

**On the emergence of unaccusative 'give' constructions in  
Sinitic languages:  
A diachronic and typological perspective**

Weirong CHEN<sup>1</sup> & Foong Ha YAP<sup>2</sup>

*<sup>1</sup>Sinotype Project, CRLAO, EHESS, France*

*<sup>2</sup>The Hong Kong Polytechnic University*

# Overview

- Objective of present study
- Some uses of ‘give’ constructions in Sinitic languages
- 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 unaccusative ‘give’ construction typologically?

## Some uses of ‘give’ constructions in Sinitic languages

- Lexical ‘give’
- Dative and benefactive ‘give’
  - Lord (1993); Lord, Yap & Iwasaki (2002)
- Causative and passive ‘give’
  - Nedjalkov (1993); Yap & Iwasaki (2003)
- Unaccusative ‘give’ / Adversative ‘give’
  - Matthews, Xu & Yip (2005); Chen (2011); Lin (2011); this study

# Lexical 'give'

## 1a) Mandarin

*gěi tā yī běn shū*

give 3SG one CL book

'Give him a book.'

給他一本書

## 1b) Min (Hui'an dialect)

*khɔ<sup>5-4</sup> i<sup>1</sup> tsit<sup>8-4</sup> pun<sup>3-2</sup> tshe<sup>7</sup>*

give 3SG one CL book

'Give him a book.'

與伊一本書

## Dative 'give'

留給他鑰匙

### 2a) Mandarin

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

leave give 3SG key                      (more commonly used)

'Leave the key to him.'

### 2b) Min (Hui'an dialect)

*so<sup>3-2</sup> si<sup>2</sup> lau<sup>2</sup> khɔ<sup>5-4</sup> i<sup>1</sup>*

key      leave give      3SG

'Leave the key to him.'

鎖匙留與伊

## Benefactive 'give'

### 3a) Mandarin

wǒ *gěi* tā fānyì

1SG give 3SG translate

'I translated (it) for him.'

我給他繙譯

### 3b) Min (Hui'an dialect)

\*ua<sup>3</sup> *khə*<sup>5-4</sup> i<sup>1</sup> huan<sup>1-6</sup>iak<sup>8</sup>

1SG give 3SG translate

'I translated (it) for him.'

\*我與伊繙譯

# Causative 'give'

## 4a) Mandarin

*gěi tā xīuxi jǐ tiān*

give 3SG rest several day

'Let him rest for a couple of days.'

給他休息幾天

## 4b) Min (Hui' an dialect)

*khɔ<sup>5-4</sup> i<sup>1</sup> hio<sup>7</sup> kui<sup>3-2</sup> let<sup>8</sup>*

give 3SG rest several day

'Let him rest for a couple of days.'

與伊歇幾日



# Passive ‘give’

## 5a) Mandarin

*yīfú*    *gěi*    *yǔ*    *lín*    *shī*    *le*

clothes give rain drip wet PFV

‘The clothes got wet in the rain.’

衣服給雨淋濕了

## 5b) Min (Hui’ an dialect)

*sã<sup>1-6</sup>khɔ<sup>5</sup>*    *khɔ<sup>5-4</sup>*    *hɔ<sup>4</sup>*    *pha<sup>7-8</sup>*    *tam<sup>2</sup>*    *khui<sup>0</sup>*

clothes give rain hit wet go

‘The clothes got wet in the rain.’

衫褲與雨拍澹去

## Type 1 Unaccusative ‘give’ (‘escape’-type)

### 6a) Mandarin

?*xiǎotōu* *gěi* (*tā*) *pǎo* *le*  
thief give (3SG) run PFV  
‘The thief ran away.’

?小偷給(他)跑了

### 6b) Min (Hui’ an dialect)

*tshia*<sup>8-4</sup>-*a*<sup>3</sup> *khɔ*<sup>5-4</sup> *i*<sup>1</sup> *tsau*<sup>3</sup> *khui*<sup>0</sup>  
thief-DIM give 3SG run go  
‘The thief ran away.’

賊仔與伊走去

Type 1: attested in Min, Wu, Gan,  
Cantonese and some Mandarin  
varieties

## Type 2 Unaccusative ‘give’ (‘die’-type)

### 7a) Mandarin

?*huār* *gěi* (*tā*) *sǐ* *le*  
flower give (3SG) die PFV  
‘The flower died.’

?花<sub>儿</sub>給(他)死了

### 7b) Min (Hui’an dialect)

*hue*<sup>1</sup> *khɔ*<sup>5-4</sup> *i*<sup>1</sup> *si*<sup>3</sup> *khu*<sup>0</sup>  
flower give 3SG die go  
‘The flower died.’

花與伊死去

Type 2: attested in some Southern Min varieties and some Mandarin varieties

## Unaccusative 'give' (beyond 3SG resumptive pronoun)

*en<sup>1</sup> huai<sup>2</sup>* 與伊死去

- PLURAL SUBJECT

8) Hui'an dialect

*en<sup>1</sup> huai<sup>2</sup> khɔ<sup>5-4</sup> i<sup>1</sup> si<sup>3</sup> khuu<sup>0</sup>*  
PL those give EXPL(<3SG) die go

'**Those people** died.'

