

Disposal Structures in Amoy*

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The so-called disposal construction has attracted an enormous amount of attention by Chinese linguists over the last few decades (cf. Cheung 1973). It is a unique Chinese syntactic device in the sense that a counterpart in other languages with exactly the same syntactic, semantic, as well as pragmatic import has yet to be reported.

Over the years, however, the attention has been focussed on the structure in Mandarin. There is virtually no literature dealing specifically with the structure, or a structure similar to it, in other major Chinese dialects, giving the impression that whatever is true of Mandarin is also true of other dialects. Against this possible implication, this paper is written to demonstrate that if indeed a counterpart in other dialects can be identified, important differences, syntactic or otherwise, exist, which may ultimately shed great light on the understanding of this structure in the Chinese language.

As in the case of Mandarin disposal (BA) construction, the disposal structure in Amoy involves the positioning of an object before the verb yet exhibits a number of interesting and significant characteristics.

* The data used in this paper are taken from 'general Taiwanese' spoken in northern Taiwan, especially Keelung. The term Amoy in the title is only loosely employed for convenience and should not be taken literally as referring to the variety of southern Min dialect spoken in the area of Amoy in Fukien. The romanisation used is in its general framework that in Bodman (1955). No tones are marked so as to make sub-dialect renderings easier.

Characters are supplied for each sentence discussed, a number of which are rendered for ease of reference and do not (necessarily) bear etymological legitimacy.

A. Disposal preposition

Corresponding to Mandarin 把 (BA) the disposal preposition in Amoy is 給 (KA), as seen in.

1. 你給椅仔提來!

Li ka i-a the-lai!

you KA chair bring-come

You bring the chair!

2. 伊給厝賣去啊。

I Ka tshu bué-khi a.

he KA house sell-go ptcl

He sold the house.

However, unlike Mandarin 把 (BA), which occurs solely in disposal sentences, 給 (KA) in Amoy can characterise various semantic roles.

First, 給 (KA) can define the Benefactive case, as illustrated in the following sentences.

3. 你的衫，伊會給你洗。

Li-e saⁿ, i e ka li se.

your clothes, he will KA you wash

He will wash your clothes.

4. 你的批，我會給你提去寄。

Li-e phue, gua e ka li the-khi kia.

Your letter, I will KA you bring-go mail

I shall mail your letter.

5. 伊吃頭路，甚麼人給伊顧囡仔?

I chia thaulo, siame lang ka i ko gin-a?

she works, who KA she look-after child

who looks after her child when she is working?

These can not be disposal sentences, since the object of 給 (KA) in disposal sentences is, at least semantically, the object of main Verbs; but in examples

(3-5), "you" cannot be the object of "wash", nor of "mail", or "she" of "look after". Furthermore, KA in these sentences can be substituted by 替 (the) without any change in meaning.

Second, KA can also define the Goal case, e. g.

6. 你的代誌，我會給伊講。

Li-e taichi, gua e ka i kong.

your business, I will KA him talk

I shall talk to him about your business.

7. 明仔早，你給伊掛一個電話。

Min-a-tsai, li ka i kha chit-e tien-ue.

tomorrow, you KA him dial one telephone

You (should) telephone him tomorrow.

8. 你欲給太太買一個甚無？

Li be ka thaithai bue chit-e siaⁿ bo?

You want KA wife buy one what NO

Do you want to buy something for your wife?

As in Mandarin, many instances of Goal can also occur post-verbally, but whereas Mandarin post-verbal Goal is also defined by 給 (gei), its Amoy counterpart is 付 (Ho), e. g.

9. 我會講付伊聽 (*講話)

Gue e kong ho i thiaⁿ. (*kong ka)

I will talk give him hear

I shall tell him.

10. 掛一個電話付伊! (*給伊)

Kha chit-e tien-ue ho i! (*ka i)

dial one telephone give him

Telephone him!

