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► **To cite this version:**

| Hilary Chappell. From Eurocentrism to Sinocentrism. 2006. halshs-00180702

**HAL Id: halshs-00180702**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00180702>**

Preprint submitted on 19 Oct 2007

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# From Eurocentrism to Sinocentrism: the case of object marking constructions in Sinitic languages

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*This article treats the diversity of object marking or ‘disposal’ constructions in Sinitic languages, considering the mismatch between language type and grammar design. These constructions are used to highlight an affected referential object, typically corresponding to accusatively case-marked nouns in inflectional languages. The discussion begins with a brief description of early Spanish grammars of Chinese languages, based on a Greco-Latin model and progresses from the problems of Eurocentrism to those of Sinocentrism, based on the new model of the prestige language, standard Mandarin. The main analysis concentrates on the historical sources and range of syntactic configurations for disposal constructions in seven main Sinitic languages, particularly with respect to an emerging typology. Paradoxically, Standard Mandarin turns out not to be an ideal choice as typologically representative of Sinitic.*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The issue

Although China has a long tradition in the compilation of rhyme dictionaries and lexica, it did not develop its own tradition for writing grammars until relatively late.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the majority of early grammars on Chinese dialects, which begin to appear in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, were written by Europeans in collaboration with native speakers. For example, the *Arte de la lengua Chiō Chiu* [Grammar of the Chiō Chiu language] (1620) appears to be one of the earliest grammars of any Sinitic language, representing a koine of urban Southern Min dialects, as spoken at that time (Chappell 2000).<sup>2</sup> It was composed by Melchior de Mançano in Manila to assist the Dominicans’ work of proselytizing to the community of Chinese Sanglely traders from southern Fujian. Another major grammar, similarly written by a Dominican scholar, Francisco Varo, is the *Arte de le lengua mandarina* [Grammar of the Mandarin language], completed in 1682 while he was living in Funing, and later posthumously published in 1703 in Canton.<sup>3</sup>

Spanish missionaries, particularly the Dominicans, played a significant role in Chinese linguistic history as the first to record the grammar and lexicon of vernaculars, create romanization systems and promote the use of the demotic or specially created dialect characters. This is discussed in more detail in van der Loon (1966, 1967). The model they used was the (at that time) famous Latin grammar of Elio Antonio de Nebrija (1444–1522), *Introductiones Latinae* (1481), and possibly the earliest grammar of a Romance language, *Grammatica de la*

*Lengua Castellana* (1492) by the same scholar, although according to Peyraube (2001), the reprinted version was not available prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Not surprisingly, the Nebrija grammars were indirectly influenced by even earlier Greek models (for more detailed discussions, see Breitenbach 2001, Mair 1997 and Peyraube 2000, 2001).<sup>4</sup>

Since a Greco–Latin model is one that is evidently designed for highly inflectional languages, it is not surprising to find standard chapters in missionary grammars include the topics of verb conjugations with accompanying abundant description of tenses: the pluperfect preterite, the future, the infinitive and the subjunctive; also declination of nouns and pronouns, including features of case, gender and number. Consequently, information is not always presented economically or concisely. For example, in the 1620 *Arte de la lengua Chiō Chiu*, complete verb conjugations are given for the verb *lāy* ‘to come’ in Southern Min for both the present and the perfect, even though the forms remain invariable. The ‘paradigm’ in (1) presents the typical case in the Sinitic taxon where the description of aspect and resultative phase markers would in fact be more appropriate for verb morphology than tense (see Chappell 1992a):

Table 1: *Arte de la lengua Chiō Chiu* [Grammar of the Chiō Chiu language] (1620: 11)

Spanish romanization	Chiō Chiu characters	17 <sup>th</sup> century Spanish translation and English
<i>guà lāy</i>	我來	— ‘I come’
<i>lu lāy</i>	汝來	<i>tu bienes</i> ‘you (sg) come’
<i>y lāy</i>	伊來	<i>aquel biene</i> ‘that one comes’
<i>guàn lāy</i>	阮來	<i>nosotros benemos</i> ‘we come’
<i>lūn lāy</i>	恁來	<i>vosotro benis</i> ‘you (pl) come’
<i>in lāy</i>	因來	<i>aquellos bienen</i> ‘those ones come’

The same situation obtains in Varo’s grammar for conjugating the verb *gái* 愛 ‘to love’ [contemporary Mandarin *ài*] in the Nanjing-based Mandarin koine of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (translated by Coblin and Levi 2001: 117). Note that Varo explicitly acknowledges Nebrija’s grammatical framework in his prologue (page 1a, Coblin and Levi 2001: 5). While Varo does discuss the non-Indo–European category of the classifier in a chapter on numbers and numerals as the category of ‘particles’, de Mançano relegates these to an appendix at the end of his grammar

of Southern Min. Similar phenomena and chapter layouts can be found in the grammars of Chinese languages written in Latin by Martino Martini, *Grammatica Sinica*, circa 1653, (see Bertolucci 1998: 349–481 for a reproduction) and Theophilus Bayer who presents an edited and revised version of the 1620 *Arte* translated into Latin, and a grammar of literary Chinese (1730). From this it should not be inferred that grammatical analyses from this period are completely inadequate, but rather that there is a distinct mismatch between the structure of the target language and the framework for analysing it. Hence, in this early phase of grammar-writing for Chinese languages, it is reasonable to claim there was little influence of language type on the design of grammars for Chinese languages.<sup>5</sup>

The description of possible accusative marking for direct objects is a case in point.<sup>6</sup> The grammars by de Mançano and Varo both point out that there are no particles for the accusative case in Chiō Chiu or Mandarin respectively, explaining that these cases can only be recognized by position in the sentence. This is certainly true for basic S–V–O clauses. Varo states that ‘[T]he accusative ... has no particle which governs it. ... However, common practice is to put it after the verb’ (translation of p. 24 by Coblin and Levi 2001: 63).

Significantly, Varo goes on to make an astute observation regarding a certain usage in this Southern variety of Mandarin which would doubtlessly be labelled a ‘serial verb construction’ by contemporary linguistic theory. His remark concerns verbs of taking in two related structures containing a preposed object, which he does not however treat as being coded in the accusative case: ‘In the verbs “to take” and “to bring” the accusative is anteposed to the verb, e.g., “bring water”, *xù nà lái* 水拿來; ... . If one wants to speak a bit better and more elegantly, one can start the sentence with the *nà* 拿, and then immediately after that put the name of the thing which is to be taken or brought, and finally the verb, e.g., *nà xù lái* 拿水來’ (Coblin and Levi 2001: 65). Many examples of both kinds of construction, albeit in a more highly grammaticalized stage, will be treated in §§3–8. It is interesting to note that Varo does not mention the use of either *bǎ* or *jiāng* which were both in evidence in vernacular works during this period of Modern Mandarin. – As will be explained below, *jiāng* 將 is the main Medieval Chinese marker of the accusative or ‘disposal’ function, while *bǎ* 把 – which superseded *jiāng* by the time of Late Medieval Chinese – is the marker used contemporaneously in standard Mandarin and many Northern Mandarin dialects.

It is only much later, when the first indigenous Chinese grammar was published, that the promise of a potentially new tradition begins to emerge: this was the 1898 *Mǎ Shì Wéntōng* [Treatise on grammar by Ma] written by Ma Jianzhong near the end of the last Chinese dynasty, the Qing (1644–1911). It describes literary Chinese, however, and not any vernacular form. It, too, is based

on a Greco-Latin model, as the author himself states at various points in the text, while it eclectically adheres to Chinese philological traditions at the same time (details are to be found in Mair 1997, Peyraube 2001). Peyraube (2001) argues that *Mǎ Shì Wéntōng* uses the 17<sup>th</sup> century *Grammaire de Port-Royal* as its model.<sup>7</sup> Since Classical Chinese is the object of description in his grammar, Ma treats only the use of instrumental *yǐ*, the Archaic Chinese precursor of the construction types discussed in this study. Nonetheless, many aspects of his terminology and framework are innovative, bearing discernible and lasting influence on the directions of contemporary linguistics in China (Peyraube 2000).

The 20<sup>th</sup> century has since seen an exponential increase in the publication of grammars, particularly on spoken Mandarin Chinese. These are written in mainly structuralist and functionalist frameworks, with the best known of these in English, being undoubtedly Yuen-Ren Chao's *A Grammar of Spoken Chinese* (1968) and Charles Li and Sandra Thompson's *Mandarin Chinese: A Functional Reference Grammar* (1981), among many others. In the Chinese-literate world, Lü (1941), Wang Li (1943) and (1944), Gao (1957) and Zhu (1980) stand out as major *opera inter alia*. Notably, these works treat Mandarin Chinese on its own terms, with special chapters on categories and constructions that are not found in most European languages, such as classifier phrases and clause nominalizations, verb copying, complex stative constructions (verbal complements of extent and manner), double subject and topic prominence structures.

It is a curious paradox that standard Mandarin (*pǔtōnghuà*), in its turn, has become the model of grammar on which descriptions of other Sinitic languages are regularly based, both by Chinese and western scholars.<sup>8</sup> This templatic approach has a similar consequence that key typological features and patterns shared between Southern Sinitic languages such as Cantonese (Yue), Shanghainese (Wu), Hakka (Kejia) and Hokkien (Southern Min) are often overlooked, simply because Mandarin does not possess them. This problem is pointed out severally in Chappell (1992a, 1994, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, to appear and in prep.), studies which examine the differences in the functions, types and range of usage for aspect markers, negative adverbs, dative, passive, causative constructions, evidentials, and *say* verbs *inter alia*.<sup>9</sup> This new Sinocentrism is pointed out in the relevant places in §§3–8. It also becomes clear that, from a linguistic point of view, Mandarin is not always in fact the ideal typological representative for Sinitic languages.

## 1.2 The disposal constructions in Standard Mandarin

In Sinitic languages, the canonical position for a direct object argument is to follow the transitive verb without any accusative case marking, as de Mançano and Varo rightly observed: Subject – Verb<sub>transitive</sub> – Object; similarly for intransitive verbs when not being used in a presentative function, the subject precedes the verb: Subject – Verb<sub>intransitive</sub>. When a direct object argument with the role of affected patient occurs in a non-canonical position preceding the main verb, this is signalled by a special marker preposed to it, for example, *bǎ* in standard Mandarin. Note, however, that preposed direct object arguments are not required by the grammar to take such accusative marking – morphologically unmarked OV constructions are common in Chinese languages, where the direct object noun has given information content (but is not necessarily an affected patient). In a similar fashion, disposal constructions may extend to coding affected patients of intransitive events, but not in all Sinitic languages.