汝是與伊 *gɔŋ<sup>5</sup>* 去, *siã<sup>0</sup>*

- SECOND PERSON SUBJECT

9) Hui'an dialect

*luu<sup>3</sup> si<sup>4</sup> khɔ<sup>5-4</sup> i<sup>1</sup> gɔŋ<sup>5</sup> khuu<sup>0</sup>, siã<sup>0</sup>*  
2SG be give EXPL(<3SG) stupid go SFP

'Are **you** stupid?!'

(give EXPL=adversative marker)

## Unaccusative ‘give’ (beyond 3SG resumptive pronoun)

*en<sup>1</sup> huai<sup>2</sup>* 與伊死去

- PLURAL SUBJECT

8) Hui’an dialect

*en<sup>1</sup> huai<sup>2</sup> khɔ<sup>5-1</sup> si<sup>3</sup> khuu<sup>0</sup>*

PL those ADVERS die go

‘**Those people** died.’

汝是與伊 *gɔŋ<sup>5</sup>* 去, *siã<sup>0</sup>*

- SECOND PERSON SUBJECT

9) Hui’an dialect

*lu<sup>3</sup> si<sup>4</sup> khɔ<sup>5-1</sup> gɔŋ<sup>5</sup> khuu<sup>0</sup>, siã<sup>0</sup>*

2SG be ADVERS stupid go SFP

‘Are **you** stupid?!’

(ADVERS=adversative marker; it expresses speaker’s subjective stance)

Adversative intransitive predicates	Min: Hui'an	Min: Jieyang	Wu	Hakka	Hui	Gan: Anyi	Cantonese	Mandarin
Escape	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Break	✓	✓				✗	✗	✓
Sink	✓	✓				✗	✗	✓
Collapse	✓	✓				✗	✗	✗
Stop	✓	✓				✗	✗	✓
Die	✓	✓				✗	✗	✓
Wither	?	?				✗	✗	✗
Extinguish	✓	✓				✗	✗	✓
Fade	✓	✓				✗	✗	✗
Leak	✓	✓				✗	✗	✗
Turn sour	✓	✓				✗	✗	✓
Turn bad/Rot						✗	✗	✗
Turn smelly	✓	✓				✗	✗	✗
Turn dry	✓	✓				✗	✗	✓
Turn black/wet	✓	✓				✗	✗	✗
Turn soft/hard	✓	✓				✗	✗	✗

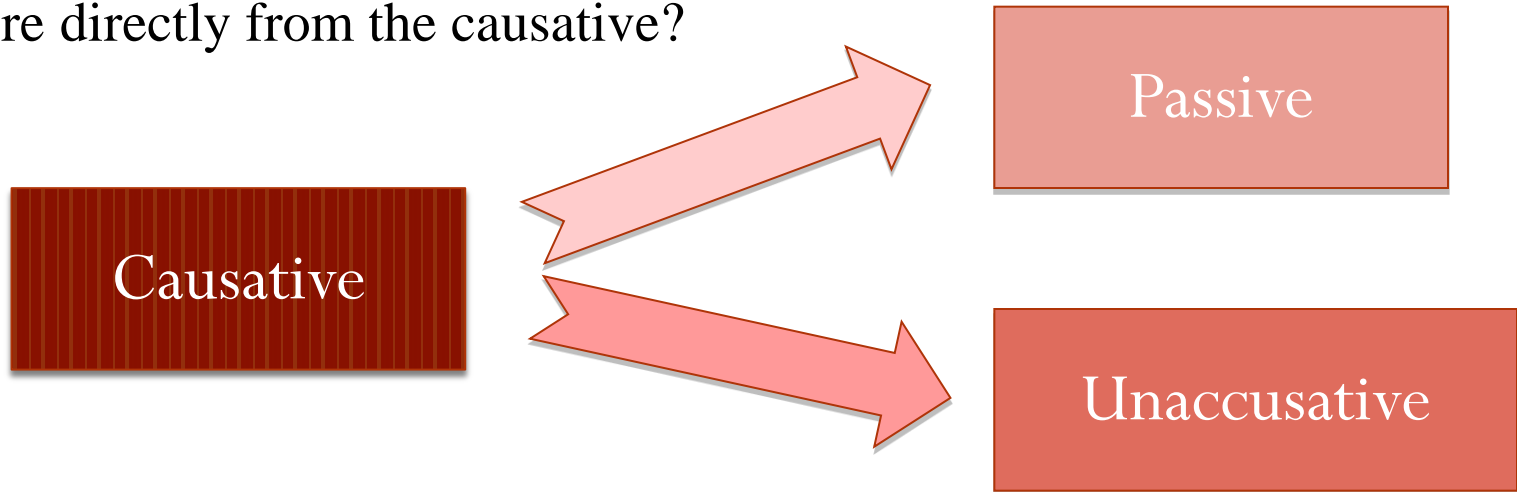
# How did unaccusative 'give' emerge?

Lin (2011)

- Is it via the passive?



- Is it more directly from the causative?



