

# On interpreting Chinese resultatives: V-V compounds and V-*de* phrases

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# Road map

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2. Some issues and shared understandings
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4. DOR: the Direct Object Restriction
5. Two puzzles and one solution
6. On making an unaccusative out of an unergative
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# 1. Introduction

## TWO GENERAL FORMS OF MANDARIN RESULTATIVES

- a. V-V compounds  
where V1= means (or manner) and V2 = result:  $V_M$ - $V_R$  (Williams 2008)
  - b. V-de VP phrases  
 $V_M$  is affixed with *de* 得 and  $VP_R$  can be a full-fledged VP:  $V_M$ - $VP_R$
- The position of object NP: [V-V NP] or [V-de NP VP]
  - There are other V1-V2 compounds and V-de VPs that are not resultative: coordinate, modifier-head, verb-phasal complement, extent, descriptive, manner. mei-si-le 美死了、ku-bi 酷斃 killing cool、shuai-dai 帥呆 mouth-open handsome. Ambiguous: kiasu 驚輸、kiasi 驚死. Also 'fake-', or pseudo-resultatives.

## FOUR (OR 5) TYPES (DEPENDING ON V1)

### - V1 = unergative

- (1) Zhangsan tiao-lei le.  
Zhangsan dance-tired LE<sub>1/2</sub>.  
'Zhangsan danced [himself] tired.'

### - V1 = unaccusative

- (2) Zhangsan qi-si le.  
Zhangsan anger-die LE<sub>1/2</sub>  
'Zhangsan [was] angered to death.' (literally or just 'very angry')

### - Canonical Transitive [V1-V2] + NP

- (3) Lisi ku-shi-le shoupa  
Lisi cry-wet-LE handkerchief  
'Lisi cried the handkerchief wet.'

- **Causative A:** a causer on top of unaccusative (2)

(5) Lisi-de huida qi-si-le Zhangsan  
Lisi's reply anger-die-perf Zhangsan  
'Lisi reply angered Zhangsan badly.'

- **Causative B:** a causer on top of an unergative / transitive (1 & 3)

(6) nei-chang bisai tiao-lei-le xuduo cansaizhe.  
that-CL contest dance-tired-perf many participants  
'That [dance] contest had many participants dance [themselves] tired.'

(7) baozhi kan-hua-le Lisi de yanjing.  
newspaper read-blurred-perf Lisi 's eyes  
'The newspapers [had Lisi] read his eyes blurred.'

## Phrasal counterparts:

### (8) **Unergative**

Zhangsan tiao-de qichuan-runiu.

Zhangsan dance-de panting-like-cow

‘Zhangsan danced [till] panting like a cow.’

### (9) **Unaccusative**

Zhangsan qi-de bansi.

Zhangsan anger-de half-dead

‘Zhangsan was angered to half-dead.’

### (10) **Canonical Transitive**

tamen ku-de shoupa dou shi le.

they cry-de handkerchief all wet perf

‘They cried the handkerchief all wet.’

laoban ma-de keren dou zou-guang le.

owner yell-de customer all leave-empty le

‘The yelled all the customers away.’

### (11) **Causative A**

Lisi-de huida qi-de ZS haomao-sanzhang.

Lisi’s reply anger-de ZS fire-erupt-30-feet

‘Lisi’s reply angered ZS HM3Z (badly).’

### (12) **Causative B**

zhe-chang dianying ku-de ta leiyan-wangwang.

this-cl movie cry-de he teary-eyed

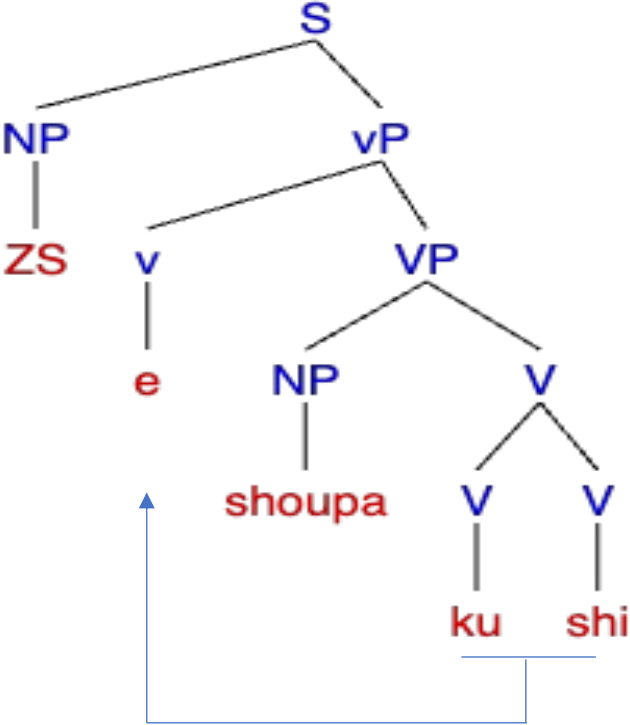
This movie had him cry [himself] teary-eyed.’

