

## Ditransitive Constructions in Mandarin Chinese

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Issues:

- (a) How many ditransitive constructions are there?
- (b) Behavioral properties of ditransitive constructions

I. How many constructions?

- (1) a. Wo song                    -le     yiben shu gei ta                    dative  
       I    give-as-present -PERF one-CL book to him            V NP *gei* NP  
       ‘I gave a book to him as a present.’
- b. Wo song                    -gei ta yiben shu                    *Vgei* double object  
       I    give-as-present-to him one-CL book                V-*gei* NP NP  
       ‘I gave to him a book as a present.’
- c. Wo song                    ta yiben shu                    double object  
       I    give-as-present him one-CL book                    V NP NP  
       ‘I gave him a book as a present.’

(2) Comparison of verbs in the three constructions

<u>subclass</u>	<u>representative member</u>	Dative	<i>Vgei</i> DO	DO
(a)				
transfer of possession	<i>song</i> ‘give as present’	yes	yes	yes
transfer of knowledge	<i>chuanshou</i> ‘pass on’	yes	yes	yes
provision	<i>tigong</i> ‘provide’	yes	yes	yes
*giving up possession	<i>rang</i> ‘yield’	yes	yes	yes
(b)				
contribution	<i>juan</i> ‘donate’	yes	yes	no
manner of motion	<i>diu</i> ‘throw’	yes	yes	no
instrument of communication	<i>ji</i> ‘mail’	yes	yes	no
promise	<i>xu</i> ‘promise’	yes	yes	no
referral	<i>jieshao</i> ‘introduce’	yes	yes	no
(c)				
creation	<i>zuo</i> ‘make’	yes	no	no
obtaining	<i>mai</i> ‘buy’	yes	no	no
(d)				
feeding	<i>wei</i> ‘feed’	no	no	yes
communicated message	<i>gaosu</i> ‘tell’	no	no	yes
future having	<i>zhun</i> ‘allow’	no	no	yes

\*different meanings between Dative/*Vgei* DO and DO

- (3) a. Wo na -le yidian dongxi gei gebi  
I take-PERF some things to next-door  
'I took some things to (the people) next door.'
- b. \*Wo na -le yidian dongxi gei lukou  
I take-PERF some things to intersection  
'I took some things to the intersection.'
- (4) a. \*Wo songgei lukou yidian dongxi  
I give-as-present-to intersection some things  
\* 'I gave some things to the intersection as presents.'
- b. ?Wo jigei Taibei yifeng xin  
I mail-to Taipei one-CL letter  
? 'I mailed Taipei a letter.'
- (5) a. Laoban gaosu ta yijian shi  
boss tell him one-CL matter  
'The boss told him one thing.'
- b. Xiaoming wen laoshi yige wenti  
Xiaoming ask teacher one-CL question  
'Xiaoming asked the teacher a question.'
- (6) Range of transfer  
(i) act of transfer: *song* 'give as a present', *jie* 'lend', *jiao* 'teach',  
(ii) manner: *diu* 'throw', *ti* 'kick', *chuan* 'pass', *di* 'hand over'  
(iii) instrument: *ji* 'mail, send', *chuanzhen* 'fax'  
(iv) pre-condition: *mai* 'buy', *zuo* 'make'
- (7) a. Wo na -le yiben shu gei Lisi kan V NP [*gei* NP] V  
I bring-PERF one-CL book to Lisi read  
'I brought a book for Lisi to read.'
- b. Wo diu -le yige qiu gei gou jie  
I throw-PERF one-CL ball to dog catch  
'I threw a ball for the dog to catch'
- (8) a. Wo zai zhao difang gei mao shui  
I PROG look-for place for cat sleep  
'I'm looking for a place for the cat to sleep.'
- b. \*Wo zai zhao difang gei mao  
I PROG look-for place for cat  
'I'm looking for a place for the cat.'