# Previous studies

- **Causative > Passive**
  - Keenan (1985); Hashimoto (1988); Chin (2011)
- **Causative > Reflexive > Passive**
  - Nedjalkov (1993); Knott (1995); Yap & Iwasaki (2003)
- **Causative > Passive > ?Unaccusative**
  - Matthews, Xu & Yip (2005); Chen (2011)
- **(i) Causative > Passive > Adversative (= Unaccusative)**
- **(ii) Causative > Adversative (= Unaccusative)**
  - Lin (2011)



# Causative > reflexive > passive

from Cantonese

## 10) Permissive causative

媽咪 畀 渠 自己 行路 返學

*Ma1mi4 bei2 keoi5 zi6gei2 haang4lou6 faan1hok6*

Mummy give 3SG self walk go.to.school

‘Mummy allows him to go to school by himself.’

## 11) Reflexive causative (intentional agent)

渠 畀 媽媽 惜 渠 一 啖

*keoi5 bei2 ma4ma1 sek3 keoi5 jat1 daam6*

3SG give mother kiss 3SG one CL

‘He allowed Mother to kiss him (one kiss).’

## 12) Reflexive passive (non-intentional agent = affected patient)

渠 畀 人 惜 一 啖

*keoi5 bei2 jan4 sek3 jat1 daam6*

3SG give human kiss one CL

‘He was kissed (by somebody).’

# Causative > Passive > ?Unaccusative

## Chaozhou (Jieyang)

(Matthews, Xu & Yip 2005:269-71)

### 13) Permissive causative 'allow'

*i bo k'e? ua t'õi tsi puŋ tsu*  
3SG not.have give 1SG read this CL book  
'He didn't let me read this book.' (p. 270)

伊無<sup>乞</sup>我睇茲本冊

### 14) Passive

*puŋ tsu k'e? naŋ boi k'u lau*  
CL book give person buy RVC PRT  
'The book has been bought already.' (p. 271)

2-P

本冊<sup>乞</sup>郎買去了

### 15) Unaccusative

*ts'iõ k'e? i to lo? k'u*  
wall PASS 3SG fall down RVC  
'The wall fell down (by itself).' (p. 269)

?

1-P

牆<sup>乞</sup>伊倒落去

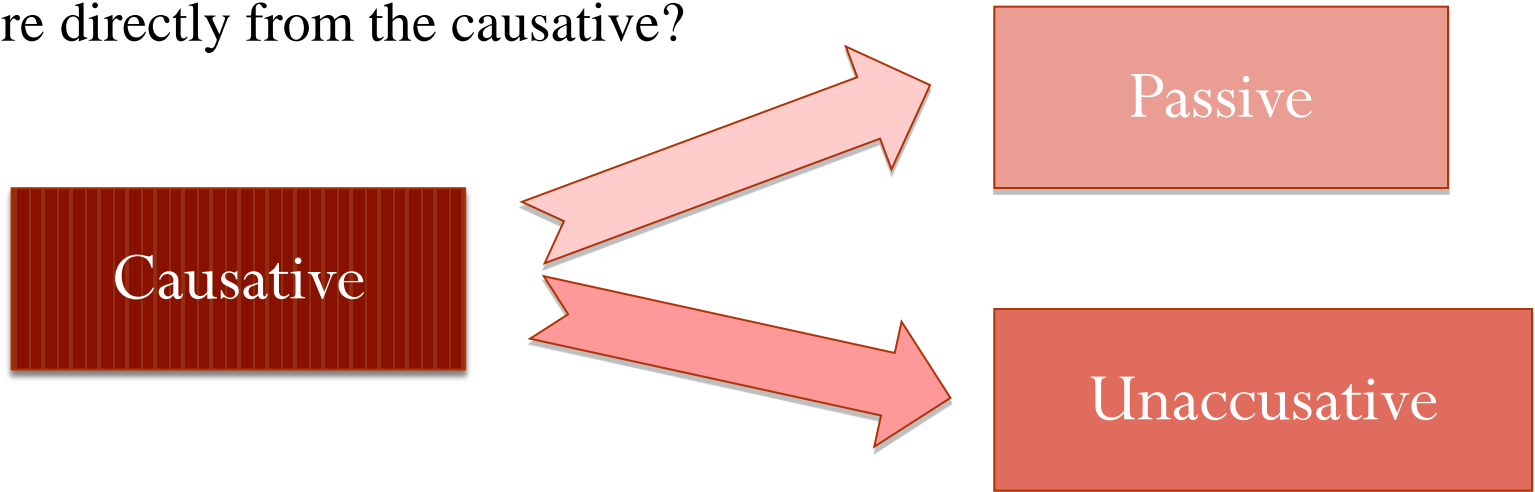
# How did unaccusative 'give' emerge?

Lin (2011)

- Is it via the passive?



- Is it more directly from the causative?