## 2. Issues and shared understandings

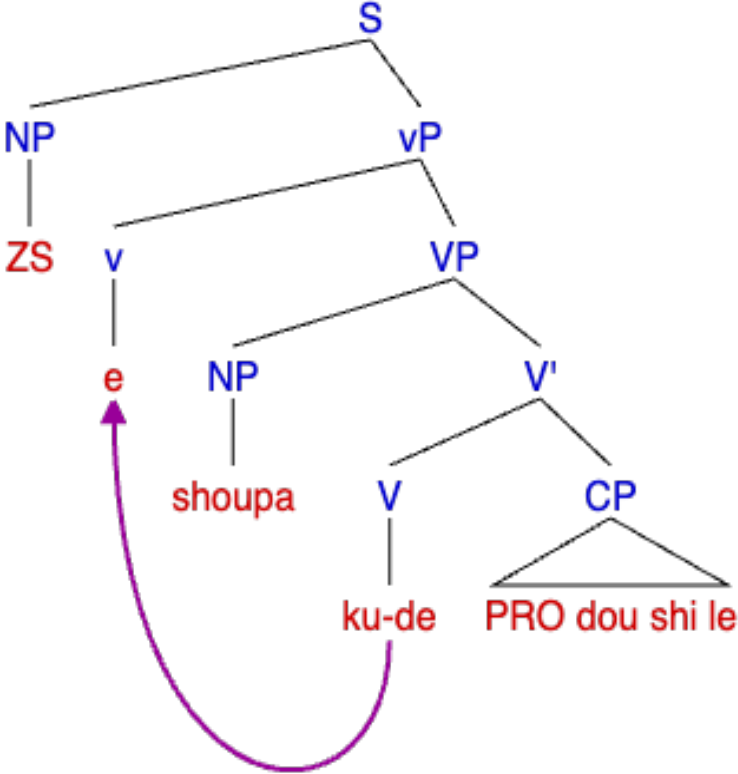
- **Lexical vs. syntactic derivation:**
  - Thompson (1972), Hashimoto (1971), Cheng & Huang (1994), a.o.
- **Head of the resultative: in [V1-V2], or [V1-de VP2], is V1 or V2 the head?**
  - Modification or complementation (or secondary predication)?
- **Strong and weak resultatives:** Chinese has strong resultatives
- **The status of the object NP**
  - V1 may be totally intransitive (*ku-shi-le shoupa* ‘cried the handkerchief wet’).
  - Even if V1 is otherwise transitive, NP need not be its object (*ta ti-po le qiuxie* ‘he kicked the sneakers thread-bare’).
  - An intransitive V1 cannot stand alone with NP without V2<sub>R</sub>.
  - The “outer object”: NP is not the object V1 but the object of [V1+V2] (or it is the subject of V2 [under the small clause analysis]).
- **Argument Structure**
  - Complex predicate: Huang (1992), Cheng & Huang (1994), Williams (2008)
  - Small clause: Sybesma (1992); Sybesma & Shen (20xx); Hoekstra (19xx)

# The complex predicate analysis

- a. V-V compound



- b. V-de VP phrase





- **The compositional semantics of complex predicates:  
(Williams 2008, 2015 & references)**

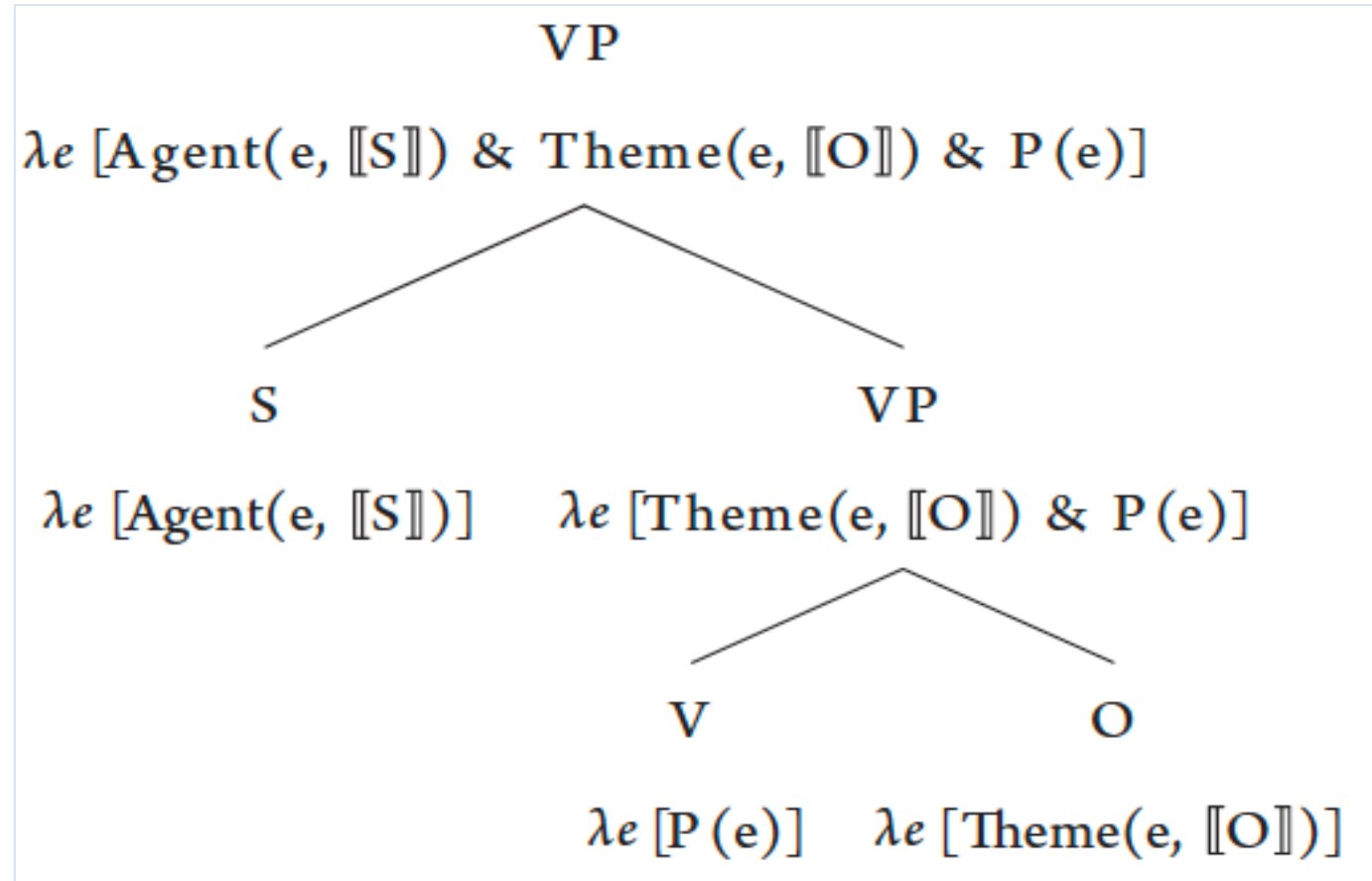
– In the example above, *shoupa* is the ‘outer object’ of ‘cry-wet’ or ‘cry-de all wet’

【 $V_M + V_R/VP_R$ 】 [<sub>V</sub> *ku shi*] or [<sub>V</sub> *ku-de shi-tou*].