- (9) a. Wo fan-le yipian wenzhang gei ta kan  
 I flip-PERF one-CL article for him read  
 ‘I opened an article for him to read.’
- b. \*Wofan-le yipian wenzhang gei ta  
 I flip-PERF one-CL article for him  
 ‘I opened an article for him.’
- (10)a. Ta tou -le Lisi yige zhaoxiangji  
 he steal-PERF Lisi one-CL camera  
 ‘He stole a camera from Lisi.’
- b. Ta yong -le wo yiben zidian  
 he use-PERF me one-CL dictionary  
 ‘He used a dictionary from me.’
- c. Wo zhu-le ta yibao miantiao  
 I cook-PERF him one-CL noodles  
 ‘I cooked a package of noodles from him.’
- (11)a. Najian shi, ni gaosu-le shei?  
 that-CL matter you tell -PERF who  
 ‘That matter, who did you tell?’
- b. Nage fangfa, ni jiao -le shei?  
 that-CL method you teach-PERF who  
 ‘That method, who did you teach?’
- (12)a. \*Neige zhaoxiangji, ta tou-le shei?  
 that-CL camera he steal-PERF who  
 ‘That camera, who did he steal it from?’
- b. \*Neiben zidian, ni yong-le shei?  
 that-CL dictionary you use -PERF who  
 \*‘That dictionary, whose did you use?’
- c. \*Neibao miantiao, ni zhu -le shei?  
 that-package noodle you cook-PERF who  
 \*‘That package of noodles, whose did you cook?’

- (13)a. Wo yijing gaosu Lisi \_\_\_ le.  
I already tell Lisi PRT  
'I already told Lisi.'
- b. Wo jiao ni \_\_\_\_.  
I teach you  
'I will teach you.'
- (14)a. \*Ta tou -le Lisi \_\_\_\_  
he steal-PERF Lisi  
'He stole Lisi's.'
- b. \*Ta yong-le wo \_\_\_\_  
he use -PERF me  
'He used mine.'
- c. \*Wo zhu -le ta \_\_\_\_  
I cook-PERF him  
'I cooked his.'
- (15)a. Ta tou -le \_\_\_\_  
he steal-PERF  
'He stole it.'
- b. Ta yong-le \_\_\_\_  
he use -PERF  
'He used it.'
- c. Wo zhu -le \_\_\_\_  
I cook-PERF  
'I cooked it.'
- (16)a. Xiaoming da-le ta yige xiao baogao  
Xiaoming hit-PERF him one-CL small report  
'Xiaoming sent in a small report on him. (Xiaoming told on him.)'
- b. Laowang bang-le wo yige mang  
Laowang help-PERF me one-CL help  
'Laowang helped me once (Laowang did me a favor.)'
- c. Laobanji -le wo yibi zhang  
boss keep-PERF me one-CL bill  
'My boss kept a score on me.'

## II. Behavioral properties

(17) Some of the ditransitive verbs that passivize:

- a. *song* ‘give as present’, *huan* ‘return’, *zu* ‘rent’, *jieshao* ‘introduce’, *juan* ‘donate’  
 b. *wei* ‘feed’, *wen* ‘ask’

Passivization: first pattern (18-20)

(18) indirective encoding--&gt; indirective passive

- a. Zhangsan *song* -le yiben shu gei Lisi  
 Zhangsan give-as-present-PERF one-CL book to Lisi  
 ‘Zhangsan gave a book to Lisi as a present.’
- b. Naben shu bei Zhangsan *song* gei Lisi le T  
 that-CL book by Zhangsan give-as-present to Lisi PRT  
 ‘That book was given as a present to Lisi by Zhangsan.’
- c. \*Lisi bei Zhangsan *song* -le yiben shu \*R  
 Lisi by Zhangsan give-as-present-PERF one-CL book  
 ‘Lisi was given a book as a present by Zhangsan.’

(19) neutral encoding --&gt; indirective passive

- a. Zhangsan *jigei* Lisi yiben shu  
 Zhangsan mail-to Lisi one-CL book  
 ‘Zhangsan mailed to Lisi a book.’
- b. Naben shu bei Zhangsan *jigei* Lisi le T  
 that-CL book by Zhangsan mail-to Lisi PRT  
 ‘That book was mailed to Lisi by Zhangsan.’
- c. \*Lisi bei Zhangsan *jigei* -le yiben shu \*R  
 Lisi by Zhangsan mail-to -PERF one-CL book  
 ‘Lisi was mailed a book by Zhangsan.’