As a consequence of the affectedness feature, the predicate may be required to depict a telic event causing a change of state in the patient noun, as argued in Chappell (1992b) and Sun (1997) *inter alia*. This means that, for Mandarin, the predicate may not comprise a bare monosyllabic verb; and it is generally true that either complex resultative verbs, aspectually marked verbs or postverbal nominals (locatives, copular-like complements of equative and *creation* verbs and indirect objects of ditransitive verbs) are to be found in disposal constructions, for example in standard Mandarin and Hong Kong Cantonese. However, the precise constraints depend on the individual language, since Nanchang Gan, Meixian Hakka and Southern Min are not subject to this constraint in its strictest form.

To serve as a starting point for the discussion, the configuration for the construction type identified in all the Sinitic languages in this survey can be stated in general terms as follows. Note however that a significant part of my description is to show variations on this theme which exist in particular dialect groups:

$$(\text{NP}_{\text{CAUSE/SUBJECT}}) - [\text{MARKER} + \text{NP}_{\text{AFFECTED PATIENT}}] - \text{VP}^{10}$$

The disposal constructions in Sinitic languages are in fact functional correlates to the well-researched *bǎ* construction in Mandarin, known as the *chùzhìshì* 處置式 in Chinese linguistics. In Mandarin, they serve to foreground a referential noun in preverbal position, specifically one which has the semantic role of affected patient, either the direct object argument of a transitive verb, the intransitive subject of an unaccusative verb, or even the subject of an unergative verb, provided this has a reflexive effect, thereby causing a change of state in the undergoer-subject.<sup>11</sup>

- (1) 把 我 洗 得 累壞 了  
*Bǎ wǒ xǐ de lèi-huài le.*  
 ABS 1SG wash EXT tired-INTS PFV  
 ‘Because of this, I washed until I was exhausted.’

For this reason, the construction could be labelled ‘absolute’, but just in the case of Mandarin. This is by virtue of the morphologically marked argument being a non-agent – it does not act upon any other entity – while the ergative argument is backgrounded.<sup>12</sup> Clause-initial agent NPs may in fact be ellipsed, as example (2) demonstrates from written Mandarin.<sup>13</sup>

Hence, I begin the analysis with examples from the best-known and described of all the Sinitic languages, Standard Mandarin. The purpose is to provide the necessary background information on the state-of-the-art for research into this topic; and importantly to set the scene for highlighting the diversity which is evident in the following descriptions of other Chinese languages. Speakers of Mandarin dialects constitute the largest proportion of all Sinitic languages in China, totalling more than 70% of the Han Chinese population (Chappell 2001a, see also note 15 on standardization).<sup>14</sup>

The first main subtype of the disposal construction in Mandarin is the most common one, where the use of *bǎ* serves to mark a direct object. It can be given the following representation:

I. (NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [MARKER<sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT</sub>] – VERB PHRASE<sub>TELIC</sub>

- (2) Standard Mandarin disposal construction with *bǎ*:<sup>15</sup>  
 往後 天 黑下去 前  
 就  
*Wǎng-hòu tiān hēi-xiaqu qián jiù*  
 after: that sky dark-INCH before then  
 把 苦根 送回去  
*bǎ Kǔgēn sòng-huiqu.*  
 ACC NAME escort-return:go  
 ‘After that, before it got dark, (I) would take Kugen home.’  
 (from novel by Yu 1994: 273)

In this example, a specifiable result state can be interpreted as the change in location for Kugen, achieving his arrival at home. Note that the agent has been ellipsed but is recoverable from the surrounding context. Counterpart S–V–O

forms of disposal constructions are not always possible, as in this case: \**Wǒ sòng-huìqu.Kǔgēn* [1SG-escort-return-NAME].<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, let us consider the case for the next example of a *bǎ* construction, given in (3), which may be contrasted with a similar S-V-O example, in (4).

- (3) Standard Mandarin disposal construction with *bǎ*:

(NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [*bǎ*<sub>ACC+</sub> NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT</sub>] – VERB PHRASE<sub>TELIC</sub>

她 把 問題 講 得 很 清楚

*Tā bǎ wèntí jiǎng de hěn qīngchū*

3SG ACC question talk EXT very clear

‘She explained the question very clearly.’

- (4) Standard Mandarin basic clause with verb copying:

(NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – VERB – NP<sub>DO</sub> [– VERB – EXT – VERB<sub>RESULT</sub>]

她 講 這個 問題 講 得 很 清楚

*Tā jiǎng zhèige wèntí jiǎng de hěn qīngchū*

3SG talk this:CLF question talk EXT very clear

‘She explained the question very clearly.’

Note, however, that when S-V-O correlates are possible, they are not equivalent from either a semantic or discourse point of view, for the features described. For instance, in (4), verb copying after the initial S-V-O portion is required to enable preservation of information concerning the manner of explanation (*qīngchū* ‘clearly’), a feature more concisely coded in the *bǎ* construction.

As pointed out above, there is a second subtype of the disposal construction in Mandarin which permits an intransitive subject to occur in the same marked position as the direct object. It does not increase the valency of the verb, however, but has a distinctly causative meaning. In fact, the causing event can be coded in the slot for the erstwhile agent of a transitive clause:<sup>17</sup>

II. (NP<sub>CAUSING EVENT</sub>) – [MARKER<sub>ABS</sub>+NP<sub>INTRANSITIVE SUBJECT</sub>] – VERB PHRASE<sub>TELIC</sub>

- (5) Standard Mandarin absolutive disposal construction with *bǎ*:



田裏 的 活 已經 把 家真  
*Tiān-li de huó yǐjīng bǎ Jiā Zhēn*  
 field-in LIG work already ABS NAME  
 累 得 說話 都 沒 力氣 了。  
*lèi de shuō-huà dōu méi lìqi le.*  
 tired EXT talk all NEG strength CRS  
 ‘Working in the fields had already made Jia Zhen so tired that she had no strength to talk.’ (from novel by Yu 1994: 126)

The fact that some kind of specifiable result state must be coded particularly in the case of the intransitive variant is clear from the unacceptability of *\*bǎ tā lèi le* 把她累了 [ABS-3SG-tired-CRS] which only expresses a general state of affairs.

Turning now to the non-Mandarin Sinitic languages, the trend in descriptive studies is to look for the cognates of either Mandarin *bǎ* < ‘grasp, take’ or its precursor *jiāng* < ‘lead, guide, take’, which serves the same function as *bǎ* but is found mainly in literary genres, for example, written Mandarin Chinese. This is particularly a problem in large dialect surveys which use questionnaires based on translating Mandarin sentences or eliciting equivalent morphemes in the target language, as, for example, in Zhan and Cheung (1988) on Yue dialects or Li and Zhang (1992) on Min dialects. It may also be noted that Southern Min, Cantonese and many Hakka dialects all make use of cognates of the literary marker *jiāng* and thus appear to preserve a more archaic feature of Chinese. Such descriptions usually concentrate on the fact that this construction tends to be more limited in use than in Mandarin.

While this may be true, what such a Mandarin-based Sinocentric approach inadvertently conceals are two other important sources for disposal markers in certain Sinitic languages. While many Sinitic languages use a verb of taking or grasping in this function, but not necessarily one that is cognate with either *jiāng* or *bǎ*, others such as Southern Min, and certain Wu and Hakka dialects, deploy accusative markers that have evolved out of a comitative. A third group of Chinese languages evinces a pathway from verbs of giving, in particular, Xiang and Wu dialects. Surprisingly, this kind of phenomenon, if mentioned, is treated as an oddity or aside in descriptive grammars, simply because it does not correspond to a model of grammar based on Standard Mandarin. Hence, there is a need for a *tertium comparationis* or truly typological approach in the study of Sinitic languages: empirical data from all major dialect groups within Sinitic must first be compared before setting up an eventual pan-Sinitic description of invariant syntactic and semantic features of accusative constructions. This study represents an initial step in this direction.

There are nonetheless important exceptions to this rule: While specific instances of this Sinocentric, specifically Mandarin-centred, tendency are pointed out in §§3–8 below, this analysis makes use of several recent and excellent studies of accusative constructions in Sinitic languages which do indeed examine the divergences from Mandarin. These include Cheung (1992), Lin (1990), Teng (1982), Cheng and Tsao (1995), Wu (1992), Xu and Tao (1999), and Zhou (1991). The study of diversity is particularly well-developed in research on Southern Min languages – the difference in markers and structure is perhaps too striking to be overlooked, as §3 demonstrates.

In the main part of this study, I first outline the diachrony of *bǎ* and *jiāng* constructions, then present a description of a range of disposal constructions in a further six Sinitic languages, according to two main parameters: (i) the source of the case marker and (ii) the construction type in terms of its configuration; also (iii) semantic and syntactic constraints, where known. All three parameters are shown to differ across Sinitic languages. Not only do the markers have different etymological sources, but the construction types include those with postverbal resumptive pronouns, those which require a possessive NP in the accusative NP slot, and yet others which permit the accusative NP to occur in clause-initial position.

The six non-Mandarin languages are Southern Min, Hakka, Cantonese, Shanghainese, Xiang and Gan in that order. These constitute the linguistically best-established groups within the Sinitic branch of Sino-Tibetan; another three – Hui, Jin and Pinghua – are less well-studied at this point of time (see Chappell 2001a). This enables a final intra-Sinitic grouping of accusative constructions according to the first two typological parameters.

The terms ‘subject’, ‘agent’, ‘direct object’, ‘indirect object’, ‘argument’, ‘case’, ‘ergative’, ‘accusative’ and ‘absolute marker’ are used as syntactic terms (Dixon 1979, 1991) whereas ‘affected patient’ refers to the semantic role of the accusatively marked NP. Whenever the label ‘Mandarin’ is used, it refers to Standard Mandarin or *pǔtōnghuà*, unless otherwise indicated. For the main discussion, including the next section on diachrony, I use the terms ‘disposal construction’ and ‘accusative marker’ given that the use of the construction with intransitive predicates is not well-researched at the present time with regard to most of the other Sinitic languages. Significantly, preliminary indications point to their use being restricted to transitive verbs in some languages, such as in Cantonese (see §5 below) and Hakka (§4). Furthermore, the absolute function in Mandarin itself did not develop prior to the Modern period, post-13<sup>th</sup> century (Alain Peyraube, pers. comm.).

