Topicality and Differential Object Marking in Mandarin Chinese

Pei-Jung Kuo National Chiayi University

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INTRODUCTION

- In this talk I discuss the differential object marking in Mandarin Chinese.
- Yang and van Bergen (2007): BA is a kind of differential object marking in Mandarin Chinese.

The BA construction

- S-V-O
- (1)Zhangsan mai-le <u>zhe-ben shu</u>. Zhangsan sell-ASP this-Cl book 'Zhangsan sold this book.'
 - S-0-V
- (2)Zhangsan **ba** zhe<u>-ben shu</u> mai-le. Zhangsan BA this-CL book sell-ASP

The [±specificity] and [±animacy] exhibition

(3)

- a. Zhangsan (ba) shu/zhe-ben shu shuai-chuqu-le. Zhangsan (BA) book/this-CL book throw-out-ASP 'Zhangsan threw the book/this book away.'
- b. *Zhangsan ba yi-ben shu shuai-chuqu-le. Zhangsan BA one-CL book throw-out-ASP 'Zhangsan threw a book away.'

(4)

- a. Zhangsan *(ba) Lisi shuai-chuqu-le. Zhangsan *(BA) Lisi throw-out-ASP 'Zhangsan threw Lisi away.'
- b. *Zhangsan ba yi-ge ren shuai-chuqu-le. Zhangsan BA one-CL person throw-out-ASP 'Zhangsan threw a person away.'

Major Claim:

- Two more constructions:
 - The verb copying construction
 - The transitive V-O compound verb construction
- Differential object marking in Mandarin Chinese is only observable with preposed objects inside the vP/TP domain.
- That is, differential object marking is corelated with internal topicalization in Mandarin Chinese.

o The roadmap:

- The verb copying construction and the transitive V-O compound verb construction
 - ∘ The [±specificity] and [±animacy] exhibition
- The shared property internal topicalization
 - o similarity and difference
- Comparison with external topicalization

THE VERB COPYING CONSTRUCTION

- Li and Thompson (1981), Huang (1982), (1984), Gouguet (2006), Fang and Sells (2007), Cheng (2007), Hsu (2008), Tieu (2009) and so on
- (5) Zhangsan **qi** ma **qi** de hen quai. Zhangsan ride horse ride DE very quick 'Zhangsan rode the horse very fast.'

Proposal: The copied verb is not a verb, but a kind of differential object marking.

- Tsao (1987b): The copied verb is not a verb.
 - Aspect marker
 - A-not-A question

(6)

- a. Zhangsan qi-le/zhe/guo ma.
 Zhangsan ride-ASP horse
 'Zhangsan rode/is riding a horse.'
- b. *Zhangsan qi-le/zhe/guo ma qi-de hen kuai. Zhangsan ride-ASP horse ride-DE very fast

(7)

- a. Zhangsan qi-bu-qi ma? Zhangsan ride-not-ride horse 'Does Zhangsan ride horses?'
- b. *Zhangsan qi-bu-qi ma qi-de hen kuai? Zhangsan ride-not-ride horse ride-DE very fast

 The [±specificity] and [±animacy] exhibition

(8)

- a. Zhangsan (fan) shu/zhe-ben shu
 fan-de hen yong-li.
 Zhangsan (flip) book/this-CL book
 'Zhangsan flipped the book/this book very hard.'
- b. *Zhangsan fan yi-ben shu fan-de hen yong-li.
 Zhangsan flip one-CL book flip-DE very hard.
 'Zhangsan flipped a book very hard.'

(9)

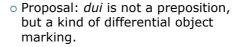
- a. Zhangsan *(ti) Lisi ti-de hen yong-li. Zhangsan *(kick) Lisi kick-DE very hard 'Zhangsan kicked Lisi very hard.'
- b. *Zhangsan ti yi-ge ren ti-de hen yong-li.
 Zhangsan kick one-CLperson kick-DEvery hard
 'Zhangsan kicked Lisi/*one person very hard.'

