

# A Comparative Study on Mandarin and Cantonese Resultative Verb Compounds

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## Abstract

This paper explores the conditions where Mandarin RVCs can be preserved in their Cantonese counterparts. Six types of Mandarin RVCs – ergatives, unergatives, accusatives, causatives, pseudo-passives and object-fronting – have been examined. Modifications have been made for certain kinds of RVCs that are usually misclassified. The analysis has been done at both the lexical and syntactic levels. At the lexical level, the concept of ‘strong resultative’ and ‘weak resultative’ has been adduced to support the idea that indirect causation cannot be expressed by RVC in Cantonese. At the syntactic level, the presentations of the same RVCs falling into different sentence types are illustrated. Since the structure of Mandarin RVCs are often restricted in Cantonese, three substitutive constructions have been introduced for presenting the same resultatives in Cantonese.

## 1 Introduction

Resultative verb compound (RVC) has been a well-ventilated topic in Modern Chinese linguistics due to its ubiquitous occurrence in Chinese especially Mandarin. A resultative verb compound in Chinese is composed of two elements, with the second element (V2) denoting the result of the action indicated by the first element (V1) (Thompson 1973, Lu 1977, Li and Thompson 1981,

Shi 2002)<sup>1</sup>. As one of the main varieties of Chinese, Cantonese seems to be closely-related to Mandarin. There are, however, some remarkable differences between them in terms of the usage. An example of Mandarin RVC construction is shown in (1), with a syntactically parallel yet ill-formed sentence in Cantonese illustrated in (2).

- (1) 我        跑丟-了    車票  
1.SG    run lost-ASP ticket  
‘I lost the ticket as I ran.’
- (2) \*我        跑跌-咗    張    車飛  
1.SG    run lost-ASP CL    ticket

Since RVCs in Cantonese are found to be less productive than they are in Mandarin, most of the previous works have been dedicated to the study of Mandarin Chinese, neglecting numerous concerns regarding Cantonese RVCs. Under what circumstances can the Mandarin RVCs be preserved in their Cantonese counterparts? What are the factors of prohibition of RVCs in Cantonese? What methods will be used when RVCs are not allowed in the corresponding sentences in Cantonese? These are the questions that motivate the current research.

In this study, we attempt to provide a systematic pattern of how resultatives are presented when the corresponding Mandarin RVCs are not allowed in

<sup>1</sup> Since ‘V1’ and ‘V2’ are widely used as the first and the second predicates of RVCs in previous studies, these terms are adopted in this paper.

Cantonese, by examining six types of Mandarin RVCs, namely ergatives, unergatives, accusatives, causatives, pseudo-passives, and object-fronting.

## 2 Related Work

With regard to Chinese RVCs, numerous studies have examined them concerning the headedness. There are four approaches proposed: a) V1 being the head (Li 1990, 1995, Cheng & Huang 1994, Wang 2001), b) V2 being the head (Tai 2003), c) neither V1 nor V2 being the head (Huang & Lin 1992), and d) both V1 and V2 being the heads (Gu 1992). The formation of RVCs also intrigued many researchers. Li (1990, 1995) suggested that RVCs are formed in the lexicon. Gu (1992) further pointed out that they are occasionally formed in the lexicon through theta-identification. Huang (1992) proposed that they are derived syntactically.

While most previous studies focus on Mandarin Chinese, little work has been done in investigating Cantonese RVCs. Cheng et al. (1997) compared the properties of verbal compounds in Cantonese, Mandarin, and Taiwanese, proposing that Cantonese and Mandarin are similarly formed in the lexicon, whereas Taiwanese is formed in the syntax. Chow (2012) investigated the interface between the semantic and syntactic realizations of RVCs in Mandarin and Cantonese, suggesting that most RVCs in Mandarin have parallel syntactic realizations with their corresponding Cantonese sentences. However, the prevailing use of ill-formed Cantonese RVCs produced by non-native speakers will be unexplained if RVCs in Mandarin and Cantonese share the same structure.

## 3 Types of RVC Constructions

Drawing on the insight of earlier works, particularly Cheng & Huang (1994) and Wang (2001), this study classifies RVCs into six types, namely ergatives, unergatives, accusatives, causatives, pseudo-passives and object-fronting. It should be noted that it is possible for the same RVC to fall into different types due to the transitivity<sup>2</sup> and canonicity<sup>3</sup> of the RVC.

<sup>2</sup> Transitivity is a property of the RVC that indicates if the RVC can take objects or not

<sup>3</sup> Canonicity concerns with the ordinary word order of a language. For example, a Chinese canonical sentence order would be: “SUBJ+ V+ (OBJ)”, of which the subject is the AGENT.

### 3.1 Ergatives

Ergatives are intransitive verbs that contain only one argument. V1 of an ergative is a non-active verb that indicates a state or a passive action. A THEME/ EXPERIENCER/ CAUSER is selected obligatorily by a non-active RVC (Cheng & Huang 1994). V1 and V2 are referring to the same entity which occupies the subject position of the sentence.

- (3) 他            嚇呆了  
3.SG        scared stupefy-ASP  
'He is shocked.'