## Causative > Passive > Unaccusative

### Chaozhou (Jieyang)

(Matthews, Xu & Yip 2005:269-71)

#### 16) Passive

*puŋ tsu k'eŋ naŋ boi k'u lau*

CL book give person buy RVC PRT

‘The book has been bought already.’ (p. 271)

2-P

本冊乞郎買去了

#### 17) Unaccusative

*ts'iõ k'eŋ i to loŋ k'u*

wall PASS 3SG fall down RVC

‘The wall fell down (by itself).’ (p. 269)

1-P

牆乞伊倒落去

Similarities: Non-agent NP in subject/topic position; adversative reading available

Differences: Transitive vs. intransitive predicate following ‘give + Pronoun’;

**However, the passive > unaccusative pathway does not come easy.**

**Syntactic reanalysis is not straightforward (more later: see Hui'an).**

## Sinitic varieties with unaccusative 'give' constructions

Mandarin // Gan // Hakka // Hui // Wu // Min // Cantonese

---Causative ---	-----Causative -----
---Passive ---	-----Passive -----

| -T1- |

| - - - - -T1- - - - - |

| -T2- |

| -T2- |

T1=Type 1 unaccusative 'give' (e.g. *xiaotou gei (ta) pao le*)

T2=Type 2 unaccusative 'give' (e.g. *hua gei (ta) si le*)

## Causative > unaccusative

### Taiwanese Southern Min (TSM)

(Lin 2011: 2037-2038)

- **Causative**

18) *gua*<sup>2</sup> *hoo*<sup>7</sup> *i*<sup>1</sup> *jip*<sup>8</sup>-*lai*<sup>5</sup>

1SG allow 3SG enter

‘I allowed him to enter.’

我予伊入來

- **Adversative (= Unaccusative)**

19) *hit*<sup>4</sup> *lui*<sup>2</sup> *hue*<sup>1</sup> *hoo*<sup>7</sup> *i*<sup>1</sup> *si*<sup>2</sup>-*khi*<sup>3</sup> *a*<sup>0</sup>

that CL flower ADVS 3SG die-go PRT

‘The flower has died.’

彼蕊花予伊死去矣

- Details of syntactic reanalysis still need to be further spelled out.

# Causative > unintentional causative > unaccusative

## Mandarin

20) 給 媽媽 休息 幾 天  
*gěi mama xiūxi jǐ tiān*  
give mother rest several day  
'Let mother rest for a couple of days.'

21) 給 小偷 跑 了  
*gěi xiǎotou pǎo le*  
give thief run SFP  
(a) 'Let the thief get away.'  
(b) 'The thief got away.'

22a) 小偷 , 給 他 跑 了  
*xiǎotōu , gěi (tā) pǎo le*  
thief give (3SG) run SFP  
'The thief, (he) got away.'

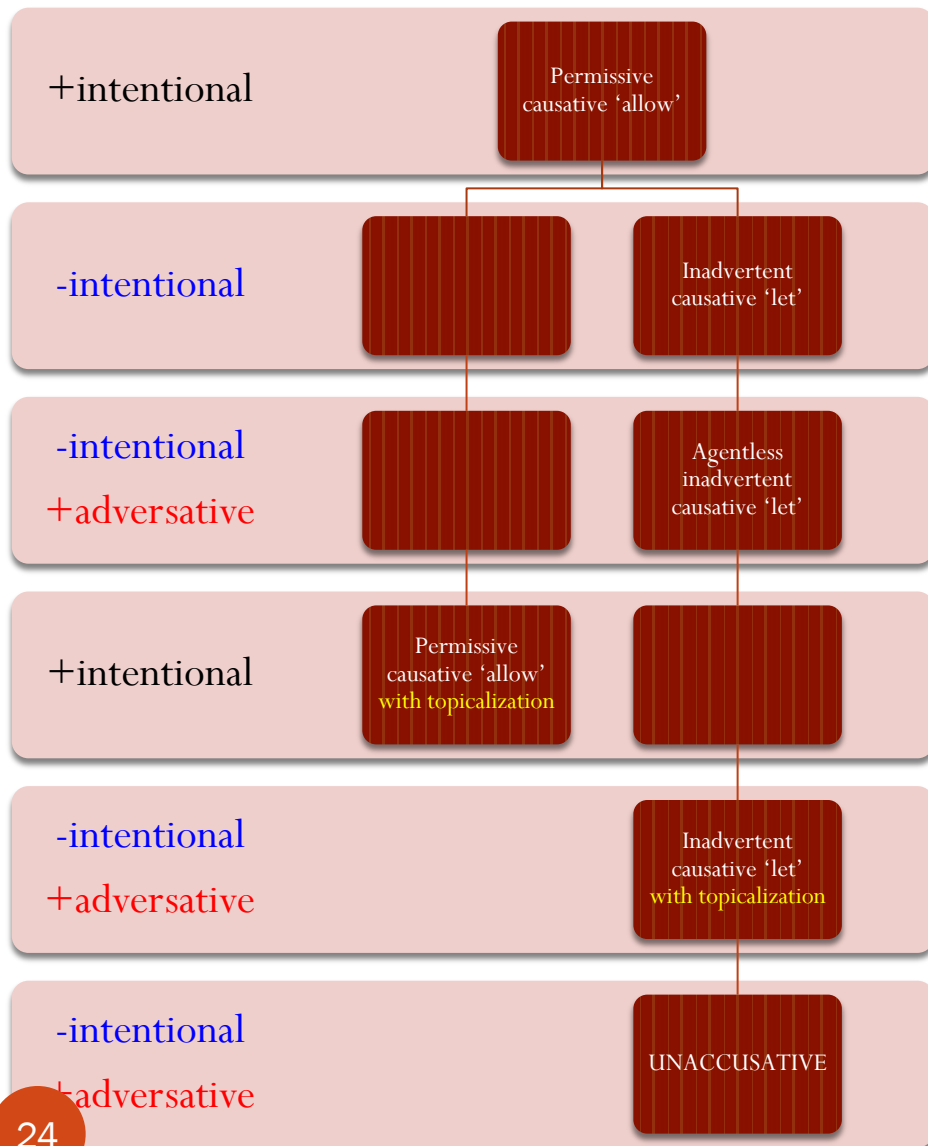
22b) 小偷 給 他 跑 了  
*xiǎotōu gěi (tā) pǎo le*  
thief give (3SG) run SFP  
'The thief got away.'