– In *John slowly painted his hands sore*, *slowly* modifies the event of

change denoted by the V+R complex predicate

## Williams (2015):



**For P = [MR] cai-lan 踩爛: (p. 278)**

a. *Xiao Wei* cai lan -le haojige pingguo.

X.W. tread on mushy perf many apples

‘Xiao Wei made the apples mushy by treading on [them].’

b.  $\lambda e_1 \exists e_2 \exists e_3$  [ Agent (e, Xiao-Wei) & Theme (e, apples)

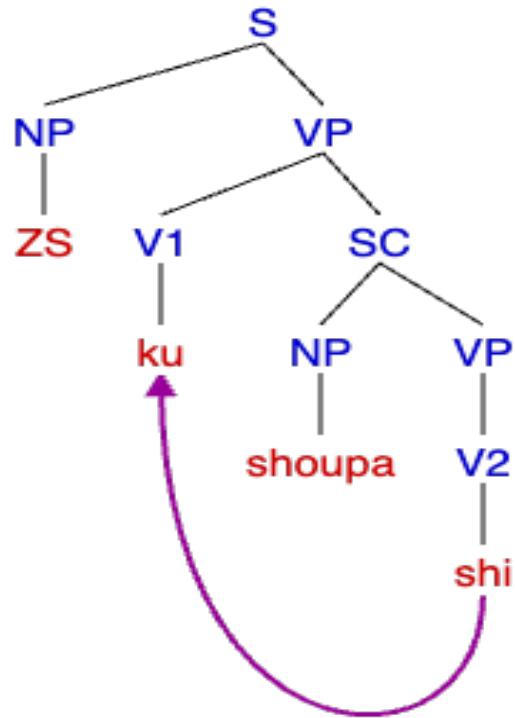
[K(e<sub>1</sub>, e<sub>2</sub>, e<sub>3</sub>) & cai(e<sub>2</sub>) & lan(e<sub>3</sub>) ] ]

Similarly,  $\lambda e_1 \exists e_2 \exists e_3$  [ Agent (e, ZS) & Theme (e, handkerchief) & [K(e<sub>1</sub>, e<sub>2</sub>, e<sub>3</sub>) & cry(e<sub>2</sub>) & wet(e<sub>3</sub>) ] ]

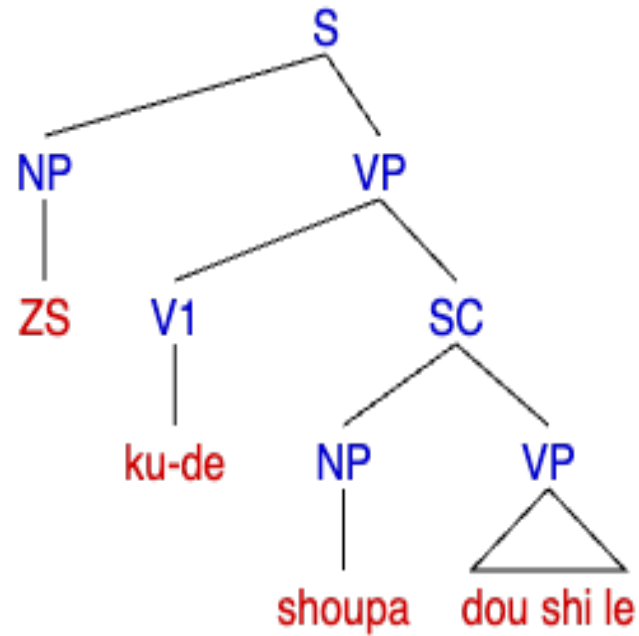


# The small clause analysis

**Compound: cry-wet NP**



**Phrase: cry [NP wet]**



The complex predicate vs. small clause won't matter here, and I shall continue with the CP assumption.

### 3. Complex predicate in control (Huang 1992)

The interpretation of the result predicate V2/VP2: what is it a predicate of?

The MDP pattern

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| a. Zhangsan tiao-de [Pro] hen lei.   | [Pro = Zhangsan] |
| b. Zhangsan jidong-de [Pro] lichu-le yanlei.   | [Pro = Zhangsan] |
| c. Zhangsan ku-de shoupa [Pro] dou shitou le.  | [Pro = shoupa]   |
| d. na-ge dianying xia-de Lisi [Pro] yi wn mei shui.  | [Pro = Lisi]     |
| e. jintian de baozhi kan-de Lisi [Pro] touhun-yanhua.<br>today's newspaper read-de Lisi dizzy-blurre | [Pro = Lisi]     |

These show a pattern of obligatory control: Result is predicated on the object if there is an object; otherwise it is predicated on the subject. The MDP pattern: Minimal Distance Principle (Rosenbaum 1971, Chomsky 1980, Larson 1991 among many others)

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| a. John intended PRO to give it a try.       | [PRO = John] |
| b. John persuaded Bill PRO to give it a try. | [PRO = Bill] |

## Other parallel cases in OC and resultatives

– Exceptional subject control: *promise* and *chi-bao*

- a. John promised Bill PRO to speak out on this issue. [PRO = John]
- b. Zhangsan chi-bao le fan, he-zui le jiu. [Zhangsan got full, drunk]  
Zhangsan eat-full perf rice, drink-drunk perf wine  
'ZS ate rice and got full, drank wine and got drunk, etc.'

– Visser's generalization

- c. \*Bill was promised (by John) PRO to speak out on this issue.
- d. \*fan bei Zhangsan chi-bao le, jiu bei ta he-zui le.  
rice bei Zhangsan eat-full perf, wine bei them drink-drunk le

## -- Optional object

- a. John promised PRO to speak out on this issue.
- b. Zhangsan chi-bao le.    Zhangsan chi-de hen bao.  
Zhangsan eat-full perf. Zhangsan eat-de PRO very full.  
'Zhangsan ate and was full, Zhangsan ate and got very full.'