## **2. Diachrony of disposal constructions**

It is well-known that *jiāng* 將 is the most frequent exponent of the disposal construction at the end of the Early Medieval period, specifically, during the Sui dynasty (6<sup>th</sup> c. CE) but that it lost this position of pre-eminence to the *bǎ* 把 construction during the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE), most likely between the 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> centuries (Peyraube 1985, 1994). The marker *jiāng* itself had similarly developed by analogy with the instrumental *yǐ* construction dating back to the period of Late Archaic Chinese (5<sup>th</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BCE) (see Peyraube 1996, Sun 1996: ch. 3).<sup>18</sup>

The disposal markers seen in vernacular texts of the Medieval Chinese period are typically deverbal prepositions (or ‘coverbs’) that evolve out of the V<sub>1</sub> position in serial verb constructions of the form: (NP<sub>0</sub>[SUBJECT]) – V<sub>1</sub>[take] – NP<sub>1</sub>[DO] – V<sub>2</sub> – NP<sub>2</sub>[DO] to first indicate instrumental then finally accusative functions. These include *jiāng* 將 ‘to guide, lead’, *bǎ* 把 ‘to grasp, hold’, *chí* 持 ‘to grasp, hold’, and *zhuō* 捉 ‘to clutch, hold, seize’. The degree of grammaticalization of these verbs into case markers can be tested with aspect marking: *bǎ* in Mandarin and *jeung*<sup>1</sup> in Cantonese do not take any aspect suffixes in their contemporary use. That is, they are no longer used as verbs, whereas disposal markers in other Sinitic languages can be, for example, *lau*<sup>11</sup> which can still be used as a verb meaning ‘to mix together’ in Hakka (see example (21) below). Construction types with similar sources and evolution pathways can be found in many Southeast Asian languages, as detailed in Bisang (1992).

Each of these stages of grammaticalization for Medieval Chinese is exemplified with a lexical postverbal NP<sub>2</sub>[DO], a pronominal one, and finally a case where there is no NP<sub>2</sub>[DO] (all examples are taken from Peyraube 1985, 1996):

(6) Medieval Chinese instrumental construction with *jiāng*:

(NP<sub>0</sub>[SUBJECT]) – V<sub>1</sub>[*jiāng* 將] – NP<sub>1</sub>[DO] – V<sub>2</sub> – NP<sub>2</sub>[DO]

輕 將 玉版 橋 花片  
*Qīng jiāng yùbǎn qiáo huāpiàn*  
 lightly take<sub>ACC</sub> jade:piece hit flower:petal  
 ‘(She) lightly hits the flower petals with a piece of jade.’

[Zhang You: Gongzi Xing 張祐：公子行]

(7) Medieval Chinese accusative construction with *jiāng* and a resumptive postverbal pronoun as NP<sub>2</sub>[DO]

(NP<sub>0</sub>[SUBJECT]) – V<sub>1</sub>[*jiāng* 將] – NP<sub>1</sub>[DO] – V<sub>2</sub> – NP<sub>2</sub>[DO]

where O<sub>1</sub> = O<sub>2</sub> [pronoun]

船者 乃 將 此 蟾 以  
*Chuán-zhě nǎi jiāng cǐ chán yǐ*

boat-AGT then take<sub>ACC</sub> this toad with  
 油 熬 之  
*yóu āo zhī*  
 oil fry 3SG  
 ‘Then the boatman took the toad and fried it.’ [Lu Xun:  
 Zhi Guai 陸勛：志怪]

According to Peyraube (1996: 169–170), after NP<sub>2</sub>[<sub>DO</sub>] is omitted under coreferentiality conditions with NP<sub>1</sub>[<sub>DO</sub>], V<sub>1</sub> grammaticalized into a preposition. Although it is very difficult to detect precisely when this syntactic reanalysis occurred, the following kind of example shows that semantically *jiāng* is being used more like an accusative marker than a verb of taking:

- (8) Medieval Chinese accusative construction with *jiāng* and no postverbal NP<sub>2</sub>[<sub>DO</sub>]:  
 (NP<sub>0</sub>[<sub>SUBJECT</sub>]) – **Prep**[*jiāng* 將] – NP<sub>1</sub>[<sub>DO</sub>] – V<sub>2</sub>  
 誰 將 此 義 陳  
*shéi jiāng cǐ yì chén*  
 who ACC this idea expose  
 ‘Who could express this idea?’

(Dufu: Ji Li Shi'er bai 杜甫：寄李十二白, 8<sup>th</sup> century)

The use of both markers, *jiāng* and *bǎ*, continued throughout the Early Mandarin period. In contemporary Mandarin, however, *jiāng* is no longer a feature of the colloquial language but may still be found in literary genres. In the following sections, I will show that at least two of the Sinitic languages, Hakka and Cantonese, also permit postverbal pronominal objects, similar to the structure in (7). This appears to be clearly related to the structure found in these vernacular works of Late Medieval Chinese, and thus a retention which standard Mandarin no longer permits, as shown in the grammatically unacceptable use of a third person pronoun (\**tā*) in postverbal position: *Yúshi chuánfū jiù bǎ zhè zhī chānchú yòng yóu jiān le (\*tā)* 於是船夫就把這隻蟾蜍用油煎了 (\*它) thereupon–boatman–then–ACC–this–CLF–toad–use–oil–fry–PFV–(\*3SG).

### 3. Southern Min

The archaic Min dialect group has its heartland in China's southeastern province of Fujian and includes a large community of Southern Min speakers in neighbouring Taiwan, not to mention outliers in northeastern Guangdong (Chaozhou, Shantou), the Leizhou peninsula and Hainan island. Min dialect speakers comprise approximately 4.1% of Sinitic languages, with 2.8% belonging to Southern Min.

The morpheme *kāng* ~ *kā* in Taiwanese Southern Min has a function similar to the Mandarin *bǎ* construction where it marks a preverbal and typically referential direct object, though its usage appears to be broader than in Mandarin, in terms of co-occurring verb classes (see Teng 1982, Tsao 1991, Cheng and Tsao 1995). Although most contemporary descriptions of Southern Min describe one use of *kā* or *kāng* as a marker of a preposed direct object, it occurs under different circumstances to the Mandarin correlate *bǎ* and is consequently not viewed as the true 'dialectal' counterpart. This role is rather taken on by a cognate of *jiāng*, as in Yuan (1960: 285). Two examples of *kā* follow from my transcription data on the Taiwanese variety of Southern Min.

- (9) Taiwanese Southern Min accusative construction with *kā*:

(NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [KA<sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DO</sub>] – VERB PHRASE

所以 阮 攏 共 褲 褪 起來

*só - í gún lóng kā k'ò t'ng - k'i-lái*

therefore 1PL all ACC trousers take:off-DIR

'So we all took our trousers off (to go swimming).'

(Jesse's Story: 116)

- (10) Taiwanese Southern Min accusative construction with *kā*:

(NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [KA<sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DO</sub>] – VERB PHRASE

啊 汝 共 汝 的 氣力 攏 *a* *lì*

*kā lì ê khui-lat lóng*

PRT 2SG ACC 2SG GEN strength all

用去 啊

*iòng-khì a*

use-DIR PRT

'You used up all your strength.' (Jesse's Story: 823)

In Chappell (2000), I trace *kā* back to Medieval Chinese *gòng* [*\*gjowNH*], a marker of the comitative that evolved from an earlier verb in Archaic Chinese

meaning ‘to gather, to share’, and show that it has further grammaticalized into this function of an accusative (Chappell 2000).<sup>19</sup>

Southern Min is a highly stratified language, with at least three historical layers involved in its formation, two colloquial and one literary, the latter being comprised of borrowings from the Tang dynasty (see Mei and Yang 1995). In many Southern Min dialects, a cognate of the Medieval Tang dynasty form of the disposal marker *jiāng* 將 is used [romanized as *chiong* in the Church romanization system] alongside *kā*, producing a hybrid form with colloquial *kā*, exemplified by (12). This construction type, exemplified for Taiwanese, differs markedly from the Mandarin type described in §1.2.<sup>20</sup> Note that the use of *chiong* belongs however to a somewhat more formal register, according to Tsao (1991: 383).

(11) Taiwanese Southern Min hybrid form with two accusative markers:

(NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [CHIONG<sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DO(i)</sub>] – [KĀ<sub>ACC</sub> + PRONOUN<sub>DO(i)</sub>] – VP

將 門 共 伊 關 起來  
*chiong mâng kā yī kui<sup>n</sup> khi-lâi*  
 ACC<sub>1</sub> door ACC<sub>2</sub> 3SG close INCH

‘Close the door.’

[more literally: take the door, take it and close]

Fusion and contraction of *kā* with its following 3SG resumptive pronoun regularly occurs in Taiwanese: *kā yī* > *kah* [= *ka i<sup>22</sup>*], but not for any other pronominal form (Teng 1982: 337). Furthermore, both fused and unfused forms of *kā* can be used in a variation on this construction type in (12), where the patient noun is in clause-initial position. The example in (12) from a spoken narrative has been selected for its similarity to (11):

(12) Taiwanese Southern Min accusative *kah* construction with a clause-initial object:

NP<sub>OBJECT(i)</sub> – [KAH<sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DO</sub>] – VP

門 共 關 關 起來 啊  
*mâng kah kui<sup>n</sup> –kui<sup>n</sup> khi-lâi a*  
 door ACC:3SG close – close INCH PRT

‘(we) closed, closed the door.’ (Jesse’s story 543)

This particular construction type is neither standard nor regular for Mandarin which, in any case, avoids the use of 3SG pronoun for inanimates. While the translation in (13) is not impossible, (14) presents the preferred form.<sup>21</sup>

(13) Standard Mandarin:

? 門 把 它 關起來  
 ?*Mén bǎ tā guān-qilai.*  
 door ACC 3SG close-INCH  
 ?‘As for the door, close it.

(14) Standard Mandarin absolutive construction with *bǎ*:

(NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [MARKER<sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT</sub>] – VERB PHRASE<sub>TELIC</sub>  
 把 門 關起來  
*Bǎ mén guān-qilai.*  
 ACC door close-INCH  
 ‘Close the door.’

Yuan (1960: 286) reports that this construction type with a clause-initial object is also found in the Xiamen, Chaozhou, Hainan and Southern Zhejiang dialects of Southern Min. Cheng and Tsao (1995) claim that the portmanteau form in (12) shows a further development in Taiwanese whereby *kah* is undergoing reanalysis as a passive prefix. This is aided by the fact that *kah* and *kā* are virtually indistinguishable in fluent speech, both being articulated without syllable closure and low falling tone in unstressed position: *kà*. This construction type also exists in certain Wu dialects (see §6).

#### 4. Hakka

Hakka is concentrated in an area which straddles Northeastern Guangdong, Southern Jiangxi and Southwestern Fujian provinces. Nonetheless, communities are scattered throughout Guangdong province, inhabiting Yue or Cantonese territory, as well as being found in Sichuan province. The estimated number of speakers is circa 3.7% with Meixian or Sixian Hakka generally being considered the representative variety. This refers to a locality within Northeastern Guangdong province (see Chappell and Sagart in press). With regard to disposal markers, three main points of view are in evidence according to the main reference grammars of Hakka: (i) Hakka does not have a disposal construction *in stricto sensu* due to the fact a marker distinct from Mandarin *bǎ* is used (He 1993: 26 on Dabu Hakka *tet*); (ii) only the cognates of *jiāng* are identified (Yuan 1960: 176; Luo 1985: 300; Rey 1926: III) with the non-colloquial nature and lack of ‘linguistic development’ of this construction, compared to Mandarin, being alluded to, as in Xiang (1997: 421); or (iii) the accusative case is claimed to be never marked (translation of (1909) Basel grammar of Sin-on Hakka, in Part 3, Chappell and Lamarre 2005: 59).

