Conditions for the emergence of unaccusative 'give' in Sinitic languages:
Evidence from Hui'an (Southern Min)

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Overview

- Objective of present study

- Two types of unaccusative 'give' constructions

- How did unaccusative 'give' emerge?

- Typological observations on unaccusative 'give' constructions

- Conclusion

Objective of this study

- To investigate the conditions for the rise of unaccusative 'give' constructions in Sinitic languages

  - What is the function of the unaccusative 'give' construction?

  - How did unaccusative 'give' emerge?

  - How robust is the unaccustive 'give' construction typologically?

Background: Sinitic languages

The Sinitic Languages

Mandarin
- 北東官話 Northeastern
- 冀魯官話 Jilu
- 膠遼官話 Jiaoliao
- 北京官話 Beijing
- 中原官話 Zhongyuan
- 蘭銀官話 Lanyin
- 江淮官話 Jianghuai
- 西南官話 Southwestern
- 桂柳片 Gui-Liu Pian
- 晉語 Jin
- 淮南 Huainan
- 吳語 Wu
- 湘語 Xiang
- 贛語 Gan

Min
- 閩南 Minnan
- 莆仙 Puxian
- 閩東 Mindong
- 閩北 Minbei
- 閩中 Minzhong
- 瓊文 Qiongwen
- 邵將 Shaojiang
- 客家 Hakka
- 粵語 Cantonese
- 平話 Pinghua
- 土話 Tuhua
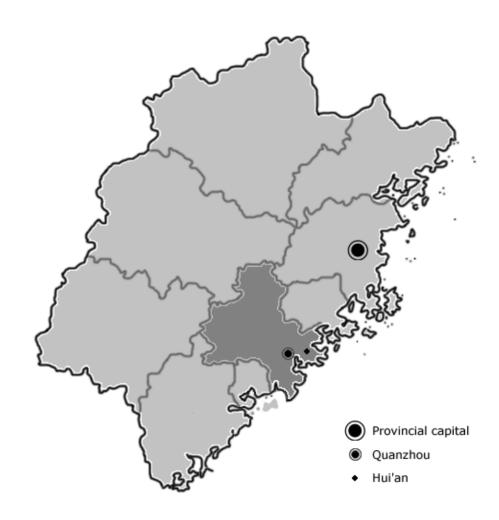- 鄉話 Xianghua

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Background: Sinitic languages & Southern Min

- Sinitic languages (or Chinese languages)

  one of two primary branches of Sino-Tibetan

  Varieties of Sinitic languages include Mandarin, Min, Wu, Hakka, Hui and Gan.

- Southern Min (or Minnan)

  a Chinese dialect group, mainly spoken in the south of Fujian province, Guangdong province, southern Hainan Island, the south of Zhejiang province, and also in Taiwan, Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia

Background: location of Hui'an

Provincial capital
Quanzhou
Hui'an

Some uses of 'give' constructions

- Lexical 'give'

- Dative and benefactive 'give'
  - Lord (1993); Lord, Yap & Iwasaki (2002)

- Causative and passive 'give'
  - Nedjalkov (1993); Yap & Iwasaki (2003)

- Unaccusative 'give'
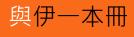 - Matthews, Xu & Yip (2005); Chen (2011); Lin (2011); this study

Lexical 'give'

1a) <u>Mandarin</u>

 gěi *tā* *yī* *běn* *shū*

 give 3SG one CL book

 'Give him a book.'

給他一本書

1b) <u>Min (Hui'an dialect)</u>

 khɔ$^{5\text{-}4}$ *i^1* *tsit$^{8\text{-}4}$* *pun$^{3\text{-}2}$* *tsheʔ^7*

 give 3SG one CL book

 'Give him a book.'

與伊一本冊

Dative 'give'

2a) <u>Mandarin</u>

liú gěi tā yàoshí   cf. *yàoshí liú gěi tā*

leave give 3SG key   (more commonly used)

'Leave the key to him.'

留給他鑰匙

2b) <u>Min (Hui'an dialect)</u>

so³⁻²si² lau²   khɔ⁵⁻⁴ i¹

key   leave give   3SG

'Leave the key to him.'

鎖匙留與伊

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Benefactive 'give'

3a) <u>Mandarin</u>

wǒ   *gěi*   *tā*   *fānyì*

1SG   give   3SG   translate

'I translated (it) for him.'

我給他繙譯

3b) <u>Min (Hui'an dialect)</u>

ua^3   *$khɔ^{5-4}$* *i^1*   *$huan^{1-6}iak^8$*

1SG   give   3SG   translate

'I translated (it) for him.'