THE TRANSITIVE V-O COMPOUND VERB CONSTRUCTION

 V-O compound verbs (Li and Thompson 1981, Chang et al. 1988, Paul 1988, Tang 1988, C.-R. Huang 1989, Mo 1990, Her 1997 and so on)

(10)

- a. Zhangsan hen guan-xin Lisi. Zhangsan very care Lisi 'Zhangsan cares Lisi a lot.'
- b. Zhangsan **dui** Lisi hen guan-xin. Zhangsan to Lisi very care



 Comparison to a semi-transitive V-O compound verb whose object is introduced by a real preposition:

 The semi-transitive V-O compound verb kai-dao (lit. open knife)

(11)

- a. *Yi-sheng kai-dao Dongni. doctor operate Tony 'The doctor operated on Tony.'
- b. Yi-sheng [gei Dongni] kai-dao. doctor to Tony operate 'The doctor operated on Tony.'

Movement

- (12) [dui Kaite], Dongni hen guan-xin. to Kate Tony very care 'Tony cares about Kate a lot.'
- (13) *[gei Dongni], yisheng mingtian kai-dao to Tony doctor tomorrow operate 'The doctor will operate on Tony tomorrow.'

o Omission

- (14) Kaite, Dongni hen guan-xin. Kate Tony very care 'Tony cares about Kate a lot.'
- (15) *Dongni, yisheng mingtian kai-dao Tony doctor tomorrow operate 'The doctor will operate on Tony tomorrow.'

The [±specificity] and [±animacy] exhibition

(16)

- a. Zhagnsan (dui) shi/zhe-jian shi hen guan-xin.
 Zhangsan (to) matter/this-CL matter very care
 'Zhangsan cared about the matters/this matter a lot.'
 b. *Zhagnsan dui yi-jian shi hen guan-xin.
- b. *Zhagnsan dui yi-jian shi hen guan-xin. Zhangsan to one-CLmatter very care 'Zhangsan cared about a matter a lot.'

- a. Zhangsan *(dui) Lisi guan-xin. Zhangsan *(to) Lisi very care 'Zhangsan cared Lisi a lot.'
- *Zhangsan dui yi-ge ren hen guan-xin. Zhangsan to one-CL person very care 'Zhangsan cared a person a lot.'

THE COMMON PROPERTY -INTERNAL TOPICALIZATION

 External topicalization in Mandarin Chinese (see Li and Thompson 1981, Liu 1997, Bender 2000 and many others):

- (18) a. Gou/Zhe-zhi gou, Zhangsan xihuan. hen like
- dog/this-CL dog Zhangsan very like 'Zhangsan likes dogs/this dog very much.' b. *Yi-zhi gou, Zhangsan hen xihuan. one-CL dog Zhangsan very like 'Zhangsan likes a dog very much.'

o Internal Topicalizaiton in Mandarin Chinese:

- Tsao (1987): the BA NP is a topic
- Paul (2002, 2005) and Hsu (2008): the preposed NP between the subject and the verb is a internal topic
- o The preverbal objects in these three constructions exhibit the same properties as the external topic.

The BA construction

(19)

- a. Zhangsan (ba) shu/zhe-ben shu shuai-chuqu-le. Zhangsan (BA) book/this-CL book throw-out-ASP 'Zhangsan threw the book/this book away.'
- b. *Zhangsan ba yi-ben shu shuai-chuqu-le. Zhangsan BA one-CL book throw-out-ASP 'Zhangsan threw a book away.'

o The verb copying construction

- a. Zhangsan (fan) shu/zhe-ben shu fan-de hen yong-li. Zhangsan (flip) book/this-CL book flip-DE very hard 'Zhangsan flipped the book/this book very hard.'
- b. *Zhangsan fan yi-ben shu fan-de hen yong-li. Zhangsan flip one-CL book flip-DE very 'Zhangsan flipped a book very hard.'

o The transitive V-O compound verb construction

- a. Zhagnsan (dui) shi/zhe-jian shi hen quan-xin. matter/this-CL matter very care Zhangsan (to) 'Zhangsan cared about the matters/this matter a lot.'
- b. *Zhagnsan dui yi-jian shi hen guan-xin. one-CLmatter very Zhangsan to 'Zhangsan cared about a matter a lot.'