BTW: a verb with obligatory object requires object control

- c. \*John persuaded [PRO to speak out on this issue].
- d. \*John encouraged/allowed/ordered [PRO to speak out on this issue]
- e. \*Zhangsan tui-dao le (where Zhangsan = agent; ok with a 'middle' reading).
- f. \*Zhangsan tui-de PRO dao zai dishang.

## BUT QUESTIONS REMAIN . . . .

- The parallels to control are incomplete
  - subject control of *chibao* is subject to restrictions not holding of *promise*-type of control, including the referentiality of *fan*, and topic vs. preposed object
  - A systematic difference between compound and V-de R. *he eat-full-le rice* is ok, but *he eat-de rice full* is absolutely out. 吃飽了飯, \*吃得飯很飽; 騎累了馬、打累了球、看累了書. In the phrasal resultatives, the object is forced to control.
  - Passive: Bill was promised to be allowed to speak on the issue. (Bill was promised a permission to speak. (See Larson 1991).
- Most important: cannot explain why English has no unergative resultatives and related questions.



## 4. DOR: the Direct Object Restriction

- Jane Simpson (1983), Beth Levin in various places, and L&R, R&L
- The DOR: In a resultative construction, the result must be predicated on an object. (Corollary: a resultative construction must *select* an object, must have a (deep) object.).

(1) a. John ran the sneakers thread bare.  
b. He hammered the metal flat.

(2) a. \*He cried tired.  
b. He cried himself tired. \*

(3) Passives and unaccusatives: (with underlying objects):  
a. The metal was hammered t flat. (R&L 2001)  
b. The river froze t dry.

\*The 'fake reflexive' is not fake.

## The origin of the DOR:

- a. Has to do with the obligatoriness of an object, but not solely.
- b. We saw that in obligatory control, with verbs obligatorily selecting an object (*persuade, force, order, require*, but not *promise, request, volunteer*), they also exhibit “DOR” behavior
- c. [M+R] requires an object when its meaning is causative. And causatives are strongly transitive: *He washed, he ate, \*he broke, \*he loosened* V1 causes R. This is for the reason the verb *cause* is strongly transitive. like *persuade* is strongly transitive.
- d. L&R, R&L, also Levin 2002. Resultatives obey DOR because resultatives are causatives, and causatives have a bi-clausal underlying structure, which in turn gives rise to an object, under the argument-per-subevent principle.
- e. The arg-per-subevent principle does not guarantee DOR; in principle it could allow the PRO to be subject-controlled or uncontrolled.
- f. DOR = MDP + \*(object)

## SKIP

A note on the asymmetry between lexical and phrasal resultatives regarding some violations of the MDP and DOR:

- 吃飽了飯, \*吃得飯很飽; 騎累了馬、打累了球、看累了書

One possible explanation is that in the compound but not the phrasal environment, the object is not c-commanding the V2 or VP2 predicate to be the target for secondary predication.

John [<sub>V</sub>BECOME full] (from) [<sub>RP</sub> EAT RICE]

Movement of EAT from the rootP to fill into inchoative head, will inevitably leave the rest of the VP in the RP. (These elements left over in the VP are what Hu (2015) calls obliques that don't participate in DOR.

These examples exhibit subject control, but not because they disobey DOR, but because they are inchoatives with leftover stuff in the RP.

Also explains the apparent Visser's generalization: 飯被他吃飽了: either 飯 cannot passivized because it is in rootP. And if it is passivized or ba-transformed, then it must occur in a true outer object position. But in that case, it will obey DOR, and give rise to a nonsensical reading.

It also explains why the oblique object (那匹馬、哪碗飯) will be less well-formed, but not quite \*. (那頓飯 doesn't, because it is event referring)

In other words, the "MEANS" is a whole VP, but only V gets to raise to V1 position, the rest of VP stuck (chomeurized) and stay inaccessible.

## 5. Two puzzles, and a solution

If the above explains why English does not have unergative resultatives, then the question is why Chinese has unergative resultatives and can caustivize such resultatives.

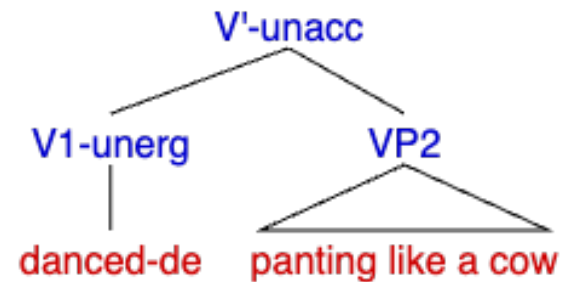
- Two puzzles
  - Puzzle 1: Why does Chinese allow an unergative resultative, violating the DOR?
  - Puzzle 2: Why can Chinese causativize an unergative resultative?
- A non-solution
  - Chinese has pro drop. → ZS cried [**pro** tired].
  - If it is the pro-subject of R, then you expect a pronoun not a reflexive.
  - If it is the pro-object of M-R, then you would not expect an empty reflexive.
  - Pro drop is *pro* not a null anaphor or null reflexive (Huang 1987).
  - Also, it cannot explain 2<sup>nd</sup> puzzle.
- The solution: There are no unergative resultatives (in the literal sense).

# Unergative resultatives = unaccusatives

**(34) All apparent unergative resultatives are actually unaccusatives.** (Gu 1992; Sybesma 1992; more recently Huang 2006; Hu 2020)



- If true, both Puzzles 1 and 2 are solved.
- Puzzle 1 solved: all apparent DOR violations are not violations.
  - Puzzle 2 solved: all causativized resultatives are unaccusative-based.