*我與伊繙譯

Causative 'give'

4a) <u>Mandarin</u>

   gěi   *tā*   *xīuxi*   *jǐ*   *tīan*

   give 3SG rest   several day

   'Let him rest for a couple of days.'

給他休息幾天

4b) <u>Min (Hui'an dialect)</u>

   khɔ$^{5\text{-}4}$ *i^1*   *hioʔ^7* *kui$^{3\text{-}2}$*   *let^8*

   give   3SG rest   several day

   'Let him rest for a couple of days.'

與伊歇幾日

Passive 'give'

5a) <u>Mandarin</u>

衣服給雨淋濕了

yīfú	*gěi*	*yǔ*	*lín*	*shì*	*le*
clothes	give	rain	drip	wet	PFV

'The clothes got wet in the rain.'

5b) <u>Min (Hui'an dialect)</u>

衫褲與雨拍澹去

sã$^{1-6}$khɔ^5	*khɔ$^{5-4}$*	*hɔ^4*	*phaʔ$^{7-8}$*	*tam^2*	*khɯ^0*
clothes	give	rain	hit	wet	go

'The clothes got wet in the rain.'

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Type 1 Unaccusative ʻgive' ('escape'-type)

6a) <u>Mandarin</u>

    *xiǎotōu   gěi   tā   pǎo le

    thief   give 3SG run PFV

    'The thief ran away.'

*小偷給他跑了

6b) <u>Min (Huiʼan dialect)</u>

    *tshia$^{8-4}$-a^3 khɔ$^{5-4}$ i^1 tsau^3 khɯ^0

    thief –DIM give   3SG run   go

    'The thief ran away.'

賊仔與伊走去

Type 1: also attested in Wu, Hakka, Hui
        and Gan

Type 2 Unaccusative 'give' ('die'-type)

7a) <u>Mandarin</u>

  *huār   gěi   tā   sǐ   le

  flower give 3SG die PFV

  'The flower died.'

*花ㄦ給他死了

7b) <u>Min (Hui'an dialect)</u>

  hue^1 khɔ$^{5-4}$ i^1 si^3 khɯ^0

  flower give 3SG die go

  'The flower died.'

花與伊死去

Type 2: attested in some Southern Min
      varieties

Unaccusative 'give' (beyond 3SG resumptive pronoun)

- PLURAL SUBJECT

8) Hui'an dialect
   en¹   huai²   khɔ⁵⁻⁴   i¹   si³   khɯ⁰
   PL   those   give   3SG   die   go
   '**Those people** died.'

- SECOND PERSON SUBJECT

9) Hui'an dialect
   lɯ3   si⁴   khɔ⁵⁻⁴   i1   gɔŋ⁵   khɯ⁰,   siã0
   2SG be   give   3SG   stupid   go   SFP
   'Are **you** stupid?!'

How did unaccusative 'give' emerge?

- **Previous studies on the emergence of unaccusative 'give'**

- **Semantic and syntactic reanalysis involving valence reduction**

- **Correlation between word order, topic-comment structure, and unaccusative 'give' constructions**

- **Resumptive pronoun disposal (or pre-transitive) constructions**

Previous studies

- Causative > Passive > Unaccusative

  Matthews, Xu & Yip (2005); Chen (2011)

- Matthews et al. (2005) examined why passive and unaccusative constructions are both marked by the 'give' morpheme *k'eʔ* in the Jieyang dialect from syntactic and semantic perspectives.

- They suggest that passive and unaccusative constructions in the Jieyang dialect share thematic and aspectual properties, which motivate the extension of passive constructions to unaccusative ones.

- They further note that morphosyntactic parallels between passive and unaccusative constructions are also found in a number of other languages such as Latin, Italian, Albanian, and the English interlanguage grammars across different L1 backgrounds.

Valence reduction: 3-place > 2-place > 1-place predicate

- **Lexical 'give' (Huang 2008-2009)**
  - a 3-place predicate construction
  - Causer V_{CAUSE} Experiencer V_{HAVE} Theme

- **Causative 'give'**
  - a 3-place predicate construction
  - Possibly a pan-Chinese phenomenon

- **Passive 'give'**
  - a 2-place predicate construction with affected patient in subject position and 'give' now marking the causer as demoted agent
  - Widely attested in Sinitic languages

- **Type 1 Unaccusative 'give'**
  - a 1-place predicate construction
  - Attested in Min, Wu, Hakka and Hui, etc.

