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

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

*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.*Wo fan-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 --> 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 --> 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 --> 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-passinivation,
      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 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 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?
     ‘Who do you want to give a book/that book to as a present?’

b. Ni yao song -gei shei yiben shu /naben shu?
     ‘Who do you want to give a book/that book as a present?’

c. Ni yao song shei yiben shu /naben shu?
     ‘Who do you want to give a book/that book as a present?’

(29) a. Neiben shu, ni yao song gei shei?
     ‘That book, who do you want to give it to as a present?’

b. Neiben shu, ni yao song -gei shei?
     ‘That book, who do you want to give it to as a present?’

c. Neiben shu, ni yao song shei?
     ‘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 gave-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 gave-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.

References