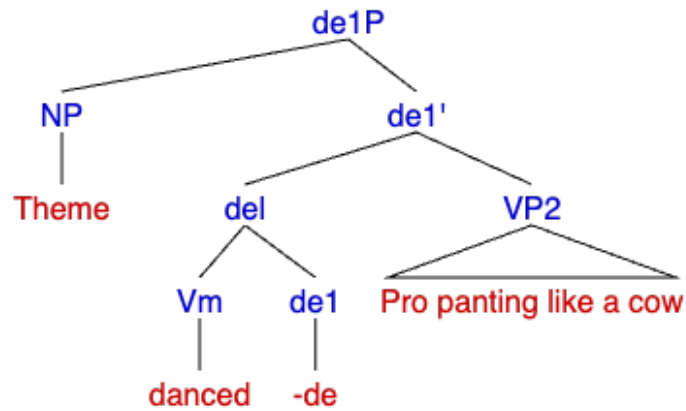


# THE EVENT STRUCTURE OF RESULTATIVES

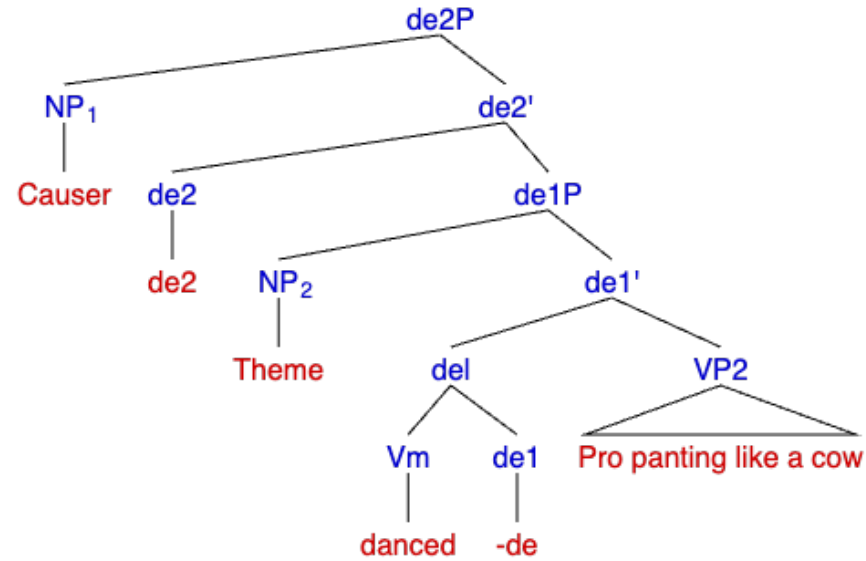
**Main point:** the clue to this question lies in the presence of the –de ending observed in the phrasal resultatives. The –de ending has evolved from the verb de ‘get’. Just as English get, in addition to its transitive use (get a prize) has both an inchoative and a causative sense (e.g., got mad vs. got John mad, -de (得) can be associated with these two senses as well: de can be paraphrased as bian-de ‘become’ (變得) or shi-de ‘cause’ (使得), the former an inchoative/unaccusative and the latter a causative. Since the meanings of change-of-state and causation are already expressed by –de, the V1 in the V-de construction exists only to express the manner or means in which some change or causing-to-change occurs. In the pure control-theoretic control, the question was not addressed how the resultative meaning comes about by putting together action verb followed by a stative verb would give rise to a resultative meaning. There is nothing in the theory that gives the resultative meaning, a situation that fits Bittner’s (1999) (Levin 2020) description well: ‘ . . . the causal relation appears to come from nowhere’.

- **de** 得: obtain, BECOME, CAUSE
- **get**: got a prize, got interested, got me interested

## The inchoative template



## The causative template

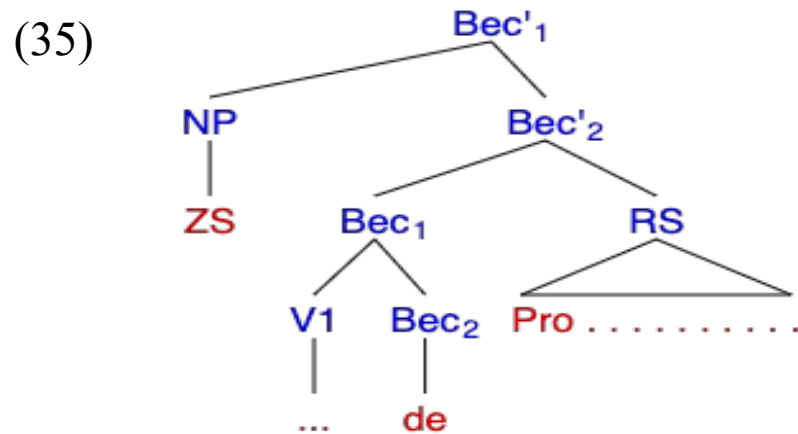


- An immediate consequence is that neither V1 or V2 is the head of the resultative construction. (The earlier debate on this point missed the target.)
- Another immediate consequence is that there are only two types of resultative: an inchoative (unaccusative) type and a causative type.

To illustrate, we can distinguish 2 inchoative and 4 causative sub-types).

### TYPE A: THE INCHOATIVE TYPE: X GETS INTO SOME STATE S

The inchoative resultative is a structure headed by BECOME, realized as *de*, modified by V1 denoting some manner or means of becoming:



The meaning of an inchoative resultative depicted above is (along with L&R 1995):

- (36) [ x BECOME<*MANNER*> [ x <*STATE*> ] ].  
Meaning: X gets into some <state> in some <manner>.



The V1 modifying *de* expressing the <manner> may be an unergative or an unaccusative verb, hence the inchoative resultative has two sub-types:

**Type A1:** x become <manner<sub>unerg</sub>> [x state] (the “unergative resultative”)

**Type A2:** x become <manner<sub>unacc</sub>> [x state]

- (37) ZS tiao-de Pro manshen-dahan. 滿身大汗  
‘ZS danced [himself] profusely sweating.’  
(He got into the state of profusely sweating from dancing.)
- (38) ZS qi-de qikong-shengyan. 七孔生煙、火冒三丈  
‘ZS was angry to a state of having smoke exiting 7 holes.’  
(He got into the state of 7KSY from being angry.)