In contradistinction to these studies, I first illustrate some disposal constructions with the exponent *tsiong*<sup>44</sup> in Hakka (cognate with Mandarin *jiāng*), and second, a variant form with a resumptive pronoun. Finally, I examine two spectacular cases of disposal markers in Hakka which show quite distinct sources from Mandarin and most other Sinitic languages, excepting Wu.

In Hakka dialects, the use of cognates of Medieval Chinese *jiāng* ‘guide, lead’ is widespread, according to published descriptions. However, two construction subtypes can be identified: one is similar in form to Mandarin, while the other is distinct due to the presence of a postverbal resumptive pronoun.

**Subtype (i):** Two examples follow, the first one from a story told in a southern variety of Guangdong Hakka from Sung Him Tong near Hong Kong. Both are of the same construction type as in Mandarin. Hence, it is only the use of the marker *jiāng* which differs.

- (15) Sung Him Tong Hakka disposal construction with *tsjiong*<sup>1</sup>:  
 (NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [*TSJIONG*<sup>1</sup><sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT</sub>] – VERB PHRASE  
 卒 之 就 將 口 隻 鷓 崽  
*tsut*<sup>5</sup>–*tsji*<sup>1</sup>, *tsj*<sup>1</sup>*iu*<sup>4</sup> *tsjiong*<sup>1</sup> *ngjia*<sup>3</sup> *tsak*<sup>5</sup> *tsjiau*<sup>2</sup>–*tsai*<sup>3</sup>  
 in:the:end then ACC that CLF child–DSIMN  
 救開 口  
*kjiu*<sup>4</sup>–*hoi*<sup>1</sup> *lɔ*  
 save–PFV PRT  
 ‘(Sima Guang) saved the child.’ (Sagart 1982: 21)

Similar examples are easy to find in the Meixian, or the northeastern variety of Hakka.<sup>22</sup>

- (16) Meixian Hakka disposal construction with *tsiong*<sup>44</sup>:  
 (NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [*TSIONG*<sup>44</sup><sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT</sub>] – VERB PHRASE  
 苗公 將 煎魚仔 食撇哩  
*miau*<sup>52</sup>*kung*<sup>44</sup> *tsiong*<sup>44</sup> *tsien*<sup>44</sup>*ng*<sup>11</sup>*nge*<sup>31</sup> *set*<sup>5</sup>–*pet*<sup>1</sup>*te*<sup>11</sup>  
 cat ACC fried fish eat–COMP–PRT  
 ‘The cat ate up all the fried fish.’ (Xie 1994: 303)

**Subtype (ii):** However, in Hakka dialects, a trace of the earlier serial verb construction of Medieval Chinese can be found, as exemplified by (7) above: SUBJECT – V<sub>1</sub>[take] – O<sub>1</sub> – V<sub>2</sub> – O<sub>2</sub>. Rey (1926: III) gives an example of a resumptive third person singular pronoun being used with the disposal marker in the Jiayingzhou variety of Northeastern Hakka, the dialect represented in his



dictionary. Note that ‘Jiayingzhou’ is in fact an older obsolete name for Meixian Hakka.

(17) Northeastern Hakka: Jiayingzhou or Meixian Hakka

(NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [*TSIONG*<sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT(i)</sub>] VERB<sub>1</sub>–(VERB<sub>2</sub>)–PRONOUN<sub>(i)</sub>  
 將 裡 隻 雞 拿來 食帛 佢  
*tsiōng li tchâc kē nā-loi chīt-p’êt kī* ACC this–  
 CLF chicken bring eat–COMP 3SG  
 De cette poule, n’en laissez rien.  
 [‘Eat up all this chicken.’]

Apart from the use of the marker *tsiong*<sup>44</sup>, several Hakka dialects make use of disposal markers which are distinct from either Mandarin *bǎ* or *jiāng*. The use of a different exponent for this function in the Dabu dialect of Hakka makes an interesting case, particularly given that it lies in geographic proximity to the prestige dialect of Meixian. Instead of using the widespread marker *tsiong*<sup>44</sup>, Dabu employs *tet* 得 < ‘to gain, to give’. Another distinction is the requirement of a possessive NP as the patient following the marker *tet*, as described by He (1993: 73–74), exemplified in (18):

(18) Dabu Hakka construction with *tet* and a possessive object:

(NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [*TET*<sub>ACC</sub> + POSSESSIVE NP<sub>DO</sub>] – VERB<sub>1</sub>–(VERB<sub>2</sub>)  
 佢 得 口 碗 打爛  
*kī tet nga vón tá-làn*  
 3SG ACC 1GEN bowl break:into:pieces  
 ‘S/he broke my bowl.’

One of the comitative prepositions in Hakka dialects is *t’ung*<sup>11</sup> ‘with, and’ (< ‘to accompany’).<sup>23</sup> It also has a benefactive use but, strikingly, can be employed in Meixian Hakka in the same way as *tsiong*<sup>44</sup> in accusative function. Similarly to the case in Dabu Hakka, Lin (1997: 103) observes that the disposal noun phrase governed by *t’ung*<sup>11</sup> must be possessive. This is not the case, however, for the benefactive use in (19).

(19) Meixian Hakka – Benefactive use of *t’ung*<sup>11</sup>

(NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [*T’UNG*<sup>11</sup> + BENEFACTIVE NP] – VERB<sub>1</sub>–(VERB<sub>2</sub>)  
 你 同 我 寫 一 張 單

*gní t'óung ngái sià yít tchōng tān*  
 2SG BEN 1SG write one CLF list  
 'écrie-moi une liste' ['Write a list for me.'] (Rey 1926: 1131)

- (20) Meixian Hakka – Accusative use of *t'ung*<sup>11</sup>  
 (NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [*T'UNG*<sup>11</sup> + POSSESSIVE NP<sub>OBJECT</sub>] – VERB<sub>1</sub> – (VERB<sub>2</sub>)  
*thìn-chhók òi thûng a-shuk kài vuk*  
 定著 愛 同 阿叔 個 屋  
 certainly want ACC uncle GEN house  
*tsò-háu-lôi*  
 做好來  
 make-COMP-come  
 'You certainly have to finish building uncle's house.'

Y. Lin (1990) provides further data on Hakka dialects, showing that not only may *t'ung*<sup>11</sup> be used as an disposal marker, but also another comitative, *lau*<sup>11</sup> 'and, with' (< 'to mix together'), found in most varieties of Hakka (e.g. see the Basel mission grammar of Sin-on or southern Guangdong Hakka, translated in Part 3, Chappell and Lamarre 2005: 60). Note that the construction with *lau*<sup>11</sup> is structurally isomorphic to the Mandarin; it is merely the etymology of the markers which differs.

- (21) Meixian Hakka – Comitative use of *lau*<sup>11</sup>  
 NP – [*LAU*<sup>11</sup> + COMITATIVE NP] – VERB<sub>1</sub> – (VERB<sub>2</sub>)  
 糯米酒 搵 葡萄酒 搵 唔 合  
*nó mì tsiòu laō p'ou t'aô tsiòu laō mġ kâp*  
 rice:wine COM grape:wine mix NEG together  
 'le vin de riz mêlé au vin de raisin n'est pas bon'  
 ['Rice wine and grape wine don't mix well together.']  
 (Rey 1926: 479)

- (22) Meixian Hakka – Accusative use of *lau*<sup>11</sup>  
 (NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [*LAU*<sup>11</sup><sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT</sub>] – VERB<sub>1</sub> – (VERB<sub>2</sub>)  
 唔愛 搵 蟻 踏死 了  
 唔愛 搵 蟻 踏死 了

*m.òì*      *lau*      *ngè (nyè)thàp-sí*      *liáu*      NEG:IMP  
 ACC      ant      tread-die      finish  
 ‘Do not walk so as to kill all the ants – do hurry up!’ (McIver 1926: 441)

(23) Meixian Hakka – Accusative use of *lau*<sup>11</sup>

我    搵    屋    買    到    (了)  
*ngai*   *lau*   *vuk*   *mai*   *tò*   *le*  
 1SG   ACC   house   buy   COMP   CRS  
 ‘I (successfully) bought the house.’ Lin (1990: 79)

Unlike the disposal use of comitative *t’ung*<sup>11</sup>, the construction with *lau*<sup>11</sup> is not subject to the constraint requiring a possessive NP to follow the disposal marker. This is evident in the previous two examples with inanimate NPs ‘ants’ and ‘house’. In particular, ‘house’ is not to be understood as owned by the agent until the purchase is completed. This furnishes another tantalizing difference from Standard Mandarin which does not permit ‘inward’ verbs of receiving in the *bǎ* construction. This could be due to the trace semantic features of *bǎ*, originally a verb that denotes coming into possession of an entity by grasping hold of it (see Ziegeler 2000 for a discussion of possession schemata and Mandarin *bǎ*). This has grammaticalized at the discourse level into the requirement for the givenness or ‘pre-existence’ of the object.

This cursory look at Hakka dialects has identified (i) a construction using the cognate of Medieval *jiāng* which has a subtype with a resumptive pronoun; (ii) constructions with *tet* ‘obtain, get’ in Dabu and comitative *t’ung*<sup>11</sup> in Meixian which both require a possessive object NP and (iii) a construction with comitative *lau*<sup>11</sup>, also found in Meixian, which is less constrained in application than Mandarin *bǎ* in permitting a wider range of verb classes. This description of Hakka disposal constructions has shown that reference grammars particularly overlook the comitative source as an important native strategy for building disposal constructions.

## 5. Cantonese Yue

The Yue dialects, of which Cantonese is the best known, are distributed throughout Guangdong province and parts of adjacent Guangxi. Speakers of these dialects comprise approximately 5% of the Han Chinese population. Hong Kong Cantonese, like many Hakka and Min dialects, makes use of *jeung*<sup>1</sup>, cognate with *jiāng*, to code accusative case. This construction type is nonetheless generally overlooked in the major grammars of Cantonese, or treated as a gap in the

grammar when compared with Mandarin (Li 2001: 33 on *fehlende bǎ-Konstruktion*).<sup>24</sup> The explanation for this may lie in the fact that its use is much more restricted than Mandarin *bǎ*, according to Cheung (1992), who provides a detailed study of *jeung*<sup>1</sup>.

In a survey of the lexicon, including grammatical function words in 25 Pearl River Cantonese dialects (Zhan and Cheung 1988: 441), the findings reveal that 23 use a cognate of *jiāng*. The issue at stake here is the problem of posing the question in terms of how the speaker would translate a Mandarin *bǎ* sentence, which tends to elicit the closest correlate in the given Cantonese dialect to written or formal Mandarin *jiāng*, rather than to any local forms.