11. 買一個甚付太太! (*給太太)

Bue chit-e siaⁿ ho thaithai. (*ka tai-thai)

buy one what give wife

Buy something for your wife!

Third, KA can define Source, corresponding to 跟 (gen), e.g.

12. 伊欲給你討錢哦？

I be ka li tho chin o?

he want KA you collect money ptcl

He wants to get his money back from you?

13. 你勿緩給伊買，好啦！

Li mai ka i bue, ho la!

You don't KA him duy, good ptcl

Don't buy it from him!

14. 我想欲給你借幾本仔冊。

Gua siuⁿ be ka li chio kui-pun-a tshe?

I think want KA you borrow some books

I would like to borrow some books from you.

Source cannot occur post-verbally with HO. The sentence,

15. 伊欲討錢付你。

I be tho chin ho li.

he want collect money give you

He wants to get some money back for you.

would mean "He wants to get some money back (from someone) and give it to you."

In the light of the foregoing, we can define the disposal preposition as follows. KA is a disposal marker only when its object is at the same time the true object of the main verb in the sentence. A true object is defined in terms of transitivity (cf. Teng 1975). This approach does relate the structure S-V-O to S-disposal O-V, but it does not follow that a disposal sentence must find a grammatical S-V-O counterpart in all instances. For instance, the sentence,

16. 你給手舉起來！

Li ka chhiu gia-khi-lai!

you KA hand lift-up-come

Raise your arms!

is a disposal sentence since "hand" is the true object of "raise", even though its S-V-O counterpart would be ungrammatical, i. e.

17. * 你舉手起來!

*Li gia chhiu khi-lai!

you lift hand up-come

The characterisation above will distinguish the disposal KA from the other instances of KA, since in non-disposal sentences, the main verbs would have their own object separate from that of KA.

B. Secondary disposal preposition

In some instances of Amoy disposal sentences, a secondary, i. e. non-primary, preposition 付 (Ho) may occur immediately after the main verb, e. g.

18. 給飯吃付清氣!

ka png chia ho chhingkhi!

KA rice eat give clean

Eat the rice all up!

19. 給酒飲付了!

ka chiu lim ho liau!

KA wine drink give finish

Drink up the wine!

This situation resembles the Mandarin disposal and passive sentences somewhat, as seen in

20. 他把酒給喝光了。(Mandarin)

Ta ba jui gei he-guang le.

he BA wine give drink-bare ptcl

He drank all the wine.

21. 酒被他給喝光了。(Md)

Jiu bei ta gei he-guang le.

wine BEI him give drink-bare ptcl

The wine was all finished by him.

However, there are significant differences. First, whereas Amoy HO occurs after the main verb, the Mandarin secondary preposition 給 (gei) occurs before the

main verb. Second, Amoy HO is observed in disposal sentences, whereas Mandarin GEI occurs in both disposal and passive sentences. Third, the occurrence of Amoy 付 (ho) is much more restricted than that of Mandarin 給 (gei). In the following Amoy disposal sentences, 付 (ho) may not occur.

22. 給冊提 (* 付) 來!

ka tshe⁷ the (*ho) lai!

KA book bring (*give) come

Bring the book!

23. 給牛縛 (* 付) 起來!

ka gu pak (*ho) khi-lai!

KA buffalo tie (*give) up-come

Tie up the buffalo!

The constraint applies to the nature of the disposal complement. If it is concrete, 付 can occur; if it is abstract, e. g. verb-particles or aspect markers, 付 (ho) may not occur.

In the field of Chinese linguistics, it has not yet been established concerning how to analyse this secondary 給 (gei) in Mandarin disposal or passive sentences. The analysis of Amoy 付 (ho) shall thus not be dealt with further here.

C. Preposing disposal objects

In some contexts, a Mandarin disposal sentence can have its disposal object preposed, leaving a pronoun in its original position, e. g.

