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## Hierarchical Structures of Vague Quantity Quantifiers

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This study investigates syntactic accounts for the “indeterminate” interpretation triggered by particular linguistic expressions. Mandarin-Chinese is the target language in this study; on the one hand, there are particular linguistic ‘items that are responsible for expressing *Vague* quantity (see (1)), on the other hand the sequence “[one+classifier]” can trigger a *Abundance* reading with certain contextual restrictions. The potential abundance reading from [one+classifier] challenges the previous analyses that classifiers are “singularising tools”. Together with the *Vague-Quantity* quantifiers, this study claims an extra syntactic head responsible for hosting the *Vague-quantity* expressions as well as the probing for classifiers that can denote “plural” meaning.

(1) Da-Liang De Xue-Sheng  
*Big-Quantity Mod students*  
‘A lot of students’ (Intended Reading)

(2) Yi-dui sha-zi  
*One-heap (CL) sand*  
‘One heap of sand/ heaps of sand.’ (Intended Reading)

Generally put, there are classifiers that are merged at higher position, which are interpreted as *Singularising tools* and they are incompatible with *Abundance* reading, we call such a position-“*Singular Portion Phrases*” Also, there are classifiers that are compatible with gradable adjectives such as “big” “good”, and they can denote a meaning of *a large quantity*, which accounts for a syntactic layer below the *Singular-PortionP*, in this study we call it “*Mass-Portion Phrase*”. *Mass-PortionP* also hosts the *Vague* quantity quantifier such as the case shown in (1), but compared to abundance-denoting classifiers, *vague* quantity quantifiers obligatorily require a portion marker-*de*, we account for the difference via the different quantificational processes. Therefore, the general sketch can be drawn (see below)