## TYPE B: THE CAUSATIVE TYPE: Y CAUSES X TO GET INTO SOME STATE S

An inchoative may be causativized with the addition of a CAUSE component, giving rise to a bi-clausal template headed by CAUSE in the matrix and BECOME in the complement. There are two cases depending on whether the V1-adjunct starts as an adjunct of BECOME or that of CAUSE.

(39) [ y CAUSE [ x BECOME<*MANNER*> [ x <*STATE*> ] ] ]. (pure causation)

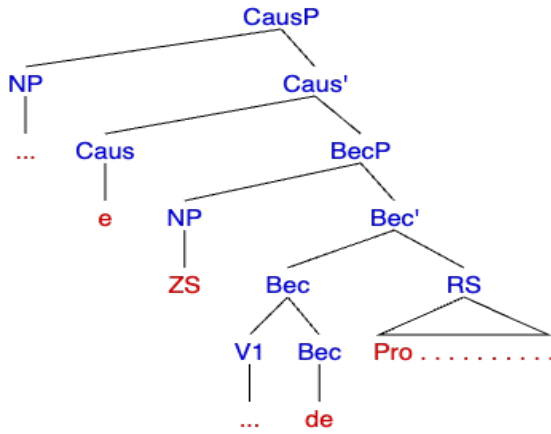
Meaning: y causes x to get into some <state> in some <manner>.

(40) [ y CAUSE<*MANNER*> [ x BECOME [ x <*STATE*> ] ] ]. (event causation)

Meaning: y, by some <means> or through some <manner>, causes x to get into some <state>.

(39) represents cases of a ‘pure causativization’ of the inchoative in (35) with a superimposed CAUSE that is itself unmodified, as illustrated below.

(41)



Head-movement of the Bec head to Caus will derive the required word order. Depending on the nature of V1, we also have two subcases:

**Type B1:** Y cause X become <manner<sub>unerg</sub>> [x state] “causativized unergative”

**Type B2:** Y cause X become <manner<sub>unacc</sub>> [x state]

B1-B2 are results of direct cauativization of the V1-modified nchoative head as modified by V1, from (37)-(38), giving;

(42) zhe-zhi wu tiao-de ZS Pro mansh dahan.  
 ‘This dance danced ZS danced profusely sweating.’  
 (This dance had ZS danced [himself] profusely sweating.)

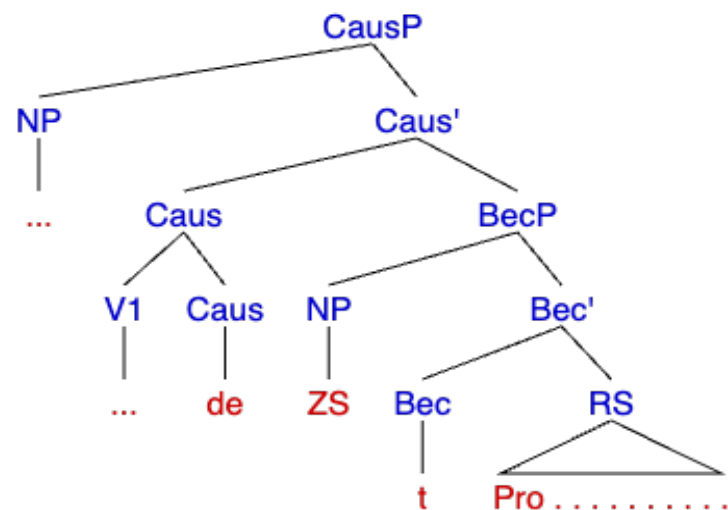
(43) zhe-ge baodao qi-de ZS qikongshengyan.  
 ‘This report got SS so angry as to have smoke exiting his 7 holes.’  
 (The report had ZS getting so angry as to be 7KSY.)

(40) represents the two subcases event causation. In these cases, the causative head is directly modified, but not the inchoative head.

**B3:** Y cause <means<sub>unerg</sub>> X become [x state]

**B4:** Y cause <means<sub>unacc</sub>> X become [x state]

(44)



Case **(B3)** with an unergative V1 and stative V2, is the ‘canonical resultative’ par excellence.

(45) ZS ku-de shoupa            Pro shi le  
C S cry-de handkerchief      wet perf  
'ZS cried the handkerchief wet.'

(46) BB qi-de dajie dou bu-gan zuo sheng.  
BB angry-de all all not-dare make sound  
'Daddy was so angry as toCmake us not dare to make a sound.'

The compounds involve same eventure structure as the V-de phrases,  
though different PF and morphology. Parallel examples below.

A1. 跳累	jump-tired
A2. 累病	tired-sick
B1. 跳累了張三	jump-tired
B2. 累病了張三	tired-sick
B3. 哭濕了手帕	cry-wet
B4. 病急了家人	sick-anxious

A1	Unaccusative -1	X become <manner <sub>unerg</sub> > [x state]
A2	Unaccusative-2	become <manner <sub>unacc</sub> > [x state]
B1	Pure causative-1	Y cause <> X become <manner <sub>unerg</sub> > [x state]
B2	Pure causative-2	Y cause <> X become <manner <sub>unacc</sub> > [x state]
B3	Event causative-1	Y cause <means <sub>unerg</sub> > X become <> [x state]
B4	Event causative-2	Y cause <means <sub>unacc</sub> > X become <> [x state]

- More examples:

- [A1] 他累得站不起來。

He was tired to death.

- [A2] 她笑得都肚子疼了。

\*He laughed to death.

- [B1] 這件事累得她站不起來。

This event tired him to death.

- [B2] 這個笑話笑得他都肚子疼了。

\*This joke laughed him to death.

- [B3] 他們哭得李四都要發瘋了。

John cried everybody all crazy.

- [B4] 他病得家人都急死了。

\*The weather froze the ducks motionless.