24. 那個人，你要把他帶來嗎？(Md)

Nei-ge ren, ni yao ba ta dai-lai ma?

that person, you want BA him bring-come ptcl

Are you bringing that man?

But it is far commoner not to have the object preposed in Mandarin. Amoy, on the other hand, frequently makes use of this structure, e. g.

25. 彼個人，你欲給伊取來哦？

Hit² e lang, li be ka i tshua-lai o?

that person, you want KA him bring-come ptcl

Are you bringing that man?

Moreover, when the object is neither first nor second person, its pronominal copy occurring after the disposal preposition can also be deleted (see below),

e. g.

27. 彼本册，你給賣去啊哦？

Hit-pun tshe?, li ka? bué-khi a o?

that book, you KA sell-go ptcl ptcl

You sold that book?

28. 我的朋友，你給開除啊哦？

Gua-e pengiu, li ka? Khai-ti a o?

my firend, you KA dismiss ptcl ptcl

Did you fire my friend?

29. * 你，我給取去好無？

*Li, gua ka? tshua-khi ho bo?

you, I KA bring-go good NO

Shall I take you?

This deletion results in a dangling preposition, a situation not otherwise observed in Amoy. Even in Mandarin, a dangling preposition is not allowed except in passive constructions, e. g. 被殺 (Md) ("bei-sha" get killed). However, after the object is deleted, the preposition has undergone a slight phonetic change and ends with a glottal stop, which has no obvious source. This is quite different from the contraction of the disposal preposition and the first person pronoun following it, e. g.

30. 你給講無要緊！ (=給我)

Li kaa kong bo iau-kin!

you KA talk Neg matter

It won't matter if you tell me.

in which KA assimilates the high tonal onset of the pronoun and changes into a high rising tone, i. e. 33+53→35.

D. Types of verbal complements.

The disposal complements in Amoy that follow the main verb can be of the following types.

1. Directional verbs, either concrete or abstract.

31. 給水提來 !

ka tsui the-lai!

KA water hold-come

Bring some water!

32. 給囡仔抱起來 !

ka gin-a pho-khi-lai!

KA child hold-up-come

Lift up the child!

33. 伊給舊車賣去啊 !

I ka ku chhia bue-khi a!

he KA old car sell-go ptcl

He sold the old car!

34. 伊給鴨趕出去啊 !

I ka a? kuaⁿ tshut-khi a!

he KA ducks chase out-go ptcl

He chased the ducks out!

Note here that 去 (qu) in Mandarin can only serve as a concrete directional verb and not as a verb-particle as in Amoy 賣去 (bue-khi "sell").

2. Resultative states.

35. 給衫洗清氣 !

ka saⁿ se chhing-khi!

KA clothes wash clean

wash the clothes properly!

36. 給你拍死 !

Ka li pha?-si!

KA you hit-die

I am going to kill you!

3. *Reduplicated verbs.*

37. 給房間掃掃咧!

ka pang-king sau-sau le!

KA room sweep-sweep ptcl

Clean this room properly!

38. 給褲燙燙咧!

ka kho ut-ut le!

KA trousers press-press ptcl

Iron the trousers!

Unlike in Mandarin, verb reduplication in Amoy carries the meaning of “exhaustiveness” and is not actually a complement to the verb. Note that the reduplicated verb itself can further take a complement, as shown below.

39. 給房間掃掃付清氣!

ka pang-king sau-sau ho chhing-khi!

KA room sweep-sweep give clean

Clean the room properly!

40. 給褲熨熨付帥!

ka kho ut-ut ho sui!

KA trousers press-press give pretty

Iron the trousers nicely!

This last situation is not common in Mandarin.

4. *Aspect markers.*

41. 給錢提著!

ka chiⁿ the-tio?!

KA money hold-prog

Take the money!

42. 給碗放下！

ka uaⁿ khng-e!

KA bowl place-down

Put the bowl down!