Treating the construction with *jeung*<sup>1</sup> first, Cantonese does not have the extended intransitive use exemplified by (5) above with an unaccusative verb *lèi* ‘be tired’, nor with unergative verbs as in (1) above with *xǐ* ‘wash’ or (25) below. Compare the Cantonese example with its Mandarin counterpart in (24) and (25) respectively (data taken from Cheung 1992, his romanization and translations). This corresponds to where the absolutive NP is both the intransitive subject and agent of *xiào* ‘laugh’, yet ends up being the affected patient whose belly aches due to the reflexivity of the event (briefly described in §1.2, but presented in detail in Chappell 1992b).

(24) Hong Kong Cantonese accusative construction with *jēung*:

(NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [JEUNG<sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT</sub>] – VERB<sub>1</sub> – (VERB<sub>2</sub>)  
 \*哩個 故事 將 我 笑 到 肚  
 \*Nīgo gujái jēung ngóh siu dou tóuh  
 this-CLF story ABS 1SG laugh EXT belly  
 都 痛 咧  
 dōu tung le.  
 all hurt PRT

(25) Mandarin disposal construction with *bǎ*:

(NP<sub>CAUSING EVENT</sub>) – [bǎ+ NP<sub>s</sub>] – VERB PHRASE<sub>TELIC</sub>  
 這 故事 把 我 笑 得 肚子 都  
 Zhè gùshi bǎ wǒ xiào de dùzi dōu  
 this story ABS 1SG laugh EXT belly all

疼 了  
 téng le  
 hurt PFV

‘This story made me laugh so much that my belly ached.’

Second, the *jeung*<sup>1</sup> construction is obligatory with certain kinds of verbs, namely, many ditransitives and verbs which take the bound complement *sihng* ‘become’ in equative or copular-like clauses (Cheung 1992: 254–260). In other words, these are predicates which could result in the dispreferred situation of two object nouns postverbally:  $V_1 - O_1 - O_2$ , as in a regular S–V–O type clause. Hence, the preference is to express them with accusative *jeung*<sup>1</sup> as *jeung*<sup>1</sup> –  $O_1 - V_2 - O_2$ .

(26) Hong Kong Cantonese accusative construction with *jēung* and a postverbal complement noun:

(NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [JEUNG<sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT(i)</sub>] VERB<sub>1</sub>–(VERB<sub>2</sub>)–NOUN<sub>(ii)</sub>  
 將 你 打扮 成 一個 伯爺婆  
*Jēung néih dábaahn–sihng yāt–go baakyepó*  
 ACC 2SG dress:up–become one–CLF old:lady  
 ‘Dress you up like an old lady.’

Third, Cantonese, like certain Hakka dialects, allows a postverbal resumptive pronoun, always 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular in form: *kéuih*. This is particularly a feature of colloquial speech, according to Li (2001: 33).

(27) Hong Kong Cantonese accusative construction with *jēung* and a postverbal pronoun:

(NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [JEUNG<sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT(i)</sub>] VERB<sub>1</sub>–(VERB<sub>2</sub>)–PRONOUN<sub>(i)</sub>  
 千祈 唔好 將 D 頭髮  
*Chìnkèih m̀h.hóu jēung dī tàuhfaat*  
 be:sure NEG:IMP ACC CLF<sub>PL</sub> hair  
 染黑 佢  
*yíhm–hāk kéuih*  
 dye–black 3SG  
 ‘Be sure not to dye your hair black.’

Once again, the observation can be made that this resembles the construction type with two coreferential objects found in Medieval Chinese (see example (7) above), suggesting that Cantonese, like Hakka, preserves structural features of earlier forms of the disposal construction whereas Mandarin has innovated, namely, by suppressing coreferential postverbal pronouns.

In my own data, I found that although *jeung*<sup>1</sup> predominated, other *take* verbs such as *ling*<sup>1</sup> and *loh*<sup>2</sup> could be used in this function, albeit arguably retaining their more literal meaning of ‘take’. The marker *jeung*<sup>1</sup>, for example,

may occur with predicates such as ‘to fool someone’ whereas there is no evidence that these two other *take* verbs can. They form a serial verb construction rather than a conflated grammaticalized form as with *jeung jeung*<sup>1</sup>. Matthews and Yip (1994: 142–145) discuss similar constructions, comparing them with the use of *jeung*<sup>1</sup>. The following examples are thus of *ling*<sup>1</sup> and *loh*<sup>2</sup> in serial verb constructions (see also §8 on Gan dialects for similar phenomena):

(28) Cantonese serial verb construction with *ling*<sup>1</sup> ‘take’:  
(NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) –LING<sup>1</sup>–NP<sub>DO</sub>–VERB<sub>1</sub>–X–VERB<sub>2</sub>–NP<sub>IO</sub>

16. ... 噉 有 個 書生 呢 就 拎 一個 琴  
... *gam*<sup>2</sup> *yau*<sup>5</sup> *goh*<sup>3</sup> *sue*<sup>1</sup>*sang*<sup>1</sup> *le*<sup>1</sup> *jau*<sup>6</sup> **ling**<sup>1</sup> *yat*<sup>1</sup>*goh*<sup>3</sup> *kam*<sup>4</sup> ,  
so have CL scholar P<sub>TOP</sub> then **take** one:CL lute

17. ... 出來 嘅  
... *chut*<sup>1</sup>*lei*<sup>4</sup> *ge*<sup>3</sup> .  
out-come GE<sub>ASST</sub>

18. 就 係 還返 俾 哩個  
*jau*<sup>6</sup> *hai*<sup>6</sup> *waan*<sup>4</sup>*-faan*<sup>1</sup> *bei*<sup>2</sup> *li*<sup>1</sup>/*lei*<sup>5</sup><sup>0</sup>/*goh*<sup>3</sup> then be  
give:back-return give this:CL

女仔 嘅。  
*lui*<sup>3</sup>*jai*<sup>2</sup> *ge*<sup>3</sup> .  
girl GE<sub>ASST</sub>

‘Then a scholar came with a lute to return it to this girl.’ (Tale of the Reborn Lady of the Red Flowering Plum)

(29) Cantonese serial verb construction with *loh*<sup>2</sup> ‘take’:  
(NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) –LOH<sup>2</sup>–NP<sub>DO</sub>–VERB<sub>1</sub>–X–VERB<sub>2</sub>–NP<sub>DO</sub>

720. ... 就 要 羅 個 斧頭 來=,  
... *jau*<sup>6</sup> *yi*<sup>3</sup> **loh**<sup>2</sup> *goh*<sup>3</sup> *foo*<sup>2</sup>*tau*<sup>4</sup>\* *lei*<sup>4</sup>  
then about:to **take** CL axe COME<sub>PURP</sub>

劈開 哩個 =,  
*pek*<sup>3</sup>*-hoi*<sup>1</sup> *lei*<sup>5</sup><sup>0</sup>*goh*<sup>3</sup> =,  
split-open this:CL

721. ... 哩個 幕 --  
 ... *lei<sup>50</sup> goh<sup>3</sup> mo<sup>6</sup>* --  
 this:CL grave  
 ‘(He) was about to take his axe and split open the doors of the tomb.’  
 [Balcony Rendezvous]

Finally, according to Cheung (1992), *jeung<sup>l</sup>* is more likely to appear in formal contexts for Cantonese. This is similar to the situations in both Hakka and Min dialects for the relevant cognate.

## 6. Shanghainese Wu

The Wu dialects, comprising approximately 8% of Chinese speakers, are spread over most of Zhejiang province on the eastern seaboard of China as well as in southern Jiangsu, the neighbouring province to the north. Shanghainese is nowadays the prestige and probably best-known dialect of this group. While Shanghainese reveals no surprises as to the source of its disposal marker, other dialects such as Shaoxing make use of a comitative, while still others use verbs of helping and giving. Yuan (1960: 101) similarly describes the use of a verb of taking as a disposal marker in the former prestige dialect of Suzhou.

In Shanghainese, the marker for the disposal construction is derived from a verb of taking *nɔ<sup>53</sup>* 拿, that is, from the same semantic domain as for Mandarin *bǎ* 把.

- (30) Shanghainese accusative construction with *nɔ<sup>53</sup>*:  
 (NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [*nɔ<sup>53</sup>* + NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT</sub>] – VERB<sub>1</sub> – (VERB<sub>2</sub>)

儂 拿 鈔票 還 拔 伊  
*noŋ<sup>42</sup> nɔ<sup>53</sup> ts<sup>h</sup>ɔ<sup>34</sup> p<sup>h</sup>iɔ<sup>34</sup> fiuɛ<sup>23</sup> pəʔ<sup>5</sup> fi<sup>23</sup>*  
 2SG ACC money return give 3SG

‘You give back the money to him.’ (N.B. All data in this section are taken from Xu and Tao 1999.)

Qian (1997: 287) claims, however, that topicalized preverbal objects are more frequent than the use of the disposal construction with *nɛ<sup>53</sup>~nɔ<sup>53</sup>* 拿. The use of other syntactic means for highlighting an object–NP is a common claim found in studies on Chinese dialects, as noted in grammars for Gan, Cantonese, and Hakka. This generally results, however, in the disposal construction not being analysed in depth, since it is viewed as less frequent than, if not dispreferred to structures with unmarked preposed objects. Consequently, the possibility of other

kinds of ‘local’ strategies, such as the deployment of a comitative in accusative function, are similarly overlooked.

In many other Wu dialects including Shaoxing, Zeguo and Wenzhou another kind of disposal construction can be found: this is the type in which a resumptive pronoun is used after the disposal marker when the direct object occurs in clause-initial slot. This particular configuration is isomorphic with that of Southern Min, discussed in §3.

- (31) Wenzhou dialect accusative *dei*<sup>11</sup> construction with a clause-initial object:

NP<sub>OBJECT(i)</sub> – [*DEI*<sup>11</sup> + PRONOUN<sub>OBJECT(i)</sub>] – VP

蘋果            代        渠        吃        交  
*beŋ*<sup>31</sup>*ku*<sup>35</sup>    *dei*<sup>11</sup>    *gei*<sup>31</sup>    *ts*<sup>h</sup>*f*<sup>13</sup>    *ɦu*<sup>o</sup>

apple            ACC    3SG    eat        PRT

‘Eat up the apple!’ [more literally: apple, take it and eat it]

Xu and Tao (1999) also note that the source for disposal markers in Wu dialects is not restricted to verbs of taking. Apart from Shanghai, Suzhou and areas to the north of the Qiantang River, which use a variety of ‘take’ verbs, two other main semantic domains are in evidence: comitatives in the Taihu subgroup, and verbs of giving and helping elsewhere, for example, Wenzhou *dei*<sup>11</sup> (see example (32) above). The latter domain is in fact the most widespread source in Wu dialects (Xu and Tao (1999: 137) while it is an equally typical source in the Xiang dialects, as described in §7 below. The following examples show the syncretism of the comitative and the disposal marker in the Shaoxing dialect: *tse*<sup>ɰ<sup>5</sup></sup> 則].