- **Type 2 Unaccusative 'give'**
  - another 1-place predicate construction
  - Attested in Southern Min varieties such as the Xiamen and Hui'an varieties in Fujian, and the Chaozhou, Shantou, Jieyang and Chenghai varieties in Guangdong

Examples from Hui'an dialect

- ua^3 $kh\mathfrak{o}^{5-4}$ i^1 $hio\mathfrak{P}^7$ kui^{3-2} let^8
  1SG give 3SG rest several day
  'I let him rest for a couple of days.'

- $s\tilde{a}^1\text{-}kh\mathfrak{o}^5$ $kh\mathfrak{o}^{5-4}$ $h\mathfrak{o}^4$ $pha\mathfrak{P}^{7-8}$ tam^2 khu^0
  clothes give rain hit wet go
  'The clothes got wet in the rain.'

- $tshat^{8-4}\text{-}a^3$ $kh\mathfrak{o}^{5-4}$ i^1 $tsau^3$ khu^0
  thief-DIM give 3SG run go
  'The thief ran away (i.e. escaped).'

- hue^1 $kh\mathfrak{o}^{5-4}$ i^1 si^3 khu^0
  flower give 3SG die go
  'The flower died.'

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Correlation between word order, topic-comment structure, and unaccusative 'give' constructions

- Sinitic languages with unaccusative 'give', e.g. Min, Wu, Hakka, Hui and Gan, have a higher frequency of patient NP subjects than those without unaccusative 'give' such as Mandarin and Cantonese (Li and Chang, 1997; Hirata, 1998; Liu, 2000, 2001; Hu and Lin, 2008).

- The SVO word order hierarchy: Liu (2000, 2001)

  Cantonese (strong SVO) > Mandarin/Hakka/Hui/Gan (moderate SVO) > Wu/Min (weak SVO)

- Cantonese: prefer VO constructions

  10) 打   開   道   門

  ta2   *hoi1*   *tou6*   *mun4*

  hit   open   CL   door

  'Open the door.'

Correlation between word order, topic-comment structure, and unaccusative 'give' constructions

- Mandarin: opt for disposal (or pre-transitive) constructions

    11)   *ba*-type disposal construction

貓	把	魚	吃	了	(Mandarin)
māo	*bǎ*	*yú*	*chī*	*le*	
cat	OM	fish	eat	PFV	

    'The cat ate the fish.'

- The frequency hierarchy for the *ba*-type disposal construction

    Cantonese (low usage) < Hakka/Gan/Hui (moderate usage) < Mandarin (high usage)

    [based on Liu (2000, 2001), Li and Chang (1997, 2000), Hirata (1998)]

Correlation between word order, topic-comment structure, and unaccusative 'give' constructions

- Min and Wu: prefer topic-comment constructions (in particular, the subtopic construction)

    12)　　我　蘋果　　　食　　了　　咯　　　　(Hui'an)

    ua3　phiŋ2-4-kɔ3　tsiaʔ8-4　liau3　lɔ0

    1SG　**apple**　　　eat　　　finish　SFP

    'I have eaten up **the apple**.'

- Compared to the main topic construction, the subtopic construction better facilitates the rise of the resumptive pronoun disposal (pre-transitive) construction.

    13)　　Resumptive pronoun disposal construction

    紙　共　伊　摳　咧　口面　　　(Hui'an)

    tsua³　ka⁵⁻⁴　i¹　kɔk⁷⁻⁸　leʔ⁷⁻⁸　khau³⁻²-ben²

    paper　OM　3SG　throw　at　　outside

    'Throw the piece of paper outside.'

Correlation between word order, topic-comment structure, and unaccusative 'give' constructions

- Some Sinitic languages such as Mandarin and Hakka:

    - topicalized patients prefer the main topic position

    - less frequent use of the subtopic construction

    - a weaker facilitation for the rise of the resumptive pronoun disposal construction

- The frequency hierarchy for topic-comment constructions

    Min and Zhejiang Wu (strong subtopic-type topic-comment orientation) > Northern Wu > Hakka/Hui/Gan > Mandarin (moderate topic-comment orientation) > Cantonese (weak topic-comment orientation)

    [based on Li and Chang (1997, 2000), Hirata (1998), Liu (2000, 2001), etc.]

Correlation between word order, topic-comment structure, and unaccusative 'give' constructions

- The distribution of the topic-comment construction, resumptive pronoun disposal construction and unaccusative 'give' construction in Sinitic languages

Cantonese<Mandarin<Gan/Hui/Hakka<Northern Wu<Zhejiang Wu/Min

|-------lower to higher prominence of topic-comment constructions------|

|----------------main topic---------------| |-------------subtopic-------------|

                      |------------Type 1 unaccusative 'give'------------|

                                          |-special disposal construction-|

                                                    |T2|

                          (T2=Type 2 unaccusative 'give')

Resumptive pronoun disposal construction

- Some structural parallel can be observed between the resumptive pronoun 'disposal' (or pre-transitive) construction and the passive 'give' construction, as highlighted in (14a) and (14b) respectively.