Aspect markers differ from resultative states in that the former do not occur independently in a sentence, so that in the sentence

43. 給藥仔飲了！

ka io-a lim-liau!

KA medicine drink-finish

Drink up the medicine!

“liau” is a state since it can occur in

44. 錢都了啊！

chiⁿ long liau a!

money all finished ptcl

The money has all been spent!

5. *Goal nouns.*

45. 給冊還伊！

ka tshe? hain i!

KA book return him

Give him back the book!

46. 給冊提付伊！

ka tshe? the-ho i!

KA book take give him

Give him the book!

47. 給冊放下土腳！

ka tshe? khng-e tho-kha!

KA book place-at floor

Put the book on the floor!

48. 給西瓜切做兩邊！

ka si-kue chhet tso nng peng!

KA water-melon cut as two sides
Cut the water-melon into halves!

6. *Frequency nouns.*

49. 我給批看三回啊！

Gua ka phue khuan saⁿ-pai a!
I KA letter look three-times ptcl
I read the letter three times!

50. 伊給衫改三位啊！

I ka saⁿ kai san-ui a!
he KA clothes alter three-places ptcl
He had the trousers altered in three places!

7. *Extent.*

51. 賊仔給厝掀到滿四界。

Tshat-a ka tshu hien-ka muaⁿ si-ke.
thief KA house turn-to all-over four-places
The thief made a mess of the house.

52. 伊給歌唱到有够壞聽。

I ka kua chhiuⁿ-ka u kau phai-thiaⁿ.
he KA song sing-to have enough bad-hear
He made a mess of the song.

E. Minimal verbal complement.

In Mandarin, it is obligatory for a disposal sentence not to end with a verb alone. Thus it may be convenient to say that the minimal verbal complement is an aspect marker, e. g.

53. 他把車賣了。(Md)

Ta ba che mai-le
he BA car sell-aspect
He has already sold the car.

54. * 他把車賣。(Md)

* Ta ba che mai.

he BA car sell

55. 他沒把車賣了。(Md)

Ta mei ba che mai-le.

he Neg BA car sell-aspect

He hasn't sold the car.

56. * 他沒把車賣。(Md)

* Ta mei ba che mai.

he Neg BA car

The last example above clearly indicates that the disposal construction has this constraint in operation, since the perfective aspect does not as a rule occur in negative sentences, e. g.

57. 他沒賣他的舊車。(Md)

Ta mei mai tade jiu che

he Neg sell his old car

He did not sell his old car.

58. * 他沒賣了他的舊車。(Md)

* Ta mei mai-le ta-de jiu che.

he Neg sell-ptcl his old car

Amoy, on the other hand, does not have this constraint, and the disposal verb can occur alone in a sentence, e. g.

59. 㗎仔，你唔當給伊拍！

Gin-a, li m-thang ka i pha?!

child, you should-not KA him hit

Don't hit the child!

60. 無啊！我無給拍。

Bo a! Gua bo ka? pha?.

Neg ptcl! I Neg KA hit

No, I did not hit him.

61. 狗仔破病啊，你來給伊看！

Kau-a phua-peⁿ a! Li lai ka i khuaⁿ!

dog sick ptcl! you come KA it look

The dog is sick. Come and take a look!

62. 醫生無給看哦？

I sing bo ka? khuaⁿ o?

doctor Neg KA look ptcl

The doctor did not take a look?

Note that Amoy does not have a perfective aspect marker corresponding to Mandarin 了 (le).

F. Semantics of disposal verbs

The issue as to what kind of verbs and their complements can occur in disposal sentences is a very complex one. Therefore, it is useful to delimit the scope of our discussion in this connection by considering only monosyllabic verbs without any kind of complement verbs. For example, in Mandarin, while the sentences,

63. 他把信燒了。(Md)

Ta ba xin shao-le.

he BA letter burn-ptcl

He burned the letter.

is grammatical, the sentence below is not,

64. * 他把帽子戴了。(Md)

* Ta ba maozi dai-le.

he BA hat wear-ptcl

He wore the hat.

