

The Syntactic Category of (ba)

Mandarin Chinese (ba) participates in several frequently discussed grammatical constructions. However, the syntactic category of *ba* is controversial. This paper evaluates previous proposals for *ba* as a preposition, verb, or functional head. I claim that *ba* can be a causative verb or a topic marker, depending on the construction it is a part of.

Ba constructions all follow one of the two surface forms given in (1-2), with the X representing a resultative complement or an aspect particle – for example, the perfective aspect particle *le* in (3b) or the complement *na ge yang* („that way) in (4) (Li 2006). The most prevalent *ba*