(20) neutral encoding --&gt; indirective passive

- a. Zhangsan *song* Lisi yiben shu  
 Zhangsan give-as-present Lisi one-CL book  
 ‘Zhangsan gave Lisi a book as a present.’
- b. Naben shu bei Zhangsan *song* Lisi le T  
 that-CL book by Zhangsan give-as-present Lisi PRT  
 ‘That book was given as a present to Lisi by Zhangsan.’
- c. \*Lisi bei Zhangsan *song*-le yiben shu \*R  
 Lisi by Zhangsan give-as-present one-CL book  
 ‘Lisi was given a book by Zhangsan.’

## (21) second pattern

- a. Zhangsan wen-le Lisi yige wenti  
Zhangsan ask -PERF Lisi one-CL question  
'Zhangsan asked Lisi a question.'
- b. \*Nage wenti bei Zhangsan wen-le Lisi \*T  
that-CL question by Zhangsan ask-PERF Lisi  
'That question was asked Lisi by Zhangsan.'
- c. Lisi bei Zhangsan wen-le yige wenti R  
Lisi by Zhangsan ask-PERF one-CL question  
'Lisi was asked a question by Zhangsan.'

## (22)a. Only a few ditransitive verbs allow passivization.

- b. Two patterns: verbs that occur in the dative construction allow T- passivization, while verbs that do not occur in the dative construction allow R-passivization.

Relativization

## (23) indirective encoding

- a. Zhangsan song -le yiben shu gei Lisi  
Zhangsan give-as-present-PERF one-CL book to Lisi  
'Zhangsan gave a book to Lisi.'
- b. Zhangsan song gei Lisi de naben shu T - gap  
Zhangsan give-as-present to Lisi de that-CL book  
'The book that Zhangsan gave to Lisi as present.'
- c. ?Zhangsan song -le yiben shu de nage ren ?R - gap  
Zhangsan give-as-present- PERF one-CL book de that-CL person  
'The person that Zhangsan gave a book as a present.'
- d. Zhangsan song -le yiben shu gei ta de nage ren R - pronoun  
Zhangsan give-as-present-PERF one-CL book to him DE that-CL person  
'The person that Zhangsan gave a book to him as a present.'

## (24) neutral encoding

- a. Zhangsan song -gei Lisi yiben shu  
Zhangsan give-as-present-to Lisi one-CL book  
'Zhangsan gave Lisi a book as a present.'
- b. Zhangsan song -gei Lisi de naben shu T - gap  
Zhangsan give-as-present-to Lisi DE that-CL book  
'The book that Zhangsan gave to Lisi as a present.'

- c. \*Zhangsan song -gei yiben shu de nage ren \*R - gap  
 Zhangsan give-as-present-to one-CL book DE that-CL person  
 ‘The person that Zhangsan gave a book as a present.’
- d. Zhangsan song -gei ta yiben shu de nage ren R - pronoun  
 Zhangsan give-as-present-to him one-CL book DE that-CL person  
 ‘The person that Zhangsan gave him a book as a present.’

## (25) neutral encoding

- a. Zhangsan song -le Lisi yiben shu  
 Zhangsan give-as-present-PERF Lisi one-CL book  
 ‘Zhangsan gave Lisi a book as a present.’
- b. Zhangsan song -le Lisi de naben shu T - gap  
 Zhangsan give-as-present-PERF Lisi de that-CL book  
 ‘The book that Zhangsan gave Lisi as a present.’
- c. ?Zhangsan song -le yiben shu de nage ren ?R - gap  
 Zhangsan give-as-present-PERF one-CL book de that-CL person  
 ‘The person that Zhangsan gave a book as a present.’
- d. Zhangsan song -le ta yiben shu de nage ren R - pronoun  
 Zhangsan give-as-present-PERF him one-CL book DE that-CL person  
 ‘The person that Zhangsan gave him a book as a present.’