Ambiguous:  
Unintentional causative  
vs. Unaccusative

Bridge context

+ topicalization

# Causative > Unintentional causative > unaccusative



警察 給 小偷 跑 了  
Jǐngchá gěi xiǎotou pǎo le

警察 給 小偷 跑 了  
Jingcha gei xiaotou pao le

給 小偷 跑 了  
Gei xiaotou pao le

小偷, 給 他跑 了  
Xiaotou, gei ta pao le

小偷, 給 (他) 跑 了  
Xiaotou, gei (ta) pao le

花 給 (他) 死 了  
Hua gei (ta) si le



## Benefactive > disposal > unintentional causative > unaccusative

23) Benefactive

我 給 你 熬 粥

*wo gěi ni ao zhou*

1SG give 2SG boil porridge

‘I boiled porridge for you.’

3-P

24) Disposal (imperative)

你 給 粥 吃 了

*ni gěi zhou chi le*

2SG give porridge eat SFP

‘You eat the porridge.’ (Lit. ‘You get the porridge and eat it.’)

2-P

25) Agentless disposal (imperative)

給 粥 吃 了

*gěi zhou chi le*

give porridge eat SFP

‘Eat the porridge.’

2-P

**(Benefactive) > disposal > unintentional causative > unaccusative**

- 25)      **Agentless disposal (imperative)**      **Disposal (unintentional causative)**
- 給   粥   吃   了      給   粥   糊   了  
*gěi   zhou   chi   le*      *gěi   zhou   hu   le*
- give porridge eat SFP      give porridge overcook SFP
- ‘Eat the porridge.’      ‘The porridge got burnt.’

2-P

**+ topicalization**

- 26)      **Agentless disposal (imperative)**      **Disposal (unintentional causative)**
- 粥,   給   它   吃   了      粥,   給   它   糊   了  
*zhou,   gěi   ta   chi   le*      *zhou,   gěi   ta   hu   le*
- porridge give 3SG eat SFP      porridge give 3SG overcook SFP
- ‘As for the porridge, eat it.’      ‘As for the porridge, it got burnt.’

2-P

- 27)      **Unaccusative**
- 粥   給   它   糊   了  
*zhou   gěi   ta   hu   le*
- porridge give 3SG overcook SFP
- ‘The porridge got burnt.’

1-P

(Benefactive) > disposal > unintentional causative > unaccusative

25) Agentless disposal (imperative)

給 粥 吃 了

*gěi zhou chi le*

give porridge eat SFP

‘Eat the porridge.’

Disposal (unintentional causative)

給 妈妈 瘋 了

*gěi mama feng le*

give mother go.crazy SFP

‘(It) drove Mum crazy.’

2-P

+ topicalization

26) Agentless disposal (imperative)

粥, 給 它 吃 了

*zhou, gěi ta chi le*

porridge give 3SG eat SFP

‘As for the porridge, eat it.’

Disposal (unintentional causative)

妈妈, 給 她 瘋 了

*mama, gěi ta feng le*

mother give 3SG go.crazy SFP

‘As for Mum, (it) drove her crazy.’

2-P

27)