The fact that a sentence closely resembling the last example, e. g.

65. 他把帽子戴好了。(Md)

Ta ba maozi dai-hao-le.

he BA hat wear-good-ptcl

He put the hat on properly.

is grammatical does not alter the fact that “burn” and “wear” are different verbs and that only the former can occur alone in a disposal sentence.

I proposed in Teng (1975) that in Mandarin only those verbs that take a Patient object can occur in disposal sentences. There are in fact very few exceptions to that rule if we limit our scope to monosyllabic verbs alone. Thus, “burn” can occur in a disposal sentence since it takes a Patient, but not “wear” since it takes a Range object. (For details of nominal roles, see Teng 1975).

Returning to Amoy, the situation is quite complicated. Verbs of many different categories can occur in Amoy disposal sentences; so much so that it is quite inappropriate to refer to such sentences as disposal. Compare the following types.

1. *Verbs that take (disappearing) Patient* (also in Mandarin)

66. 我的藥仔，你未使給吃。

Gua-e io-a, li be-sai ka? chia.

my medicine, you Neg-must KA eat

You must not take my medicine.

67. 這款魚，得愛按然給剖。

Chit-khuan hi, tio ai ani ka? thai.

this-kind fish, should need this-way KA kill

You should kill this fish like this.

68. 此的樹葉仔，你來給燒？

chia-e chhiu hio-a, li lai ka? sio!

here's tree leaves, you come KA burn

Burn these leaves!

2. *Outward verbs (without change of state)* (Also in Mandarin)

69. 彼然好的車，你唔好給賣。

Hiani ho-e chhia, li m-ho ka? bue.

that-way good car, you Neg-good KA sell

You should not sell such a good car.

70. 彼桶水，你提出去給倒！

Hit- thang tsui, li the-tshui-khi ka? to!
that-bucket water, you take-out-go KA pour
Take that bucket of water and pour it away!

71. 彼然帥的衫，伊不肯給脫。

Hiani sui-e saⁿ, i m-khing ka? thng.
that-way pretty dress, she Neg-willing KA take-off
She is unwilling to take off such a pretty dress.

3. *Inward verbs*. (Not in Mandarin)

72. 你的冊，欲叫甚人去給領？

Li-e tshe?, be kio sia-lang khi ka? niaⁿ?
Your book, want ask who go KA collect
Who shall I ask to go and get your book?

73. 好的方法得想辦法給學。

Ho-e honghuat tio siuⁿ panhuat ka? o.
good method must think method KA learn
We must think of a way to learn good methods.

74. 我的成績無好，公司無愛給我收。

Gua-e singchik bo ho, kongsi bo ai ka gua siu.
my grades Neg good, comqany Neg want KA me hire
My grades are not good enough; the company does not want to hire me.

4. *Perception verbs* (Not in Mandarin)

75. 伊破病啊，你去給看！

I phua-peⁿ a, li khi ka? khuaⁿ!
he sick ptcl, you go KA look
He is sick. Go and see him!

76. 此是甚人的聲？你給聽看埋！

Che si sia-lang-e siaⁿ? Li ka? thiaⁿ khuaⁿ mai!
this be whose voice? you KA listen look try
Whose voice is this? You listen to it!

77. 你無給鼻，哪會知影是臭的？

Li bo ka? phiⁿ, na e tsai-iaⁿ si tshau-e?
you Neg KA smell, how will know be rotten
How do you know it is rotten without smelling?

5. *Verbs of handling* (Not in Mandarin)

78. 危險，唔好給揪！

Hui-hiam, m-ho ka? khiu!
dangerous, Neg-good KA pull
Dangerous! Don't pull him!

79. 危險，唔當給揀！

Hui-hiam, m-thang ka? sak!
dangerous, Neg-good KA push
Dangerous! Don't push him!