### 3.2 Unergatives

Unergatives involve an intransitive frame. They contain AGENTS as the grammatical subjects who take the actions denoted in V1 and eventually undergo changes of state (Cheng & Huang 1994, Huang 2008). The subject is the AGENT of V1 and the EXPERIENCER/ THEME of V2. V1 and V2 are referring to the same entity, as in (4):

- (4) 張三            吃飽了  
Zhangsan        eat full-ASP  
'Zhangsan ate and he is full.'

### 3.3 Accusatives

Accusative predicates<sup>4</sup>, consisted of active V1 and state-denoting V2, are transitive verbs that obligatorily take two theta roles including an AGENT and a THEME. The AGENT role is assigned to the subject whereas the THEME role is appointed to the object. As the accusative RVCs may differ in their referential properties, accusative RVCs can be divided into two types, namely co-referential and cross-referential.

#### Co-referential Accusatives

The grammatical subject must be the logical subject of both V1 and V2 but the grammatical object may have three types, we name them Type 1, 2 and 3. According to Wang (2001), it can be (a) the logical object of the whole RVC (**Type 1**), (b) the logical object of V1 (**Type 2**) or (c) the logical object of V2 (**Type 3**). The typical examples of the three types are shown as in (5) – (7):

<sup>4</sup> 'Accusatives' is termed 'transitives' in the work of Cheng & Huang (1994).

- (5) 他 看懂-了 說明書 (Wang 2001: 66)  
3.SG read understand-ASP user guide  
'He read the user guide and understood it.'
- (6) 張三 打累-了 籃球  
Zhangsan play tired-ASP basketball  
'Zhangsan played basketball (for a long time)  
and then he became tired.'
- (7) 大黑 跑贏-了 對手 (Wang 2001: 66)  
Dahei run win-ASP competitor  
'Dahei won in a running competition.'

### Cross-referential Accusatives

The grammatical subject must be the logical subject of V1 but the grammatical object may also have three types, we name them Type 4, 5 and 6. If there are only two arguments in the sentence, the grammatical object can be (a) the logical object of V1 and the logical subject of V2 (**Type 4**) or (b) the logical subject of V2 (**Type 5**). If there are three arguments, the direct object must be the logical object of both the V1 and V2 (**Type 6**). They are demonstrated as in (8)-(10):

- (8) 她 擦乾-了 眼淚  
3.SG wipe dry-ASP tears  
'She dried her eyes.'
- (9) 他 咬碎-了 牙齒  
3.SG bite broken-ASP tooth  
'He broke his tooth by biting something.'
- (10) 老師 教會 我 游泳  
teacher teach know 1.SG swim  
'The teacher taught me how to swim.'

### 3.4 Causatives

Causatives are transitive verbs whose grammatical subject is a cause in terms of thematic relations. The event structure proposed by Cheng & Huang (1994) is shown in (11):

- (11) [RV V1<sub>Non-active</sub> [ V2<sub>State/ Change-of-State</sub>]]  
<Causer, Theme/ Experiencer/ Causee>

According to Wang (2001), there are three semantic patterns of causatives, of which one of them needs to be revised. In this paper, all patterns are renamed and two new patterns are introduced.

### Co-referential

#### Type 1 Causatives

"Type 1 causative" is derived from a canonical sentence (i.e. accusatives) simply by switching the positions of the subject and object. The subject is the CAUSER which is the THEME before the deriving from accusatives. In Type 1 causative, V1 denotes an activity taken by the object and the subject is the logical object of V1 as in 大餐吃膩了夫人 (Wang 2001: 63) 'The woman was sick of having the big meal.'

#### Type 2 Causatives

"Type 2 causative" is sentences with the original AGENTs becoming the CAUSERs. This can be done by verbs that can either be an active verb or an state-denoting verb such as 嚇 'scare', 氣 'irritate'. For example, in 他嚇呆了我 'he scared me', the subject "他" is regarded as the AGENT who takes the action of scaring the object "我". It can also be understood as "He caused me to be scared". The latter one will be referred to in causatives. Thus, the statement "V1 and V2 are cross-referential" suggested by Wang (2001) is incorrect. It is proposed that Type 2 causative RVCs are object-oriented (i.e. co-referential) with an active V1 used in a non-active sense. Since the property of the V1 contains two readings, this kind of sentence involves structural ambiguities.

#### Type 3 Causatives

"Type 3 causative" is combined with Type 2 in the work of Wang (2001). They are, however, different in their semantic patterns. Thus, we propose "Type 3 causatives" as one of the new sub-category in causatives. "Type 3 causative" is a sentence containing an independent CAUSER, meaning that the CAUSER (i.e. the subject) has no logical connection with the predicates. Both predicates refer to the same entity which is the object, with V1 being an intransitive verb. For example, 夢裡的那件事哭醒了他 'He woke up in tears for the event he dreamt (in his dream).'

#### Type 4 Causatives

"Type 4 causative" contains a suppressed AGENT of the action stated in V1. The subject is the logical object of V1 while the object is a body part of the one who takes the action denoted by V1. For

example, 那些資料看花了眼睛, ‘The information made (his) eyes blurred (from reading it).’