Unaccusative

妈妈 給 她 瘋 了

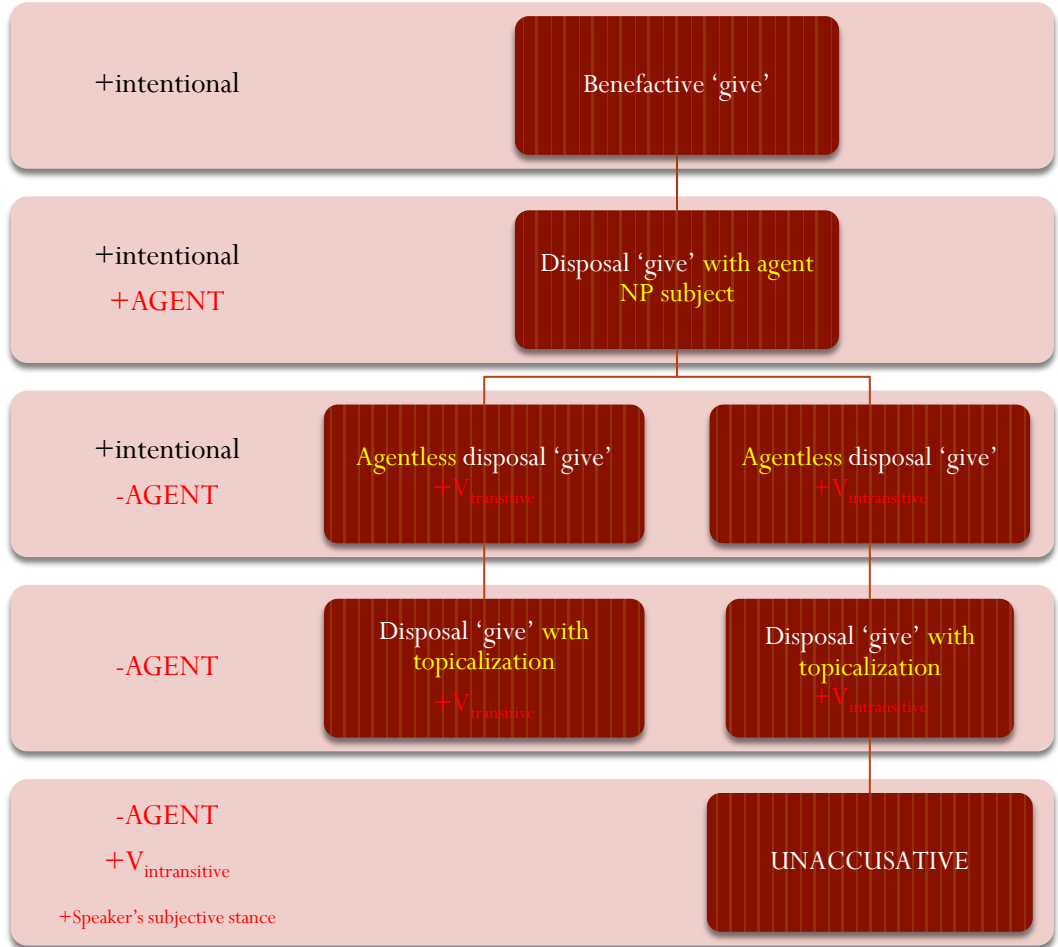
*mama gěi ta feng le*

mother give 3SG go.crazy SFP

‘Mum went really crazy.’

1-P

# Benefactive > disposal > unaccusative



我給你熬粥  
Wǒ gěi nǐ áo zhōu

你給粥吃了  
Nǐ gěi zhōu chī le

給粥吃了 // 給粥糊了  
Gěi zhōu chī le // Gěi zhōu hú le

粥, 給他吃了 // 粥, 給他糊了  
Zhōu<sub>i</sub>, gěi tā<sub>j</sub> chī le //  
Zhōu, gěi tā hú le

粥給他糊了  
Zhōu<sub>i</sub> gěi tā<sub>j</sub> hú le

Causative > reflexive > passive > adversative (with 2-p or 1-p) > adversative (with 1-p) + topicalization = unaccusative

Southern Min: Hui'an

Causative > reflexive > passive (as in many other Sinitic varieties)

28) Passive

(我) 與 伊 罵

(ua<sup>3</sup><sub>h</sub>) khɔ<sup>5-4</sup> i<sup>1</sup><sub>i≠h</sub> bã<sup>5</sup>

(1SG) give 3SG scold

'(I) got scolded by him.'

2-P

Typical 'give' passive

29) Adversative (with 2-place predicate)

與 賊仔 帶去 三百

khɔ<sup>5-4</sup> tshat<sup>8-4</sup>-a<sup>3</sup> thue<sup>?</sup>8-4 khuu<sup>0</sup> sã<sup>1</sup>pa<sup>?</sup>7

give thief-DIM take go three hundred

'The thief took away three hundred.'

+ Speaker's subjective evaluation

2-P

## Type 1 UNACCUSATIVE > Type 2 UNACCUSATIVE

(the latter more common in Min varieties)

1-P

30) Adversative (with 1-place predicate)

與 賊仔 走 去

*khɔ<sup>5-4</sup> tshat<sup>8-4</sup>-a<sup>3</sup> tsau<sup>3</sup> khui<sup>0</sup>*

give thief-DIM run go

‘The thief got away.’

與 花 死 去

*khɔ<sup>5-4</sup> hue<sup>1</sup> si<sup>3</sup> khui<sup>0</sup>*

give flower die go

‘The flower died.’

31) Adversative (with topicalization)

賊仔, 與 伊 走 去

*tshat<sup>8-4</sup>-a<sup>3</sup> khɔ<sup>5-4</sup> i<sup>1</sup> tsau<sup>3</sup> khui<sup>0</sup>*

thief-DIM give 3SG run go

‘The thief got away.’

花, 與 伊 死 去

*hue<sup>1</sup> khɔ<sup>5-4</sup> i<sup>1</sup> si<sup>3</sup> khui<sup>0</sup>*

flower give 3SG die go

‘The flower died.’

32) Unaccusative

賊仔 與伊 走 去

*tshat<sup>8-4</sup>-a<sup>3</sup> khɔ<sup>5-4</sup>i<sup>1</sup> tsau<sup>3</sup> khui<sup>0</sup>*

thief-DIM give 3SG run go

‘The thief got away.’

花 與伊 死 去

*hue<sup>1</sup> khɔ<sup>5-4</sup>i<sup>1</sup> si<sup>3</sup> khui<sup>0</sup>*

flower give 3SG die go

‘The flower died.’