- (32) Shaoxing dialect – Comitative use of *tse*<sup>ɰ<sup>5</sup></sup> 則]

NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub> – [*TSE*<sup>ɰ<sup>5</sup></sup> + COMITATIVE NP] – VERB<sub>1</sub> – (VERB<sub>2</sub>)

我        則        偌        一堆    生        去  
*ŋo*<sup>13</sup>    *tse*<sup>ɰ<sup>5</sup></sup>    *no*<sup>ɰ<sup>2</sup></sup>    *ie*<sup>ɰ<sup>5</sup></sup>    *te*<sup>5</sup>    *saŋ*<sup>53</sup>    *tɕ*<sup>ɦ</sup><sup>33</sup>

1SG    COM    2SG    together    go

‘I’ll go with you.’ (Xu and Tao 1997: 139)

- (33) Shaoxing dialect – Accusative use of *tse*<sup>ɰ<sup>5</sup></sup> 則]

NP<sub>DO</sub> – NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub> – [*TSE*<sup>ɰ<sup>5</sup></sup> ACC + NP<sub>POSSESSIVE</sub>] – VERB<sub>1</sub> – (VERB<sub>2</sub>)

東西    渠        則        我        捻        破        哉  
*toŋ*<sup>53</sup> *ɕi*<sup>53</sup> *ɦi*<sup>13</sup>    *tse*<sup>ɰ<sup>5</sup></sup>    *ŋo*<sup>13</sup>    *ŋie*<sup>n3</sup>    *p*<sup>ɦa</sup><sup>33</sup>    *dze*<sup>o</sup>



thing 3SG ACC 1SG:GEN do broken-PRT  
 ‘S/he broke my things.’ (Xu and Tao 1997: 139)

Note that if an inanimate object NP is preposed into clause-initial position, a resumptive pronoun in possessive form appears after the disposal marker, as in (33). Additional evidence for the comitative source comes from Huang et al (1996: 525–529, no transcriptions provided) who report that the Huaiyin and Shuyang dialects in Jiangsu province, both Jiang-Huai Mandarin dialects, make use of another comitative marker 跟 GEN ‘to follow’ in the function of accusative.<sup>25</sup>

## 7. Xiang dialects

The Xiang dialects, comprising 4.8% of Sinitic languages, are distributed over most of Hunan, except in the north and the northwest and some southern parts of this province where Southwestern Mandarin is spoken. Little has been written on their grammar apart from Wu (1999) who presents a large scale study of passive and disposal constructions in Hunan involving 107 localities, where dialects of several different Sinitic languages are spoken (mainly Xiang, Gan, Hakka and Mandarin). In the case of Xiang dialects, she claims that the predominant pattern is for both passive and disposal markers to derive from verbs of giving, but, importantly, verbs with distinct etymologies. Note that in Sinitic languages, the passive marker introduces the agent NP which means that these dialects have markers from the same lexical source with semantically contrastive functions: agent versus undergoer.

This contrasts with Southwestern Mandarin, also spoken in Hunan, which opposes a disposal marker whose source is a verb of giving to a passive marker whose source is a verb ‘to suffer’. In Standard Mandarin, the passive markers also have their sources in verbs meaning ‘to suffer’, if not in causative verbs, but the disposal marker is not related to a verb of giving (rather, as we have seen, it comes from a verb of grasping, *bǎ*). Two such fossilized verbs used as passive markers in Mandarin are *bèi* 被 < ‘put on the body’ → ‘cover’ → ‘suffer’ → PASSIVE MARKER and *ái* 挨 ‘be next to’ → ‘endure’ → ‘suffer’ → PASSIVE MARKER. The historical development of the *bèi* passive is the subject of Peyraube (1989a) and Sun (1996), while synchronic constructional semantics are treated in Chappell (1986, in prep.).

It may thus appear at first contradictory to find that the disposal marker in more than half of the localities that Wu investigated is derived historically from verbs cognate with Mandarin *bǎ*. The striking difference is that in Hunan this verb has extended its meaning from ‘to hold, grasp, take’ to that of ‘to give’, as in the Changsha dialect of New Xiang, where the form of the disposal construction is

otherwise deceptively the same as for Standard Mandarin (data from Wu 1999: 95):

- (34) Changsha dialect of Xiang – Verbal use of *pa*<sup>41</sup> meaning ‘to give’:  
 (NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – *PA*<sup>41</sup> – NOUN PHRASE<sub>INDIRECT OBJECT</sub> – NOUN PHRASE<sub>DIRECT OBJECT</sub>  
 媽媽 諱 把 我 兩塊 錢 咯  
*ma*<sup>33</sup>*ma ei*, *pa*<sup>41</sup> *ŋo*<sup>41</sup> *lian*<sup>41</sup>*k<sup>h</sup>uai*<sup>41</sup> *tci*<sup>ɛ</sup><sup>3</sup> *lo* mother  
 PRT give 1SG two :CLF money PRT  
 ‘Mum, give me two dollars please.’

- (35) Changsha dialect of Xiang – Accusative use of *pa*<sup>41</sup>:  
 (NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [*PA*<sup>41</sup><sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT</sub>] – VERB PHRASE  
 把 窗戶 打開  
*pa*<sup>41</sup> *tɕ<sup>h</sup>yan*<sup>41</sup> *fu* *ta*<sup>41</sup> *k<sup>h</sup>ai*<sup>33</sup>  
 ACC window strike–open  
 ‘Open the window!’

A grammar of the Changsha dialect of New Xiang by Y. Li (1991: 532-534) also discusses and abundantly exemplifies the verbal use of *pa*<sup>41</sup>. However, he pre-emptly any description of the syntax and semantics of the accusative marker in the disposal construction, claiming that its use is exactly the same as in Mandarin, and consequently finds there is no need to introduce it. Of comparative interest for the present analysis is the use of cognates of *gěi* 給 ‘to give’ as disposal markers in the Shuangpai and Chenzhou dialects (both Southwestern Mandarin) (Wu 1999: 92).

## 8. Gan dialects

Gan dialects are concentrated in Jiangxi province in central China and make up approximately 2.4% of speakers of Chinese languages. According to Liu (1999), verbs of taking prevail as the source of accusative markers in the Gan dialect area. These include *bǎ* 把 ‘to hold’, *ná* 拿 ‘to take’, *tí* 提 ‘to carry’ and *bǎi* 擺 ‘to put’. Liu (1999: 743–744) attributes the use of the disposal form to Mandarin influence, in his claim that for many Gan dialects, a non-disposal form, either S–V–O or a topicalization is preferred and is somehow more native than a disposal construction. No evidence for this claim is provided, nor statistics for the disposal versus topicalization or S–V–O strategies. Moreover, he is implicitly using Standard Mandarin as the benchmark for his comparative analysis, while a

comprehensive description of Chinese dialects by Yuan (1960) does not discuss this construction type at all.

This section makes use of a sketch grammar of the representative dialect for this group, Nanchang (the capital of Jiangxi province) by Laurent Sagart (1999), as well as the data and transcriptions therein. An example of the Nanchang disposal construction using *bǎ* 把 ‘hold’ follows:

- (36) Nanchang dialect of Gan – Accusative use of *pa*<sup>3</sup>  
 (NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [*PA*<sup>3</sup><sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT</sub>] – VERB PHRASE  
 隔 又 把 水 都 完全  
*kaq*<sup>7</sup> *yi*<sup>6</sup> *pa*<sup>3</sup> *sui*<sup>3</sup> *tu*<sup>1</sup> *won*<sup>5</sup> *chi*<sup>on</sup><sup>2</sup>  
 KAQ<sub>NEW</sub> again ACC water all completely

濾 乾 了  
*li*<sup>6</sup> *kon*<sup>1</sup> *lieu*  
 filter dry PFV

‘Once again, strain off all the water.’ (Text 5 : 119 *Noodles*)

Speakers of Nanchang Gan also make use of two other verbs of holding: *na*<sup>2</sup> 拿 ‘to hold, take’ and *laq*<sup>7</sup> 搵 ‘to hold’, particularly with ditransitive verbs of giving in the latter case.

- (37) Nanchang dialect of Gan – Accusative use of *laq*<sup>7</sup>  
 (NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – *LAQ*<sup>7</sup><sub>ACC</sub> – NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT</sub> – VERB PHRASE  
 人家 就 搵 糖 把 你人 喫  
*nyin*<sup>5</sup> *ka*<sup>1</sup> *chiu*<sup>6</sup> *laq*<sup>7</sup> *Dong*<sup>2</sup> *pa*<sup>3</sup> *n*<sup>3</sup> *len* *c[h]iaq*<sup>7</sup>  
 people then ACC sweets give 2SG eat  
 ‘People would give you sweets.’ (Text 3: 65 *New Year*)

- (38) Nanchang dialect of Gan – Verbal use of *na*<sup>2</sup>  
 (NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – *NA*<sup>2</sup> – NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT</sub> – X  
 拿 細仔子 到 我  
*na*<sup>2</sup> *xi*<sup>5</sup> *nga-tsi* *tao*<sup>5</sup> *ngo*<sup>3</sup>  
 take child reach/to 1SG

‘Give me the children.’

According to Sagart’s informants, the use of *pa*<sup>3</sup> is not permitted in (38) in particular. However, these markers appear to be losing ground to the Mandarinized disposal form with *pa*<sup>3</sup> 把 (Sagart 1999: 76). Nonetheless, their mere use gives the lie to any inference that the native strategy involves avoidance of the disposal form, as Liu (1999: 744) supposes and, in fact, claims to be particularly the case for Nanchang Gan. Note that *pa*<sup>3</sup> 把 can also be used as a verb of giving, as in the Xiang dialects, as exemplified by the main verb in (37).

Although there is no evidence to hand of other types of disposal construction, such as those with resumptive postverbal pronouns, the use of the construction with *pa*<sup>3</sup> is not subject to exactly the same constraints as in Mandarin. For example, it is possible for unmodified monosyllabic verbs to occur in the predicate, unlike the case in Standard Mandarin.

