine in a phrase, with *semantic* restrictions
 - Unmarked 'possession'
- Grammaticalisation *reduces* semantic restrictions
 - De supports all modifier types
- BUT it brings processing costs
 - Formal GFs require syntactic checking processes

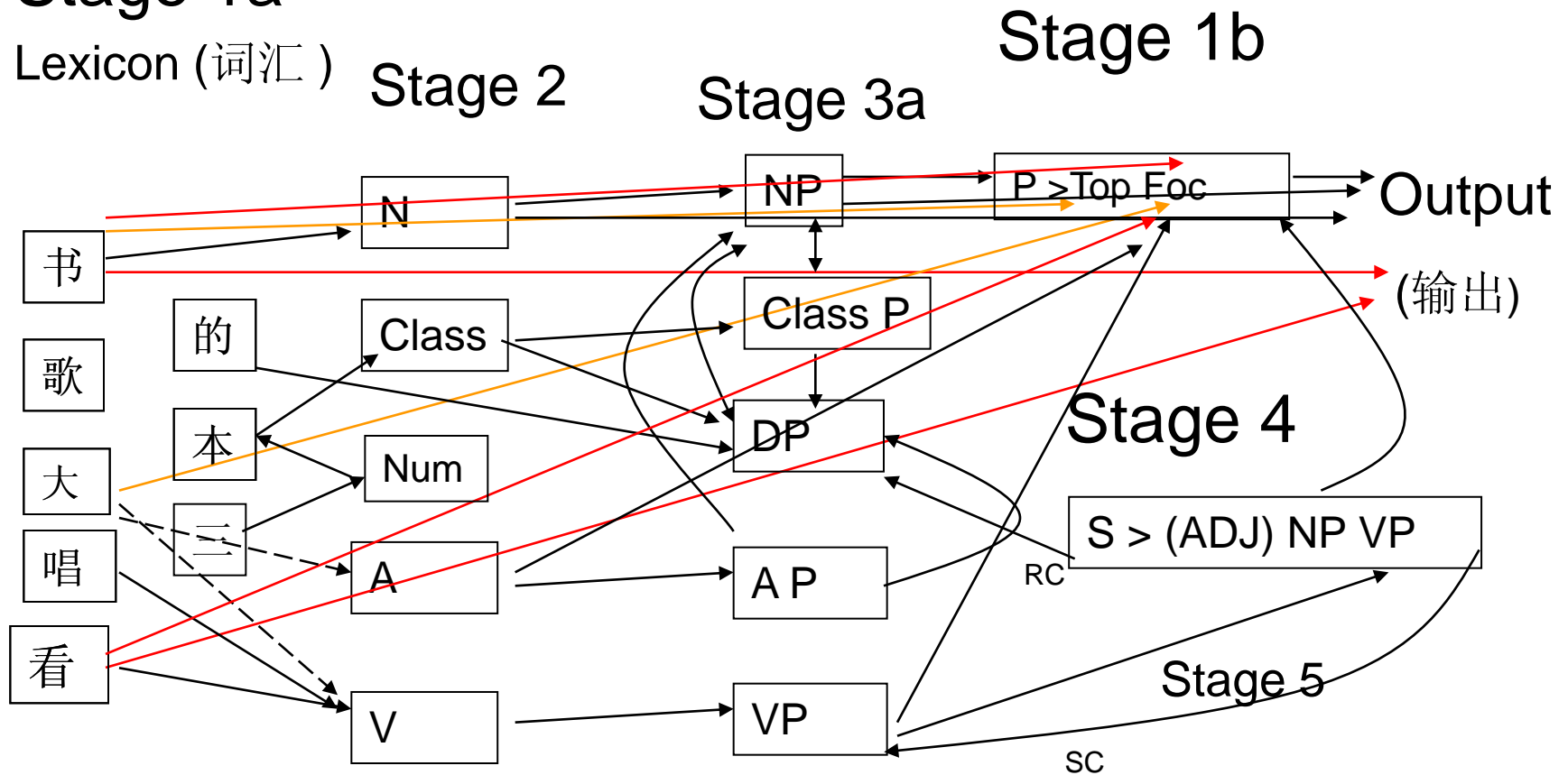
The END

Development in EFG

Conceptual content (概念内容)

Stage 1a

Lexicon (词汇)



Allocation to stages

Morphology

1. 'Lemma': no variation in form
wo 我; *ni* 你; *houbian* 后边
2. Bound 'Lexical' morphs & function words
wode 我的 *sange* 三个
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RC

(20) *wǒ mǎi ___ de shū hěn piányí.*

(I buy _ *de* book very cheap

The book I bought is cheap)

FOCUS [PRED 'SHU']

SUBJ [PRED 'WO']

OBJ []

PRED 'MAI <(SUBJ)(OBJ)>'

- Zhang (2001)