- (26) a. In all three constructions, T can be relativized, and R can only be relativized with the pronoun strategy.  
 b. Mandarin shows indirective alignment with respect to relativization regardless of the alignment of encoding.

Constituent questions

- (27) a. Ni yao song shenme gei ta?  
 you want give-as-present what to him  
 ‘What do you want to give to him as a present?’
- b. Ni yao songgei ta shenme?  
 you want give-as-present-to him what  
 ‘What do you want to give to him as a present?’
- c. Ni yao song ta shenme?  
 you want give-as-present him what  
 ‘What do you want to give him as a present?’

- (28)a. ?Ni yao song yiben shu/naben shu gei shei?  
 you want give-as-present one-CL book/that-CL book to who  
 ‘Who do you want to give a book/that book to as a present?’
- b. ?Ni yao song -gei shei yiben shu /naben shu?  
 you want give-as-present-to who one-CL book/that-CL book  
 ‘Who do you want to give a book/that book as a present?’
- c. ?Ni yao song shei yiben shu /naben shu?  
 you want give-as-present who one-CL book/that-CL book  
 ‘Who do you want to give a book/that book as a present?’
- (29)a. Neiben shu, ni yao song gei shei?  
 that-CL book you want give-as-present to who  
 ‘That book, who do you want to give it to as a present?’
- b. Neiben shu, ni yao song -gei shei?  
 that-CL book you want give-as-present-to who  
 ‘That book, who do you want to give it to as a present?’
- c. Neiben shu, ni yao song shei?  
 that-CL book you want give-as-present who  
 ‘That book, who do you want to give it to as a present?’
- (30)a. T can be questioned in-situ.  
 b. R can be questioned only when T is topicalized  
 c. Mandarin shows indirective alignment with respect to constituent question formation regardless of alignment of encoding.

### Scope

- (31)a. Zhangsan song -le yiben shu gei meige xuesheng R > T  
 Zhangsan give-as-present-PERF one-CL book to every-CL student  
 ‘Zhangsan gave a book to every student as a present.’
- b. ?\*Zhangsan song -le meiben shu gei yige xuesheng R > T  
 Zhangsan give-as-present-PERF every-CL book to one-CL student \*T > R  
 ‘Zhangsan gave every book to a student as a present.’
- c. Zhangsan song -le sanben shu gei liangge xuesheng R > T  
 Zhangsan gave-as-present-PERF three-CL book to two-CL student \*T > R  
 ‘Zhangsan gave three books to two students as a present.’



- (32)a. Zhangsan song -gei meige xuesheng yiben shu R > T  
 Zhangsan give-as-present-to every-CL student one-CL book  
 ‘Zhangsan gave every student a book as a present.’
- b. ?\*Zhangsan song -gei yige xuesheng meiben shu  
 Zhangsan give-as-present-to one-CL student every-CL book  
 ?\*‘Zhangsan gave to a student every book.’
- c. Zhangsan song -gei liangge xuesheng sanben shu R > T  
 Zhangsan give-as-present-to two-CL student three-CL book \*T > R  
 ‘Zhangsan gave two students three books.’
- (33)a. Zhangsan song -le meige xuesheng yiben shu R > T  
 Zhangsan give-as-present-PERF every-CL student one-CL book  
 ‘Zhangsan gave every student a book as a present.’
- b. ?Zhangsan song -le yige xuesheng meiben shu  
 Zhangsan give-as-present-PERF one-CL student every-CL book  
 ‘Zhangsan gave a student every book as a present.’
- c. Zhangsan song -le liangge xuesheng sanben shu R > T  
 Zhangsan give-as-present-PERF two-CL student three-CL book \*T > R  
 ‘Zhangsan gave two students three books as a present.’
- (34)a. In all three constructions, R has scope over T, but T cannot have scope over R.  
 b. Unexpected: Scope in Mandarin Chinese is usually determined by linear order.

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