- Two remaining questions

The plausibility of an unaccusative result with unergative V1

The English-Chinese difference

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## 6. On making an unaccusative out of an unergative verb

- In a resultative construction, if  $[V_M-V_R]$  or  $[V_M VP_R]$  is headed by V1, then one may expect an intransitive resultative headed by an unergative V1 to be a unergative resultative. (That was the assumption of Cheng and Huang 1994.) But if it is headed by *de* not by V1, in principle this need not to be the only possibility.
- For example, even if  $V_M$  is unergative,  $[V_M - V_R / VP_R]$  may not be unergative as a whole, as it cannot occur with the progressive or durative (see Hu 2020):  
  
\*ZS zai ku-lei,      \*ZS zai ku-de mantou-dahan,      \*ZS ku-lei-zhe.  
ZS at cry-tired      ZS at cry-de profuse-weating      ZS cry-tired-durative
- Although *cry cry-tired*, *cry-die* can be unaccusative (e.g., with inversion):  
?\*tamen ban ku-le haojige ren.    OK tamen ban ku-lei haojige ren.  
'\*Their class cried several people.    Their class cried-tired several people.'

It has been noted by many that a given verb's membership in the Unerg-Unacc dichotomy may vary across different languages and may vary depending on the contexts and their meanings.

### A. fly, run, etc. (SHEN & SYBESMA 2010)

Two familiar examples are *pao* 'run' and *fei* 'fly'. They may occur with the progressive *zai*, they are clearly unergative denoting actions.

- (54) ta zai pao, niao zai fei  
he at run. bird at fly.  
'He is running, the bird is flying.'

But in other texts, for example when occurring with the perfective *-le*, two senses are possible:

- (55) gou pao-le, niao fei-le.  
a. 'The dog ran, the bird flew.  
b. 'The dog ran away, the bird flew away.'

The (a) reading conveys the unergative reading in the perfective, but reading (b) conveys an disappearance reading that makes them akin to existential (hence unaccusative) verbs. Shen and Sybesma (2010) study the ‘*gei* + VP’ construction that has a pejorative reading and show that the construction the VP to be unaccusative. This means that only under the ‘run away, fly away’ reading is the *gei*-VP acceptable:

- (56) xiaoniao *gei* fei-le, xiaogou *gei* pao-le, xiao shu *gei* zhang-wai le.  
‘(It happens to us unfavorably that) the little bird flew away, the dog run away, and the small tree grew crooked.’

Post-verbal subject position is possible under the run-away or fly-away reading:

- (57) tamen you pao-le yi-zhi gou, fei-le yi-zhi niao.  
they again run-perf one-CL dog, fly-perf one-CL bird.  
‘They again had one dog run away on them, a bird fly away on them.’

They assume that the verb should a middle construction, but Huang (2013) argues that more precisely the requirement is that it is unaccusative. Cf. also 劉探宙 20xx.

## C. DUTCH *FLY* (HOESTRA 199x, L. CHENG 2005)

In a past-tense sentence, a ‘fake reflexive’ is optional:

... dat het vliegtuig (**zich**) te pletter vloog.  
That the airplane (itself) to pieces flew  
‘... that the airplane flew (itself) to pieces.’

In a perfective sentence, the verb *vliegen* may take a *be* or *have* auxiliary. Importantly, when it takes *be* as the auxiliary (e.g., *is gevlogen*), no ‘fake reflexive’ is allowed:

... dat het vliegtuig (**\*zich**) te pletter is gevlogen. (*be* as auxiliary)  
that the airplane (\*itself) to pieces is flown  
‘... that the airplane has (lit. is) flown (\*itself) to pieces.’

---

Cf. also 劉探宙 20xx.

And when the auxiliary *have* is used (e.g., *heft gevlogen*), the fake reflexive is obligatory:

- (60) ... dat het vliegtuig **\*(zich)** te pletter heft gevlogen. (*have* as auxiliary  
that the airplane \*(itself) to pieces has flown  
'... that the airplane has flown \*(itself) to pieces.'

This means: *vliegen* 'fly' may be used as either an Unerg or Unacc, obeying the respective auxiliary selection and 'fake reflexive' requirements. So when (56) does not use the fake reflexive *zich*, it is not because it does have to obey the DOR, but because it's now an unaccusative. We have meant to treat the so-called unergative resultatives in Chinese this way. Of course, the same resultative may use a (really non-flake) reflexive, in which case the resultative is a causative with an unergative V1:

- (61) a. ZS chang de ziji kougan-shezao.  
ZS sing-de self mouth-dry-tongue-parched  
'ZS sang himself mouth-dry.'
- b. ZS ba ziji chang-de kougan-shezao.  
ZS BA self sing-de mouth-dry-tongue-parched  
'ZS sang himself mouth-dry.'

## D. ENGLISH *WAY*-CONSTRUCTION

(62) Barak Obama (2012-05-02)

We can't just drill our way to lower gas prices.

(also: We can't drill our way out of high fuel prices.)

(63) Someone managed to sleep their way to the top.

(64) From L&R 2001 and references

a. The wise men followed the star out of Bethlehem.

b. The sailors managed to catch a breeze and ride it clear of the rocks.

c. John danced mazurkas across the room.

d. The children played leapfrog across the park.

Generalizations: all of these constructions that may involve an unergative verb and appear to violate the DOR involve some motion events. Either the verb itself involves motion or it combines with an object and/or a goal/source preposition that somehow *facilitates* an unacc reading. Perhaps in these cases we can say that in some cases, the unergative verb itself has semantic feature of motion. Or put another way, the unergative V1 is actually a verb GO or COME or MOVE itself modified by some manner components. And this motion verb may in turn consist of a complex expression.