THE DIFFERENCE 1/2

- o The syntactic domain:
 - ullet BA and the BA NP is in the vP domain.
 - The object NPs in the verb copying construction and the transitive V-O compound construction can be higher than the νP domain.
- o Interaction with modals:
 - Tsai (2010): deontic modals in Mandarin Chinese mark the vP periphery.



The BA construction

(22) Zhangsan (bixu) ba zhe-jian shi Zhangsan must BA this-CL matter (*bixu) zuo-wan. must do-finish 'Zhangsan must finish this matter.'



(23) Zhangsan (bixu) qi na-pi ma Zhagnsan must ride that-CL horse (bixu) qi de hen quai. must ride DE very fast 'Zhangsan must ride that horse very fast.'



The transitive V-O compound verb construction

(24) Dongni (bixu) [dui Kate] (bixu)
Tony must to Kate must
duo guan-xin yi-dian.
much care one-point
'Tony must care about Kate more.'

THE DIFFERENCE 2/2

- The formation of internal topics:
 - The BA construction: base-generation or movement
 - The verb copying construction: basegeneration (Cheng 2007)
 - The transitive V-O compound verb construction: movement

The BA construction

(25)

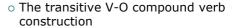
- a. Zhangsan mai-le <u>yi-ben shu</u>. Zhangsan sell-ASP one-Cl book 'Zhangsan sold a book.'
- b. Zhangsan **ba** <u>yi-ben</u> <u>shu</u> mai-le. Zhangsan BA one-CL book sell-ASP
- (26) Zhangsan **ba** zhi-men ti-le yi-ge dong. Zhangsan BA this-door kick-ASP one-CL hole 'Zhangsan kicked a hole on the paper door.'

o The verb copying construction

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(27)
a. K = [vP ride [deP de very fast ]]
b. L = [NP (that) horse]

(28)
a. K = [vP ride [deP de very fast ]]
b. M = [vP ride [NP (that) horse]]

(29) [[vP ride [NP (that) horse]] [vP ride [deP de very fast ]]
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(30)

- a. Zhangsan hen guan-xin Lisi. Zhangsan very care Lisi 'Zhangsan cares Lisi a lot.'
- b. Zhangsan **dui** Lisi hen guan-xin. Zhangsan to Lisi very care

o The external topic

- (31) Meiguihua, wo hen xi-huan. rose I very like 'I like roses a lot.'
- (32) Hua, wo zui xi-huan meiguihua. flower I most like rose 'As for flowers, I like roses most.'

THE TP INTERNAL-ONLY RESTRICTION

- The differential object marking is not available in external topicalization.
 - The object in the transitive V-O compound verb construction can become external topics as well.
 - There is no [±specificity] and [±animacy] differences for external topics.

The transitive V-O compound verb construction

(33)

- a. (dui) Kaite, Dongni hen guan-xin. to Kate Tony very care 'Tony cares about Kate a lot.'
- b. (dui) zhe-jian shi, Dongni hen guan-xin. to this-CL matter Tony very care 'Tony cares about Kate a lot.'

CONCLUSION

- In this paper I discuss the phenomena of differential object marking in Mandarin Chinese.
- The DOM phenomena can be observed in the BA construction, the verb copying construction, and the transitive V-O compound verb construction respectively.

- The shared syntactic property of these three constructions and the DOM phenomena is internal topicalization.
- \circ This then echoes the observations in García García (2005) for Spanish, Gustsetseg (2009) for Mongolian, Dalrymple and Nikolaeva (2011) for Tundra Nenets (Uralic) and Tigre.

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Thank you for your attention!