80. 㗎仔起來啊，你去給抱！

Gin-a khi-lai a, Li khi ka? phio!
child wake-come ptcl. you go KA hold
The child is up. Go and hold her!

6. *Verbs that take Locative.* (Not in Mandarin)

81. 伊無提甚，唔好給拍！

I bo the siaⁿ. M-ho ka? pha?!
he Neg take what. Neg-good KA hit
He did not take anything. Don't hit him!

82. 伊在睏，唔好給摸！

I ti khun. M-ho ka? bong.
he prog sleep. Neg-good KA touch
He is asleep. Don't touch him!

83. 㗎仔在外口，狗給給咬齣？

Gin-a ti gua-khau. Kau e ka? ka be?
child at outside. dog will KA bite won't
The child is outside. Will the dog bite him?

7. *Verbs of utterance.* (Not in Mandarin)

84. 我唔知，你去給伊問！

Gua m-tsai. Li khi ka i mng!

I neg-know. you go KA him ask

I don't know. You ask him!

85. 伊真好，你唔好給罵！

I chin ho. Li m-ho ka? me!

he very good. you Neg-good KA scold

He is very good. Don't scold him!

86. 伊上無愛人給喊。

I siong bo ai lang ka? hua?.

He most Neg want people KA yell

He dislikes yelling most.

8. *State verbs* (Not in Mandarin)

87. 伊真需要人給疼。

I chin su-iau lang ka? thiaⁿ.

he very need people KA care

He needs other people's care.

9. *Verbs that take effected objects.* (Not in Mandarin)

88. 你的厝，甚人欲給起？

Li-e tshu, sia-lang be ka? khi?

your house, who will KA build

who is going to build your bouse?

89. 我彼張批，請你給寫一下！

Gua hit-tiuⁿ phue, chhiaⁿ li ka? sia chit-e!

I that-class. letter, please you KA write one

Please write that letter of mine!

The above illustrates what can and cannot occur in Mandarin and Amoy and is not intended to be exhaustive. We can at least observe that Mandarin BA-sentences are highly restricted to semantically "disposal" (i. e. causative) circum-

stances, while Amoy KA-sentences seem to be rather neutral semantically and thus can be more appropriately defined as a syntactic device of preposing an object than is the case in Mandarin. However, it does not follow that all cases of objects, regardless of their semantic roles, can be preposed by KA. As in Mandarin, Range (cf. Teng 1975) can not be the object of KA, e. g.

90. * 電影勸壞，你去給看！

* Tien-iaⁿ be bai, li khi ka? khuan!

movie Neg bad, you go KA look

The movie is not bad. Go and see it!

91. * 野球真好，你去給拍。

* Ia-kiu chin ho. Li khi ka? pha?!

base-ball very good. you go KA hit.

The baseball is fun. Go and have a game!

92. * 歷史真重要，你來給教！

* Liksu chin tiong-iau, li lai ka? ka!

history very important, you come KA teach

History is an important subject; you (should) teach it.

G. Retained objects.

By “retained object” is meant a disposal sentence in which both the disposal marker, Mandarin BA and Amoy KA, and the main verb have a syntactic object, e. g. in Mandarin.

93. 他把書拿了三本。(Md)

Ta ba shu na-le san-ben.

he BA book take-ptcl three-class.

He took three of those books.

The second object is said to be “retained,” since it seems to form a part of the first object and yet is not preposed.

This construction also occurs in Amoy. The following types are established on the basis of the relationship between the two objects.

1. *The second object is a sub-set of the first object.*

94. 你給册提幾本去啊？

Li ka tshe? the kui-pun khi a?

you KA book take how-many go ptcl

How many of those books did you take?

95. 魚仔，你給剖幾尾啊？

Hi-a, li ka? thai kui-bue a?

fish, you KA kill how-many ptcl

How many of the fish did you kill?