Such expressions are existential expressions of some sort (coming to existence or going out of existence), a typical kind of unaccusative expression. (Cf. Jackendoff 19xx, but Mateu 2005)

- (65) a. To MAKE one's way to the top = GO to the top  
Merge a verb, including an unergative, like *sleep, sing, flirt, joke, drill*, etc. to the light verb MAKE or GO.
- b. Then you have:  
to sleep-MAKE one's way to the CED's office.  
to sing-MAKE one's way to Broadway  
to drill-MAKE our way to energy efficiency  
to flirt-MAKE one's way back-and-forth to a distinguished title (e.g., what Jim MacCawley used to call)

(66) English & Chinese again

English can also have apparent unergative resultatives, but the V1 is limited to motion verbs or verbs occurring in an environment conducive for the expression of motion.

Chinese on the other hand allows unergative resultatives (*qua* unaccusatives) more freely without the same restrictions.

More examples: 跳累、哭累、跳死、（做工）做死、喊啞、哭醒、等煩、笑傻、笑瘦、吃飽、喝醉 and even more phrasal examples.

All of these compounds may occur with postverbal subject, but the unergative verbs alone cannot:

- 昨天晚上這裡喝醉了許多人，\*喝了許多人。
- 校園槍擊案發生以後，那學校哭死好幾個家長。\*那學校哭了好幾個家長。

That is, along with Washio's strong-weak dichotomy, we also have:

- English allows 'Weak unergative resultatives'
- Chinese allows 'Strong unergative resultatives'



## 7. On deriving the strong-weak parameter

- According to Washio's typology, and the distinction on 'unergative resu

	Strong/weak resultatives	Strong/weak unergative resultatives
Japanese, Romance ....	weak	weak
English, Germanic ...	strong	weak
Chinese, Igbo? ....	strong	strong

- The question is, what explains this particular typology? [The minimal must-ask *why* question . . . . ]
- Possible routes to explanation:
  - a. As a consequence of the analytic-synthetic parameter (Huang 2006, Lin 2001, Williams 2008, 2015; also HLL 2010.)
  - b. As a consequence of the verb-framed vs. satellite-framed parameter (Mateu 2012, Victor Acedo-Matellán 2023).
  - c. Or another possible route on the analyticity parameter

# A. Analyticity parameter, take 1

- a. In Chinese, the Agenthood of an unergative verb is not obligatorily projected. That is, an unergative verb like *ku* ‘cry’ or *xiao* ‘shout’, etc. may enter the derivation as [Lv2 √], [Lv2 [Lv1 √], or just [√]. The last option is not available in English.
  - b. This has the consequence that a merged Unerg verb to V1(-de) need not conflict with an inchoative BECOME with which it is merged. → apparent unergative unaccusable possible.
  - c. That is, an argument feature in Chinese may be less +formal or ‘uninterpretable’ that it need not be projected in grammar. This is a property that also gives rise other analyticity properties in Chinese.
- **BTW** Analytic – synthetic similar to verb-framed vs. satellit-framed

## B. As a consequence VF-SF, S-W parameter

- a. Mateu (2012) discusses Washio's strong-weak typology and proposals to relate it to Talmy's verb-framed vs. satellite-framed languages. Mateu proposes that the strong-weak distinction can be given a syntactic distinction between conflation (or compounding) and head-movement (incorporation), following Haugen (2009).
- b. Strong resultatives are formed by conflation (or compounding) in L-syntax. Available in English. Weak resultatives are formed by moving materials from the RootP in the complement of the light verb. The latter operation is head-movement, by adjunction to the head.
- c. An L-syntax vs. S-syntax parameter. Cf. the traditional DTP:  
Derivational Timing Parameter
- d. Possibly, along Victor's (yesterday), build this as part of the [S-W] & [BF-SF] typology

## C. Analyticity Parameter, take 2

- a. The overt functional head *de1* or *de2*, by virtue of being overt (though phonetically weak), is not entirely uninterpretable and [+strong], so it does not trigger a movement (or external merge) to replace it (which would be a process of substitution). Instead of, movement triggered for phonological reason is by adjunction which, by nature, keeps the host as its head. Therefore, the nature of a V1 that is truly an adjunct to *de* does not affect the feature contents (including argument structure) of *de*. (We also assume that for V—V2 compounds, the non-overt DE-become is (by assumption) less strong so it also triggers adjunction and retains its inchoative nature.
- b. Since the movement is for phonological reasons, it may apply in PF.
- c. By assumption, the verbalizing *v* is more deeply uninterpretable (and +strong), so it triggers movement-by-substitution or move-and-integrate, for which argument-feature agreement or compatibility is required. Hence, an unergative verb would be inappropriate for movement into an inchoative light verb position.  
→ English has no (truly) unaccusative resultatives headed by an unergative V1.  
(The movement cannot be a PF movement.)

# Conclusion and a note on history

## Old Chinese

- 飯、飯、飯 fan (rice, eat rice, feed X with rice)
- 衣、衣錦返鄉、問人之寒則衣之 yi (clothing, to wear X, to clothe sb.)
- 平：天下太平 > 平天下 (flat or peaceful; flatten/pacify) Dumbo )
- 格物、致知、誠意、正心、修身、齊家、治國、平天下

## Mid-ME

- 春林花多媚，春鳥意多哀。  
春風復多情，吹我羅裳開。 出自南北朝《[子夜四時歌·春林花多媚](#)》

## Pre-Modern: Tang-Song

VM-VR compound Tang dynasty (7-10 CC)

V-de phrases: Yuan Dynasty (12 CC)

Old Chinese: verb-framed, no resultative compounds. Lexical causatives everywhere. ‘Synthetic blocking’. (Barring exceptional circumstances, use the synthetic form when you can.)

Mid-Mod Chinese: many many resultatives both V-V and V-de-VP

Modern Chinese: till highly analytic, with limited development of synthesis

→ OC to MnC = synthetic to analytic, or VF to SF

→ The rise of RV compounds and phrases is a consequence of the rise of SF or analytic syntax

Thank you! 謝謝、多謝、勞力  
terima kasih、dhanyavaad、न्यवाद

A commercial:

[TEAL-13](#)

13<sup>th</sup> international workshop on  
[Theoretical East Asian Linguistics](#)  
in Taipei, May 12-14, 2023