- (39) Nanchang dialect of Gan – Imperative with *pa*<sup>3</sup>  
 [*pa*<sup>3</sup><sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT</sub>] – VERB  
 把 佢 煮  
*pa*<sup>3</sup> *cie*<sup>3</sup> *tsu*<sup>3</sup>  
 ACC 3SG boil  
 ‘Boil it.’ (Text 5 : 85 *Noodles*)

Standard Mandarin would require at least a resultative verb or phase complement such as *shóu* ‘cooked, ripe, mature’, as a minimum verb form in the imperative: *bǎ miàntiáo zhǔ-shóu* 把麵條煮熟 [ACC–noodles–boil–cooked] ‘Boil the noodles (till done)’. The lack of a semantic constraint on telicity of the predicate is also reported for Hakka (Lin 1990) and Southern Min dialects (Teng 1982) as well.

## 9. Conclusion

### 9.1 Sources for disposal markers

These data from Sinitic show there are three main sources for disposal markers in Sinitic languages, broadly defined as follows:

**Verbs of taking and holding** > Disposal markers, e.g. cognates and synonyms of *bǎ* 把 ‘to take’ as in Standard Mandarin; *jiāng* 將 ‘to take, lead’ as evidenced in more formal registers of Hakka, Southern Min and Cantonese; *ná* 拿 ‘take, hold’ = *nɔ*<sup>53</sup> in Shanghainese (Wu); *na*<sup>2</sup> 拿 and *laq*<sup>7</sup> 搵 in Gan

dialects, also the borrowed disposal form *pa*<sup>3</sup> 把 in Gan (which otherwise serves as a verb of giving).

**Verbs of giving and helping** > Disposal markers, e.g. cognates and synonyms of *gěi* 給 ‘to give’ as in Southwestern Mandarin; *bǎ* 把 which means ‘to give’ in the Hunan Xiang dialects; *bāng* 幫 ‘to help’ in Wu and Xiang dialects, *tet* 得 ‘to gain, to give’ in Dabu Hakka; *dei*<sup>11</sup> 代 ‘to help’ in Wenzhou (Wu).

**Comitatives** > Disposal markers, e.g. cognates and synonyms of *kā* 共 in Min dialects, *t’ung*<sup>11</sup> 同 and *lau*<sup>11</sup> 佬 in Hakka dialects, *tse*<sup>5</sup> 則 in Shaoxing (Wu); *GĒN* 跟 in Jiang-Huai Mandarin dialects, all with the comitative meanings ‘and, with’ which can be traced still further back to verbs meaning ‘to share, to gather’, ‘to mix’ or ‘to accompany’.

The detailed stages of the grammaticalization pathways have been well-described for verbs of taking and holding in Chinese (for example in Peyraube 1985, 1989b, 1994 and Sun 1996) but are still to be worked out for the two additional sources of *give/help* verbs and comitatives. I propose that this in fact proceeds via dative and oblique usages respectively for the semantic domains of *give/help* verbs and comitatives in Chappell (in prep.).

Typologically, the accusative use of comitatives such as *kāng-kā* in Southern Min and *t’ung*<sup>11</sup> and *lau*<sup>11</sup> in Meixian Hakka would otherwise represent an unusual conceptual shift, if direct and ‘one-step’, both in the case of Sinitic languages and crosslinguistically. While Heine and Kuteva (2002: 84–86) list the semantic shift from COMITATIVE > INSTRUMENTAL, they have no category for COMITATIVE > PATIENT. It is significant that the stage COMITATIVE > INSTRUMENTAL is *not* attested for comitatives in Sinitic but rather only in the case of grammaticalization of *take* verbs (see §2 above) *pace* Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 135) who state with respect to the comitative ‘With few exceptions, the following principle holds in all languages of the world: The word or grammatical device that indicates ACCOMPANIMENT also indicates INSTRUMENTALITY.’

Similarly to schemata proposed for verbs of taking (Heine 1997, Ziegeler 2000), a type of possession is clearly involved for comitatives (and self-evidently for proprietives); this is one based on accompaniment or co-presence.

The conceptual shift for *give/help* verbs into object markers has been very little researched, if at all. While crosslinguistically, the shifts to benefactive, purposive and causative markers for *give* verbs are well-documented, as in Newman (1996) and Song (1996), the further step into an accusative marker is not attested.

I propose that for both domains of *give/help* verbs and the comitative, the semantic change occurs in the following manner, noting that this is just one of the attested pathways of grammaticalization for each class of morpheme, which possesses several:

- (3) **GIVE/HELP** > DATIVE > DATIVE/ACCUSATIVE  
> ACCUSATIVE
- (4) **COMITATIVE** > OBLIQUE MARKER (benefactive / addressee / ablative)  
> ACCUSATIVE

The main difference between the two domains is that the comitative develops into an oblique marker ‘with respect to’ and not specifically into a dative marker (see Chappell 2000 on Southern Min comitatives).<sup>26</sup> In fact, the semantic change for *give* verbs echoes similar developments for Old English pronouns *him*<sub>DAT</sub> > *him*<sub>DAT/ACC</sub> and *hire*<sub>DAT</sub> > *her*<sub>DAT/ACC</sub>, not to mention Spanish accusative case-marking of animates by means of the erstwhile dative (Heine and Kuteva 2002: 103, 37).

Finally, note that in other parts of the world, as in many West African Benue-Kwa languages, accusative markers typically have their source in verbs of taking and holding, and may have an instrumental function in addition, similar to the use of *bǎ* and *jiāng* in the Medieval Chinese period (see Lord 1993: 453–457; Heine and Kuteva 2002: 286–289).

## 9.2 Construction type

At least four types of disposal construction have been identified in this study. These can be defined in terms of syntactic configuration:

- (i) (NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [MARKER<sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT</sub>] – VERB PHRASE
- (ii) (NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [MARKER<sub>ACC</sub> + NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT(i)</sub>] VERB<sub>1</sub> – (VERB<sub>2</sub>) – PRONOUN<sub>(i)</sub>
- (iii) NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT(i)</sub> – [MARKER<sub>ACC</sub> + PRONOUN<sub>(i)</sub>] – VERB PHRASE
- (iv) (NP<sub>SUBJECT</sub>) – [CHIONG<sub>ACC</sub> – NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT(i)</sub>] – *KĀ*<sub>ACC</sub> – PRONOUN<sub>(i)</sub> – VERB PHRASE

All the Sinitic languages examined in this brief survey have been shown to possess at least one type of disposal construction:

$(NP_{\text{SUBJECT}}) - [\text{MARKER}_{\text{ACC}} + NP_{\text{DIRECT OBJECT}}] - \text{VERB PHRASE}$

While the basic structure is isomorphic in form with the Standard Mandarin *bǎ* construction, it may make use of an etymologically distinct marker, according to the classification in §9.1. In addition to this, certain Sinitic languages permit resumptive or anaphoric pronouns in the postverbal slot (Hakka, Cantonese):

$(NP_{\text{SUBJECT}}) - [\text{MARKER}_{\text{ACC}} + NP_{\text{DIRECT OBJECT}(i)}] \text{VERB}_1 - [\text{VERB}_2] - \text{PRONOUN}_{(i)}$

In a third construction type, the direct object is placed in clause-initial position and a resumptive pronoun follows the disposal marker (certain Min and Wu dialects):

$NP_{\text{DIRECT OBJECT}(i)} - [\text{MARKER}_{\text{ACC}} + \text{PRONOUN}_{(i)}] - \text{VERB PHRASE}$

In both construction types, the pronoun must be coreferential with the direct object preposed to it, not to mention, invariably in third person singular form. This contrasts strikingly with the case for standard Mandarin which does not possess either structural subtype for its *bǎ* construction.

A fourth structure found only in Southern Min involves hybridization and the use of a resumptive pronoun, whereby both the native and Medieval markers of the disposal construction co-occur:

$(NP_{\text{SUBJECT}}) - [\text{CHIONG} - NP_{\text{DIRECT OBJECT}(i)}] - \text{KĀ} - \text{PRONOUN}_{(i)} - \text{VERB PHRASE}_{\text{TELIC}}$

An interesting semantic constraint has also been observed for certain Hakka and Wu dialects: the direct object governed by the disposal marker is required to be coded as a possessive NP.

### 9.3 Intra-typological classification

A highly preliminary intra-typological classification of the seven major Sinitic languages with respect to disposal constructions can be proposed with the caveat that detailed research into the syntactic and semantic constraints needs to be made before a full typology is possible.

Standard Mandarin stands out as a singleton: it possesses just the one main type of disposal construction which has semantically generalized to mark absolutive NPs, and not just accusative ones. The Southern Sinitic languages of

Cantonese, Hakka and Min all evince a Medieval stratum, represented in their use of cognates of *jiāng*; with Hakka and Cantonese further related by their use of a subtype with the postverbal resumptive pronoun. Hakka and Min also possess distinct markers which belong to the native stratum. Min and Wu dialects are naturally associated by their use of the construction type with a clause-initial patient noun coreferenced by the following accusatively-marked pronoun. These two dialect groups are reputed to be two of the oldest branches of Sinitic, with Min dialects having possibly split off from an ancestral proto-Wu-Min language (see Chappell 2001a). Furthermore, Hakka, Min and Wu are conspicuous for their use of comitatives in the function of disposal markers.

In contrast to these Southern Sinitic languages, the central zone Sinitic languages of Gan and Xiang which have remained in prolonged linguistic contact with Mandarin dialects can be grouped together for their use of ‘give’ and ‘take’ verbs in the function of disposal markers. ‘Give’ is also the commonest source for Wu whose northern dialect areas are also in close proximity with Mandarin, possibly forming an areal feature for this central transitional zone.

Finally, from examination of the data in these six Sinitic languages for disposal constructions, it should be clear that many important phenomena are overlooked if only direct correlates of the Mandarin *bǎ* or *jiāng* constructions are searched for. By ‘direct correlates’, I mean those which ‘translate’ the constituents and word order for standard Chinese *bǎ* or *jiāng* constructions slot-by-slot, and use cognate markers. This results in two main linguistic ‘crimes’: Either constructional subtypes are considered as somehow ‘deviant’ when they do not conform to the structural framework for *bǎ* or *jiāng* constructions (for example, resumptive pronouns) or important kinds of disposal constructions are completely overlooked because the markers are non-cognate with *bǎ* or *jiāng*, as in the case of comitatives and *give/help* verbs.

Clearly, we have a case of standard Mandarin taking the place of European languages such as Greek and Latin as the new model for descriptive grammar-writing in Chinese linguistics. In other words, a Eurocentric model has been replaced by a Sinocentric one, specifically one that is based on the standard language, Mandarin. Paradoxically, Mandarin in its turn has not proven to be the best departure point for typological comparison within Sinitic: it possesses just the one type of disposal construction, and the one accusative marker, whose use has further evolved into an absolutive, placing it somewhat out in ‘left field’, at variance with its sister languages, many of which possess two or more construction types not to mention several markers. At the same time, its constraint on telicity of the predicate appears to be stronger than for other Sinitic languages, although certain dialect groups permit the use of intransitive predicates too, such



as Southern Min. The possibilities are more restricted than Mandarin, however, including only certain kinds of undergoer subjects (see Teng 1982).