96. 你欲給佢請幾個來？

Li be ka in chhiaⁿ kui-e lai?

you want KA them invite how-many come

How many of them are you inviting?

The set/sub-set relationship is a semantic one, and it doesn't matter what the underlying configuration of the two NP's is. For instance, in example (94), the two NP's can be combined as "kui-pun-tshe?" in the underlying structure, whereas "in" and "kui-e" in (96) cannot. In any event, the same semantic relationship holds.

2. *The second object is an integral part of the first object.*

97. 此粒柑仔，你給剝皮提付伊！

Chit-liap kam-a, li ka? pak phue the ho i!

this orange, you KA peel skin take give him

Peel this orang and give it to him!

98. 你唔好給伊摸手！

Li m-ho ka i bong chhiu!

you Neg-good KA her touch hand

Don't touch her hand!

99. 哪會使給囡仔搥嘴巴？

Na e-sai ka gin-a sien tshui-phue?

how may KA child slap cheek

How could you slap a child?

Unlike the set/sub-set instances, the two NP's in this category can be paraphrased by possessive constructions, i. e.

100. 你剝柑仔的皮！

Li pak kam-a-e phue!

you peel orange's skin

Peel the orange!

101. 你摸伊的手！

Li bong i-e chhiu!

you touch her hand

Touch her hand!

102. 搵罔仔的嘴巴！

Sien gin-a-e tshui-phue!

slap child's cheek

Slap the child!

And invariably, it is the possessive noun, not headnoun, that is preposed.

3. *The first noun is the location of the second noun.*

103. 伊給門踢破兩孔。

I ka mng thak-phua nng khang.

he KA door kick-break two holes

He kicked two holes in the door.

104. 你給腳抹一點仔藥仔！

Li ka kha bua? chit-tiam-a io-a!

you KA foot apply a little medicine

Apply some medicine on your foot!

105. 你給便所裝一塊鏡好啦！

Li ka pien-so tsng chit-te kiaⁿ ho la!

you KA toilet install one mirror good ptcl

Install a mirror in the toilet!

H. A related structure

There is a type of sentence in Amoy that resembles the disposal sentences both syntactically and semantically. Compare the following sentences.

106. 伊直直拿我看。

I tit-tit lia gua khuaⁿ.

he straight grab me look

He was staring at me.

107. 無伊的代誌，你哪的合伊咕咕罵？

Bo i-e tai-chi. Li nae lia i khok-khok me?

Neg his business. You how will grab him scold

It has nothing to do with him. How come you keep scolding him?

Note first that Amoy 拿 (lia) and Mandarin 把 (ba) are synonyms. Second, the object of 拿 (lia) is also the object of the main verb. Thus, it seems unlikely that 拿 (lia) can be analysed merely as a kind of preposition.

Mandarin 拿 (na) occurs in different circumstances, e. g.

108. 你別總是拿他開心。(Md)

Ni bie zong shi na ta kai-xin.

you don't always be grab him fun

Don't make fun of him all the time.

in which the object of 拿 (na) is not the object of the main verb.

Conclusion

Two important features concerning the disposal structure in Amoy must be noted from the foregoing discussion. First, the minimal verbal complement can be zero. Second, a wide variety of verbs can serve as the main verbs in Amoy disposal sentences. These features distinguish Amoy from Mandarin in this respect.

If the characterisation is correct that Mandarin disposal sentences are either causative-motivated or phonologically-motivated (see Teng 1980), Amoy KA sentences are not "disposal" sentences as commonly defined. They do not

exhibit such features. The Amoy KA construction is merely one of the devices in Amoy of preposing the object, not unlike the function of BA in, say, the Tang dynasty language. Thus, we may postulate that the function of BA in Mandarin has specialised over the centuries.

Further investigation of disposal sentences in other Chinese dialects will be necessary before we can conclude that Amoy KA and Mandarin BA sentences are in fact relatable and that a comparative study such as this paper is indeed meaningful.

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