14a) $b\eta^2_i$ $ka^{5\text{-}4}$ i^1_i $kuin^1$ $khai^0$

      door OM 3SG close RVC

     'Close the door.'

門共伊關(起來)

14b) ua^3_h $kh\mathfrak{o}^{5\text{-}4}$ $i^1_{i\neq h}$ $b\tilde{a}^5$

     1SG   give   3SG   scold

     'I got scolded by him.'

我與伊罵

Resumptive pronoun disposal construction

- More striking are the structural parallels between this special type of 'disposal' (or pre-transitive) construction and the unaccusative 'give' construction, as highlighted in (15a) and (15b) respectively.

15a) $bŋ^2_i$ ka^{5-4} i^1_i $kuin^1$ $khai^0$

門共伊關(起來)

door OM   3SG close RVC

'Close the door.'

15b) hue^1_i $khɔ^{5-4}$ i^1_i si^3 $khɯ^0$

花與伊死去

flower give   3SG die go

'The flower died.'

Resumptive pronoun disposal construction

- Another similarity: the highly grammaticalized status of their resumptive third person pronoun *i*.

16) 迄　(兩) 領　共　伊　收　　咧　　房咧

$hit^{7\text{-}8}$　$lŋ^4$　　$liã^3$　$ka^{5\text{-}4}$　i^1　siu^1　　　　$le\text{ʔ}^{7\text{-}8}$　$paŋ^2\text{-}le\text{ʔ}^0$

that　two　CL　OM　3SG　put.away　at　　room-LOC

'Take **that piece/those two pieces (of clothing)** into the room.'

- We suggest that the existence of 'disposal' (or pre-transitive) constructions such as (15a) paves the way for the emergence of unaccusative 'give' constructions such as (15b) in Southern Min varieties such as the Hui'an dialect.

Typological observations

- Table 1. Functions of 'give' constructions in Sinitic languages

- Table 2. Types of disposal constructions in Sinitic languages

Table 1. Functions of 'give' constructions in Sinitic languages

Functions	Mandarin gěi 給	Tunxi Hui [ti]掋	Shanghai Wu [pəʔ] 撥	Hui'an Min khɔ 與	Chaozhou Min keh 乞	Taiwanese Min hoo 與	Meixian Hakka [pun] 分	Hong Kong Cantonese béi 畀
Lexical	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dative	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Benefactive	✓	✓	✓					
Causative	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Permissive	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Passive	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Unaccusative (1)		Attested in Xiuning variety	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Unaccusative (2)				✓	✓	✓		
Locative		✓						
Instrumental								✓

Table 2. Types of disposal constructions in Sinitic languages

Type of disposal construction	Mandarin	Tunxi Hui	Shanghai Wu	Hui'an Min	Chaozhou Min	Taiwanese Min	Meixian Hakka	Hong Kong Cantonese
(Agent NP) **OM + Patient NP** + VP	*pa* 把				*pa*			
	tɕiaŋ 將			*tsiɔŋ*	*tsiaŋ*	*ciong*	*tsioŋ*	*tsœŋ*
					pa tsiaŋ		*tsioŋ pa*	
		pau 幫	*nɔ* 拿	*ka* 共		*ka*	*t'uŋ* 同	
Patient NP$_i$ + **OM + 3SG$_i$** + VP			*nɔ ɦi*	***ka i***	***kai i***	***ka i***		
OM$_1$ + patient NP$_i$ **OM$_2$ + 3SG$_i$** + VP				*tsiɔŋ … ka i*	*tsiaŋ… kai i*	*ciong … ka i*		
Zero-marked topic-comment construction (Topic NP, VP)	✓4	✓3	✓2	✓1	✓1	✓1	✓3	✓5

Conclusion

- This study examines the conditions for the rise of unaccusative 'give' constructions in Sinitic languages from a cross-dialectal perspective.

- Our analysis reveals that, the development from causative > passive > unaccusative involves valence reduction, i.e. 3-place > 2-place > 1-place predicate.

- We claim that the emergence of the unaccusative 'give' construction found in some Southern Min varieties facilitated by the high frequency usage of constructions with patient NP subjects, in particular the subtopic construction and the resumptive pronoun disposal construction involving the use of a highly grammaticalized resumptive pronoun, which interestingly is rather rare among Sinitc languages.

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