The extensive range of structural possibilities and semantic constraints which shape these different disposal constructions shows that it is an erroneous exercise to simply assume a broad syntactic isomorphism between Mandarin and other Sinitic languages. It is therefore crucial to explore the diversity of the Sinitic languages in a more detailed and thorough way for the purposes of working out intra-Sinitic typological parameters and for finding conceptual links with structures that have similar functions in other languages of the world.

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<sup>1</sup> I thank the editors, William McGregor, Alain Peyraube, Laurent Sagart and the anonymous reviewers for their comments and critique of this study, also for their many excellent suggestions. I am indebted to Wen Huiping, CRLAO, for checking the Mandarin data.

A note on terminology: I use the term ‘Sinocentrism’ in preference to the more unwieldy ‘Mandarincentrism’ or ‘Mandarocentrism’, and, moreover, use it with a negative connotation. This neologism refers to the bias in choosing the official and standard language, Mandarin, as representative of all Chinese languages, and in fact, reflects the common use of ‘Chinese’ to mean ‘Mandarin’.

<sup>2</sup> This has the handwritten title of *Gramatica China* and annotation on the first page that it was written by Father Melchior de Mançano for the use of Father Rajmundo Feijoo. It is part of a corpus of early Southern Min materials being used by this author in a joint project with Alain Peyraube on the diachronic syntax of Southern Min (16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries). Prof. Peyraube



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uncovered this precious manuscript in the University of Barcelona Library some years ago. However, a grammar by Juan Cobo (d. 1592) entitled *Arte de la Lengua China* [Grammar of the Chinese language] may be the earliest grammar of any Chinese language. The manuscript is mentioned in Coblin and Levi (2000: ix) but has not been sighted, presuming a copy still exists.

<sup>3</sup> Information regarding Funing 福寧 in Fujian province as Varos's main place of work comes from W. South Coblin (pers. comm.), and not Fuzhou 福州, as previously believed (e.g. Gonzales 1967).

<sup>4</sup> A list of works by the Dominicans who were the most active sect among missionaries in the production of grammars and descriptions of Chinese languages and dialects can be found in Gonzales (1967). Van der Loon (1966, 1967) also provides a brief historiography of the study of Chinese languages by western scholars, discussing major works from 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. An early important bibliography on works published in China by Europeans is that of Cordier (1901).

<sup>5</sup> Abel-Rémusat's grammar (1822) of vernacular Chinese is an exception to this rule, for the reason that it sets out to explain Chinese grammar on its own terms (see Peyraube 2001). Thus, Abel-Rémusat provides brief descriptions of both *bǎ* and *jiāng*.

<sup>6</sup> I use the term 'accusative marking' for nouns preceded by a preposition whose grammatical function is to indicate that the dependent noun is in the argument role of direct object. This is mainly to avoid ambiguity, given the large number of senses 'object' has. 'Accusative marker' is also used interchangeably with 'disposal' marker, a term adopted from the domain of Chinese linguistics.

Even though Sinitic languages are clearly not inflectional and do not possess morphological case marking *per se*, the disposal construction is the kind of structure from which eventual inflections emerge when the grammaticalization process has taken its full course. Furthermore, in terms of typology, there are benefits to be gained from unifying the use of terminology across languages.

<sup>7</sup> This is the more common name for *Grammaire générale et raisonnée* (1660) by A. Arnauld and C. Lancelot. Reprint, 1997. Paris: Editions Allia.

<sup>8</sup> One of the anonymous reviewers observes that the same situation applies in the study of unrelated minority languages in China.

<sup>9</sup> Yue-Hashimoto (1993) also provides a description of dialectal differences for many different construction types, and includes a comprehensive reference list on dialectal studies of Sinitic languages.

<sup>10</sup> Abbreviations used in the glossing of examples are as follows: ABS=absolutive marker preceding affected object noun, ACC=accusative marker preceding affected object noun, ACH=achievement aspect marker, ADV=marker of adverb formation, AGT=agentive marker, ASST=assertive modality particle, CLF=classifier, COMP=completive aspect marker, COMPR=comparative marker, CONT=continuative aspect marker, COP=copula, CRS=sentence-final marker of a currently relevant state of affairs, DEM=demonstrative, DIMN=diminutive suffix, DIR=directional aspect marker encliticized to verbs, EXT=extent, marker of a postverbal complement indicating the extent of an action or its result state: 'so X that', GEN=genitive marker, INCH=inchoative aspect marker, INTS=intensifier, LIG=marker of ligature and dependency for attributive phrases, also for relative clauses, LOC=locative, NAME=proper name, NEG=negative adverb, NEG:IMP=negative imperative modal verb, NOM=nominalizer, PFV=perfective aspect marker, PL=plural, PRT=modal or discourse particle, Q=quantifier, SG=singular.

<sup>11</sup> In fact, many semantically reflexive unergative predicates such as *chī-kě le* eat-thirsty 'to eat so that one becomes thirsty' or *zǒu-fá* walk:exhausted 'cause oneself to become exhausted through

walking’ are possible (see Chappell 1992b). Furthermore, in older forms of Mandarin and in certain non-standard Mandarin dialects, the use of motion verbs with *bǎ* constructions is permitted (see Frei 1956, Grootaers 1954). For example, *Bǎ ge zhū pǎole*. [ABS-CLF-pig-run-CRS] ‘A pig is running away.’ In the latter case, the definition for the constructional semantics would need to be broadened.

<sup>12</sup> Given information in most Chinese languages is typically coded into a preverbal position; new is postverbal (see Li and Thompson 1981 on Mandarin).

<sup>13</sup> This may appear to be at variance with Frei’s extremely perceptive analysis (1956) of the *ba* construction as an ergative construction; however, this is in nomenclature only: I choose ‘absolutive’ in preference to ‘ergative’ for the reason that the ergative NP is not morphologically marked at all (see Chappell 1992b however for a contrasting position).

<sup>14</sup> Percentages of the population are quoted throughout this chapter as a rough approximation of speaker numbers, given that the most recent censuses in China have not surveyed maternal language or knowledge of other dialects. In other words, these are estimates, absolute figures not being possible.

<sup>15</sup> I use the *pīnyīn* romanization system for the **Mandarin** examples, a system adopted in 1958 for transcription and language pedagogy purposes by the Chinese government. Note that Standard Mandarin, or *pǔtōnghuà*, ‘the common language’ refers to a formal, educated variety of the Beijing dialect from the Northern group of Mandarin. Consensus for the definition of ‘standard Mandarin’, or *pǔtōnghuà*, was achieved at the Symposium on the Standardization of Modern Chinese held in China in 1956. It is specifically based on the pronunciation of the Beijing dialect, the lexicon of the northern dialects and the grammar of modern vernacular works (Chappell 1980). Chinese characters in traditional *fántǐzì* form are provided, and where feasible, also for the six other Sinitic languages treated in this study. Where a demotic character is not known or attested, the use of an empty box, thus □, is conventional practice in Chinese linguistics.

Tone marks are indicated on all syllables, apart from unstressed ones, and without indicating tone sandhi. For the **Southern Min** examples, I use the Church Romanization system, as exemplified in the Carstairs Douglas dictionary (1990). TONE DIACRITICS: **v** (no marking) = high level 55; **ǎ** = high falling 53; **ǎ** = low falling 21; **ǎ** = mid rising 24; **ǎ** = low level 22, **vh** = low checked 32 (glottalized ending), **ǎC** = high checked 4 where C = plosive. **Meixian Hakka** examples follow the romanization devised by McIver (1991), unless examples from Rey (1990) are being quoted which uses a francophone system. The **Cantonese** examples from Cheung (1992) use the Yale system while my own data employs the Sidney Lau system. The **Shanghainese**, **Xiang and Gan** examples are rendered in the International Phonetic Alphabet.

<sup>16</sup> This S-V-O counterpart is dispreferred for the reason that the postverbal noun is fully lexical and thus, creates a ‘heavy VP’ following the polysyllabic verb with its directional complement.

<sup>17</sup> I do not agree with one of the anonymous reviewers that the intransitive *bǎ* constructions increase the valency since the causing event is generally not an argument of the verb. The absolutive NP may also represent the grammatical subject of a reflexive predicate in Mandarin, see Chappell (1992b). Intransitive predicates such as *lèi* ‘be tired’ are causativized by the constructional semantics of the disposal form, which indeed has several subtypes, as argued in Chappell (1992b).

<sup>18</sup> Peyraube (1985, 1989, 1996) has argued convincingly that *bǎ* did not directly supersede the Archaic Chinese construction with *yǐ*, but was rather in competition with the earlier *jiāng* construction.

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<sup>19</sup> The bridging stage may be the use of *kāng* as a general marker of the oblique, if not via a benefactive/dative interpretation. This point of view is taken in Chappell (in prep, chapter 4). Note also that in contemporary Min dialects, *kā* ~ *kāng* is a polysemous morpheme, coding several functions, as described in Chappell (2000).

<sup>20</sup> Chappell (2001c) devotes a section to the topic of hybridization of syntactic constructions in Sinitic languages.

<sup>21</sup> Apparently, this construction can be used by younger generation speakers of Taiwanese Mandarin (thanks to Dylan Tsai, National Tsing Hua University, for this observation). In this case, it can be viewed as a calque from Taiwanese Southern Min (see also Chappell 2001c and to appear for the same phenomenon with *say* verbs).

<sup>22</sup> In the original documents, examples (17) and (18) are given in character form only. I have transcribed them in one of the most widely used transcription systems which was devised by missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as represented in the Hakka dictionary of McIver (1991). Translations are similarly my own.

<sup>23</sup> The reader will note various romanizations for the comitative marker in Hakka: *t'ung*<sup>11</sup>, *t'oung* and *thung*. This authentically reflects the original works from which the examples were taken.

<sup>24</sup> For example, this construction type is not treated in any depth in Matthews and Yip's reference grammar of Cantonese (1994), nor mentioned in Yuan (1960).

<sup>25</sup> I use Mandarin *pīnyīn* romanization in small capitals for the comitative marker 跟 GEN, as no transcription has been provided in the original source for this character, in either of the dialects listed.

<sup>26</sup> This standpoint contradicts and supersedes my earlier view (Chappell 2000) that the accusative meaning developed from an ablative or Source use of *kā*, the comitative marker, in Southern Min. I am now of the view that the comitative 'and, with' did not develop into a polysemous preposition meaning 'to', 'for', 'from' but rather grammaticalized into a preposition with the vague semantics of 'with respect to'. I owe this enlightenment and solution to William McGregor. One of the anonymous reviewers also observed that the BENEFACTIVE > ACCUSATIVE link might explain the comitative source, if not the *give/help* source as in the semantic re-interpretation 'He helped the child get dressed' > 'He dressed the child.'