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-O-V
  (1) Zhangsan mai-le zhe-ben shu.
  Zhangsan sell-ASP this-CL book
  ‘Zhangsan sold this book.’
- S-V-O
  (2) Zhangsan ba zhe-ben shu mai-le.
  Zhangsan BA this-CL book sell-ASP

The [±specificity] and [±animacy] exhibition

(3)
     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.’

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 correlated with internal topicalization in Mandarin Chinese.
The roadmap:
- The verb copying construction and the transitive V-O compound verb construction
- The [+specificity] and [+animacy] exhibition
- The shared property – internal topicalization
  - similarity and difference
  - Comparison with external topicalization

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

The [+specificity] and [+animacy] exhibition

THE VERB COPYING CONSTRUCTION


(5) Zhangsan qi ma qi de hen quai.
Zhangsan ride horse ride DE very quick
‘Zhangsan rode the horse very fast.’

(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

(8) 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 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-CL person kick-DE very hard
‘Zhangsan kicked Lisi/*one person very hard.’
THE TRANSITIVE V-O COMPOUND VERB CONSTRUCTION


(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

Proposal: **dui** is not a preposition, but a kind of differential object marking.

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 open knife Tony 'The doctor operated on Tony.'

   doctor to Tony operate 'The doctor operated on Tony.'

Movement

(12) [dui Kate], 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.'

Omission

(14) Kate, 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.
   Zhangsan to one-CL matter very care
   'Zhangsan cared about a matter a lot.'
   Zhangsan *(to) Lisi very care
   ‘Zhangsan cared Lisi a lot.’
   b. *Zhangsan dui yi-ge ren hen guan-xin.
   Zhangsan to one-CL person very care
   ‘Zhangsan cared a person a lot.’

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

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 hen xihuan.
    dog/this-CL dog Zhangsan very like
    ‘Zhangsan likes dogs/this dog very much.’
   b. *Yi-zi gou, Zhangsan hen xihuan.
    one-CL dog Zhangsan very like
    ‘Zhangsan likes a dog very much.’

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

○ The BA construction

    Zhangsan (BA) book/this-CL book throw-out-ASP
    ‘Zhangsan threw the book/this book away.’
   b. *Zhangsan ba yi-ben shu shuai-chu-qu-le.
    Zhangsan BA one-CL book throw-out-ASP
    ‘Zhangsan threw a book away.’

○ The verb copying construction

(20) 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 hard
    ‘Zhangsan flipped a book very hard.’

○ The transitive V-O compound verb construction

(21) a. Zhangsan (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. *Zhangsan dui yi-jian shi hen guan-xin.
    Zhangsan to one-CL matter very care
    ‘Zhangsan cared about a matter a lot.’
THE DIFFERENCE 1/2

- The syntactic domain:
  - 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 vP domain.

- Interaction with modals:
  - Tsai (2010): deontic modals in Mandarin Chinese mark the vP periphery.

The verb copying construction

(23) Zhangsan (bixu) qi na-pi ma
    Zhangsan 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: base-generation (Cheng 2007)
  - The transitive V-O compound verb construction: movement

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.’

(25)
  a. Zhangsan mai-le yi-ben shu
     Zhangsan sell-ASP one-CL book
     ‘Zhangsan sold a book.’
  b. Zhangsan ba yi-ben shu mai-le,
     Zhangsan BA one-CL book sell-ASP
     ‘Zhangsan bought a book.’

(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.’
The verb copying construction

(27)

a. K = [waride [ω de very fast]]
b. L = [ω (that) horse]

(28)

a. K = [ω ride [ω de very fast]]
b. M = [ω ride [ω (that) horse]]

(29) [(ω ride [ω (that) horse]) [ω ride [ω de very fast]]]

The transitive V-O compound verb construction

(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

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 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.’

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.

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.

This then echoes the observations in García García (2005) for Spanish, Guntsetseg (2009) for Mongolian, Dalrymple and Nikolaeva (2011) for Tundra Nenets (Uralic) and Tigre.

SELECTED REFERENCES


Thank you for your attention!