Not common in  
contemporary Hui'an

32) Unaccusative

賊仔 與伊 走 去  
*tshat<sup>8-4</sup>-a<sup>3</sup> khɔ<sup>5-4</sup>i<sup>1</sup> tsau<sup>3</sup> khuu<sup>0</sup>*  
thief-DIM give:3SG run go  
'The thief got away.'

花 與伊 死 去  
*hue<sup>1</sup> khɔ<sup>5-4</sup>i<sup>1</sup> si<sup>3</sup> khuu<sup>0</sup>*  
flower give:3SG die go  
'The flower died.'

Tone incorporation attested only in  
Southern Min varieties

33) Unaccusative (with tone incorporation)

賊仔 與伊 走 去  
*tshat<sup>8-4</sup>-a<sup>3</sup> khɔ<sup>5-1</sup> tsau<sup>3</sup> khuu<sup>0</sup>*  
thief-DIM ADVERS run go  
'The thief got away.'

花 與伊 死 去  
*hue<sup>1</sup> khɔ<sup>5-1</sup> si<sup>3</sup> khuu<sup>0</sup>*  
flower ADVERS die go  
'The flower died.'

Causative > reflexive causative > reflexive passive > passive > ??? >  
unaccusative

Adversative

34) 他 給 我 看 電影  
*tā gěi wǒ kàn diànyǐng*  
3SG give 1SG watch movie  
'He allowed me to watch a movie.'

3-P

35) 他 給 警察 看見 他  
*tā gěi jǐngchá kànjiàn tā*  
3SG give police see 3SG  
'He let the police see him (=catch sight of him).'

2-P

36) 他 給 警察 看見 了  
*tā gěi jǐngchá kànjiàn le*  
3SG give police see SFP  
'He (was careless enough to) let the police see him  
(=catch sight of him).'

2-P



Causative > reflexive causative > reflexive passive > passive > ?unaccusative

37) 给 警察 看见 了  
*gěi jingcha kanjian le*  
give police see SFP  
'(S/he) was seen by the police.'

Unintentional causative

38) 给 看见 了 vs. 给 小偷 跑 了  
*gěi kanjian le* vs. *gěi xiǎotōu pǎo le*  
give see SFP vs. give 3SG run SFP  
'S/he's been sighted.'

(a) 'Let the thief escape.' (Mandarin)  
(b) 'The thief got away.' (Min-type)

39) 小偷, 给 (他) 跑 了  
*Xiǎotōu<sub>i</sub>, gěi (tā<sub>i</sub>) pǎo le*  
thief give (3SG) run SFP  
'The thief got away.'

+topicalization > unaccusative

# Distribution of topic-comment structure and unaccusative ‘give’ constructions in Sinitic varieties

Sensitive to animacy hierarchy

Cantonese // Mandarin // Gan // Hui // **Hakka** // **Wu** // **E. Min** // S. Min

|-----lower to higher prominence of topic-comment constructions-----|  
|-----main topic-----| |-----subtopic-----|  
| G-disposal | | Resumptive pron. disposal |

|-----**Type 1**-----|  
|---**T2**---|

|-----**Type 1**-----|  
|---**T2**---|

T1=Type 1 unaccusative ‘give’ (e.g. *xiaotou gei ta pao le*)

T2=Type 2 unaccusative ‘give’ (e.g. *hua gei ta si le*)

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

- **Lexical ‘give’ (Huang 2007)**
  - a 3-place predicate construction
  - Causer  $V_{\text{CAUSE}}$  Experiencer  $V_{\text{HAVE}}$  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 some Min, Wu, Gan, Cantonese and Mandarin varieties
- **Type 2 Unaccusative ‘give’**
  - another 1-place predicate construction
  - Attested in Southern Min varieties (e.g. Xiamen, Hui’ an, Chaozhou, Shantou, and Jieyang varieties and Taiwanese)
  - Also attested in some Mandarin varieties (e.g. Beijing, Harbin, Changchun, Xi’an and Guanzhong varieties)

## Examples from Hui’ an dialect

- $ua^3 kh\text{ɔ}^{5-4} i^1 hio^{\text{?7}} kui^{3-2} let^8$   
1SG give 3SG rest several day  
‘I let him rest for a couple of days.’
- $s\tilde{a}^1-kh\text{ɔ}^5 kh\text{ɔ}^{5-4} h\text{ɔ}^4 pha^{\text{?7-8}} tam^2 khuu^0$   
clothes give rain hit wet go  
‘The clothes got wet in the rain.’
- $tshat^{8-4-a^3} kh\text{ɔ}^{5-4} i^1 tsau^3 khuu^0$   
thief-DIM give 3SG run go  
‘The thief ran away (i.e. escaped).’
- $hue^1 kh\text{ɔ}^{5-4} i^1 si^3 khuu^0$   
flower give 3SG die go  
‘The flower died.’

rare

## Conclusion

- This study examines the conditions for the rise of unaccusative ‘give’ constructions in Sinitic languages from a cross-dialectal perspective.
- Our study identifies the following pathways for the rise of unaccusative ‘give’:
  - Causative > Unintentional causative > Unaccusative
  - Benefactive > Disposal > Unintentional causative > Unaccusative
  - Causative > Reflexive > Passive > Adversative > Unaccusative

## Conclusion

- Our study shows asymmetrical distribution in the use of unaccusative ‘give’ constructions in Sinitic languages, with some Southern Min varieties showing productive use and some Mandarin varieties showing restricted use.
- We suggest that the emergence of the unaccusative ‘give’ construction in some Southern Min varieties is facilitated by the high frequency of constructions with patient NP subjects, in particular the subtopic construction and the resumptive pronoun disposal construction (e.g. Hui’an *ka i* and Jieyang *ke? i*), which interestingly is rather rare among Sinitic languages.

