Profilng Chinese Cause-effect Constructions with *rang* (讓), *shi* (使) and *ling* (令) Using Frame Semantic Features

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Abstract. This behavioural profiling (BP) study examines the use of *rang* (讓), *shi* (使) and *ling* (令) as three ways to express cause-effect relationships. The study investigates the intricate semantic variation of *rang*, *shi* and *ling* through analysing 103 contextual features (ID tags) that characterize the collocational, lexical semantic and frame semantic environment of the near-synonyms. Instead of using an out-of-the-box BP design, we present a modified approach to profiling that includes a range of frame semantic features that aims to better capture variation of slot fillers of the three constructions and their relation to clause structure. Our data set consists of around 100,000 data points based on the annotation of 1002 sentences of written Chinese. The BPs of each nearsynonym are compared using multidimensional scaling and hierarchical cluster analysis. The results show that *rang*, *shi* and *ling* are each characterised by a combination of distinctive features and how different feature types contribute to setting the near-synonyms apart based on their usage patterns. Methodologically, this study illustrates how behavioural profiling can be modified to include frame semantic features in accordance with the method’s emphasis on producing empirically verifiable results and how these features can aid a comparative analysis of near-synonyms.

Keywords: behavioural profiling · construction grammar · frame semantics · near-synonymy · cause-effect constructions