

A Generalized Ditransitive Analysis of Split Affectivity in Mandarin Chinese

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Abstract

This study provides an analysis for the derivation of two kinds of Mandarin affective constructions which involve the ditransitive morpheme *gei* ‘give’: *give*-affectives as in (1), and *with*-affectives as in (2), following Tsai’s (2017) terminology. What characterizes *give*-affectives lies in an affective relation between an affective subject prior to *gei* and an affecting event posterior to *gei*, while what is special about *with*-affectives has to do with an extra argument introduced by *gei*. Interestingly, these two types of affectives have variant forms. *Give*-affectives like (1) have the passive *bei*-counterpart as shown in (3), and *with*-affectives like (2) have the disposal *ba*-counterpart as shown in (4).

To account for these affective forms, we adopt Lin & Huang’s (2015) “generalized ditransitive analysis” and assume the structure in (5) for Mandarin ditransitive *gei* sentences. According to this analysis, *gei* is a ditransitive verb which may select an NP, a VP or an IP as its complement, and the outer internal argument has the semantic role of Recipient, undergoing the property of the inner internal argument which is transferred by *gei*. Lin & Huang also point out that “the different uses of *gei* arise from the interplay of several factors, including its core property of ditransitive verb, the syntactic structure in which it occurs, the kind of complement it takes, and the semantics of the elements that occur with it” (*ibid.*: 309-310).

In this study, we propose that *gei* in *give*-affectives takes an IP complement. In this case, *gei* may either undergo V-to-v movement as in (6a) or stay in situ as in (6b). In the latter, the light verb slot can be, depending on the intended semantics, realized by inserting the passive morpheme *bei*. This *give*-affective structure is interpreted like this: the event of his running away is allowed by the passivity of the null subject, who does nothing to prevent from the event from happening.

On the other hand, *gei* in *with*-affectives takes a VP complement. In this case, *gei* also has two possible ways to go: either undergo V-to-v movement as in (7a) or stay in situ as in (7b). In the latter, the light verb slot can be, depending on the intended semantics, realized by inserting the disposal morpheme *ba*. This *with*-affective structure is interpreted like this: the subject *ta* ‘he’ performs the action of running, and this eventive property is, due to the occurrence of the ditransitive verb *gei*, transferred to the Recipient *wo* ‘me,’ thus causing the Recipient to be affected.

Under our proposed analysis, *give*-affectives and *with*-affectives differ crucially in that the former involve an IP complement selected by *gei* and fall into a bi-clausal structure, while the latter involve a VP complement selected by *gei* and fall into a mono-clausal structure. We now offer evidence in support of this analysis. First, the unacceptability of (8b) can be well explained if the sentence is taken to be bi-clausal as illustrated in (8d). Here we see that the empty pronominal is not coindexed with the closest nominal element, and this violates the Generalized Control Rule (GCR), proposed by Huang (1984). In contrast, (8c) is well-formed because the pronominal in this sentence is not empty but spelt out as a resumptive pronoun, thus immune to the GCR.

Second, the anaphoric pattern of (9a) may receive a satisfactory explanation if the sentence is considered mono-clausal on a par with serial verb constructions. As demonstrated in (9b), which involves serial verbal constituents, the binding should be local; otherwise, the Binding Principle A would be violated. The same state of affairs is observed in (9a), where the anaphor *ziji* ‘self’ is locally bound in its mono-clausal domain. Furthermore, in (10), the problematic use of the coreferential pronoun is due to the fact that the pronoun is not locally free in this mono-clausal structure, violating the Binding Principle B.

Data

- (1) Zhe-ci juran **gei** ta pao-le! (*give*-affective)
this-time unexpectedly give he run-Perf
‘This time (we have to) endure his running away unexpectedly!’
- (2) Zhe-ci ta juran **gei** wo pao-le! (*with*-affective)
this-time he unexpectedly give me run-Perf
‘This time he ran away on me unexpectedly!’
- (3) Zhe-ci juran **bei** ta **gei** pao-le!
this-time unexpectedly BEI he give run-Perf
‘This time (we have to) endure his running away unexpectedly!’

- (4) Zhe-ci ta juran ba wo **gei** pao-le!
 this-time he unexpectedly BA me give run-Perf
 ‘This time he ran away on me unexpectedly!’
- (5) [_{VP} NP *gei*_i [_{VP} NP_{RECIPIENT} *t*_i {NP/VP/IP}]]
- (6) a. [_{VP} NP_k *gei*_i [_{VP} NP_j *t*_i [_{IP} Op_k [_{IP} *t*_k PRO_j VP]]]]
 b. [_{VP} NP_k *bei* [_{VP} NP_j *gei* [_{IP} Op_k [_{IP} *t*_k PRO_j VP]]]]
- (7) a. [_{VP} NP *gei*_i [_{VP} NP *t*_i [_{VP} VP]]]
 b. [_{VP} NP *ba* [_{VP} NP *gei* [_{VP} VP]]]
- (8) a. Zhe-ci jingcha juran **gei** sharenfan taopao-le!
 this-time police unexpectedly give murderer run.away-Perf
 ‘This time the police endured the murderer’s running away unexpectedly!’
 b. * Sharenfan_i, zhe-ci jingcha juran **gei** *t*_i taopao-le!
 murderer this-time police unexpectedly give run.away-Perf
 c. Sharenfan_i, zhe-ci jingcha juran **gei** ta_i taopao-le!
 murderer this-time police unexpectedly give he run.away-Perf
 d. Sharenfan_i jingchak *t*_j [_{IP} PRO_j VP]
- (9) a. Zhe-ci ta_i juran **gei** wo pao-duan-le ziji_i-de tui!
 this-time he unexpectedly give me run-break-Perf self-DE leg
 ‘This time he ran and broke his leg on me unexpectedly!’
 b. Zhangsan_i bu xiang qipian ziji_i.
 Zhangsan not want deceive self
 ‘Zhangsan does not want to deceive himself.’
- (10) Zhangsan_i juran **gei** wo da-le ta-ziji_i-de/*ta_i-de xiaohai!
 Zhangsan unexpectedly give me beat-Perf he-self-DE/he-DE child
 ‘Zhangsan beat the child of himself/*him on me unexpectedly!’

References

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