## Acknowledgements

- This study is an extension of earlier collaborative work with Dr. Huiling Xu.
- This study is supported by a research grant from the Department of English, Hong Kong Polytechnic University for the research project entitled “Valence-Changing Phenomena and Implications for Argument Focus in Discourse”.
- The research leading to these results has also received partial funding from the European Research Council under the European Community’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) for the ERC project “Sinotype” under grant agreement n° 230388.
- An earlier version of this study was presented at the Annual Research Forum (ARF-2011) of the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011, the Spring Seminars of Sinotype, CRLAO, EHESS in Paris on March 20, 2012, and the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of Southeast Asian Linguistics Society (SEALS 22) at Agay, France on June 2, 2012.

- We are also grateful to Dr. Stephen Matthews, Prof. Hilary Chappell, Dr. Marco Caboara, Dr. Jian Wang, Dr. Xuping Li, Tak-sum Wong, Shanshan Lv and Na Song for their valuable comments.
- We also wish to thank the following for providing us useful information on various Sinitic languages: Prof. Zeping Chen, Prof. Rulong Li, Prof. Danqing Liu, Prof. Wuyun Pan, Prof. Mengbing Xiang, Dr. Zhengda Tang, Dr. Ruiyuan Xu, and Melody Wen Lu, Ernest Pan, Tak-sum Wong, Vivien Ying Yang, and Yuqing Yang.

## References

- Chen, W., 2011. The Southern Min Dialect of Hui'an: Morphosyntax and Grammaticalization. PhD thesis. The University of Hong Kong.
- Hashimoto, M., 1988. The structure and typology of the Chinese passive construction, In Masayoshi Shibatani (eds.), *Passive and Voice*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Hirata, S. (Ed.), 1998. *Huizhou Fangyan Yanjiu [A Study on Huizhou Dialect]*. Kohbun Shuppan, Tokyo.
- Hu, S., Lin, Z., 2008. *Yanshan Fangyan Yanjiu [A Study on Yanshan Dialect]*. Culture and Art Publishing House & Social Sciences academic Press, Peking.
- Huang, J., 2007. Hanyu dongci de tiyuan jiegou yuqi jufa biao xian [Thematic structure of verbs in Chinese and their syntactic projections]. *Yuyan Kexue [Linguistic Sciences]* 4, 3-21.
- Knott, J., 1995. The causative-passive correlation. In: Bennett, D., Bynon, T., Hewitt, G. (Eds.), *Subject, Voice, and Ergativity: Selected Essays*. University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, pp. 53-59.



## References—contd.

- Li, R., Chang, S. (Eds.) 1997. Dongci Weiyuju [Verb Predicate Sentences]. Ji'nan University Press, Canton.
- Li, R., Chang, S. (Eds.) 2000. Jieci [Adpositions]. Ji'nan University Press, Canton.
- Lin, H., 2011. Pure unaccusatives with *HOO I* in Taiwan Southern Min. *Lingua* 121, 2035-2047.
- Lin, L., 1996. Chenghai Fangyan Yanjiu [A Study of the Chenghai Dialect]. Shantou University Press, Shantou.
- Liu, D., 2000. Yueyu jufa de leixingxue tedian [Typological features of Yue syntax]. *Asia Pacific Journal of Language in Education* 2, 1-30.
- Liu, D., 2001. Hanyu fangyan de yuxu leixing bijiao [A comparison on word order types of Chinese dialects]. *Contemporary Research in Modern Chinese* 2, 24-37.
- Lord, C., Yap, F., Iwasaki, S., 2002. Grammaticalization of 'give': African and Asian perspectives. In: Wischer, I., Diewald, G. (Eds.), *New Reflections on Grammaticalization (Typological Studies in Language 49)*. Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp. 217-135.

## References—contd.

- Matthews, S., Xu, H., Yip, V., 2005. Passive and unaccusative in Jieyang dialect of Chaozhou. *Journal of East Asian Linguistics* 4.4, 267-298.
- Matthews, S., Yip, V., 2008. Passive, unaccusative and pretransitive constructions in Chaozhou. In: Djamouri, R., Meisterernst, B., Sybesma, R. (Eds.), *Chinese Linguistics in Leipzig*. Centre de Recherches Linguistiques sur l'Asie Orientale, Paris, pp. 163-174.
- Nedjalkov, I., 1993. Causative-passive polysemy of the Manchu-Tungusic *-bu/-v(u)*. *Linguistica Antverpiensa* 27, 193-202.
- Yap, F., Iwasaki, S., 2003. From causative to passive: A passage in some East and Southeast Asian languages. In: Casad, E., Palmer, G. (Eds.), *Cognitive Linguistics and Non-Indo-European Languages (Cognitive Linguistics Research 18)*. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, pp. 419-446.

Thank You!