### Cross-referential

#### Type 5 Causatives

“Type 5 causative” is a sentence with three arguments in its deep structure. Only two of them appear on the surface and the V1 AGENT is covert. The grammatical subject is the logical object of V1, while V2 denotes the state which is object-oriented. Consider: 這首歌唱哭了觀眾 ‘The audiences were moved by the song’.

### 3.5 Pseudo-Passives

“Pseudo-passives”, termed “surface ergatives”, show the pattern of ergativity. They indeed differ in their properties as pseudo-passives entail the existence of some implicit agent that pure ergatives do not. Pseudo-passive can be divided into two types, namely “1-argument pseudo-passive” as in 桌子擦乾了 ‘The table is wiped dry’ and “2-argument pseudo-passive” as in 花瓶擺錯了地方 (Wang 2001: 70) ‘Someone put the vase in a wrong place’. The latter is often neglected by many linguists and was misclassified as “object-fronting” in Wang (2001). Due to its cross-referentiality, we re-categorize and name it “2-argument pseudo-passive”. The sole difference between “2-argument pseudo-passives” and “1-argument pseudo-passives” is that the former contains two arguments while the latter comprises only one argument on the surface. They both have a suppressed agent in their deep structures.

### 3.6 Object-Fronting

Similar to pseudo-passives, the logical object of “object-fronting” is in the subject position. Therefore, many often confuse “object-fronting” with “pseudo-passive”. Although it has been mentioned in some works before, the distinguishability is not accurately proposed. We clearly distinguish “object-fronting” from “pseudo-passives” by examining the passivizability of the sentences. This is demonstrated as in (12) and (13):

#### Pseudo-passives:

- (12) a. 飯 吃完-了  
rice eat finish-ASP  
‘The rice was eaten up.’

- b. 飯 被他 吃完-了 (Thompson 1973: 367)  
rice by 3.SG eat all-ASP  
‘The rice was eaten up by him.’

#### Object-fronting:

- (13) a. 飯 吃飽-了  
rice eat full-ASP  
‘(Someone) has had enough rice.’

- b. \*飯 被他 吃飽-了 (Thompson 1973: 367)  
rice by 3.SG eat full-ASP

## 4 Comparison between Mandarin and Cantonese

While some researchers suggest that almost all resultative constructions in Mandarin have a parallel structure with their corresponding Cantonese sentences, we find that sentences containing different types of RVCs in Mandarin may use various methods in re-producing corresponding sentences in Cantonese. As observed, some RVCs could be preserved in Cantonese while some were restricted and presented by means of V-*dou3* (V-到), V-copying and ‘*gau2-dou3*’ (攪到) constructions. Although the selection process seems to be arbitrary, it is believed that there must be a rule governing the interpretation process for the sentences to be produced in a correct and natural way.

Moreover, it should be noted that it is possible for the same RVC in Mandarin to be categorized into different types due to the transitivity and canonicity of the RVC. For examples, 他寫累了 ‘He wrote himself tired’ is an unergative, 他寫累了論文 ‘He is tired for he has been writing his essay’ is an accusative, and 論文寫累了他 ‘He is tired for he has been writing his essay’ is a causative. The same RVC 寫累 ‘write-tired’ falls into different categories. The alternation in the examples of unergative and accusative shows that canonical intransitive RVC can be presented in a canonical transitive way. It is also instantiated in the examples of accusative and causative that RVC may have both canonical and non-canonical transitive use. Thus, whether or not sentence types affect the presentation of the sentences in Cantonese will be investigated in Section 4.2.

#### 4.1 At the Lexical Level

There are four ways for the resultatives to be expressed in Cantonese, namely RVC, *V-dou3* (V-到), V-copying and ‘*gau2-dou3*’ (攞到) constructions. Similar to Cantonese, RVCs and *V-de* (V-得)/ *V-dao* (V-到) constructions are the most common ways of presenting resultatives in Mandarin. Consider (14):

- (14) a. 他 踢破-了 鞋子  
3.SG kick broken-ASP shoes  
‘He has ruined his shoes.’
- b. 他 踢-到/得 鞋子 破-了  
3.SG kick-dao/de shoes broken-ASP  
‘He has ruined his shoes.’
- c. 佢 踢爛-咗 對鞋  
3.SG kick broken-ASP CL shoes  
‘He has ruined his shoes.’
- d. 佢 踢-到 對鞋 爛-咗  
3.SG kick-dou3 CL shoes broken-ASP  
‘He has ruined his shoes.’

In (14), (a) and (b) are in Mandarin, while (c) and (d) are in Cantonese. RVC and *V-dou3* are interchangeable in both Mandarin and Cantonese as shown in these examples. It should also be noted that “*V-dou3*” in Mandarin can also be substituted by “*V-de*”. In Mandarin, “*V-de*” marks either a degree complement or a state complement whereas “*V-de*” in Cantonese can only be used in marking degree complement and “*V-dou3*” is used to mark state complement. Thus, it can be concluded that *V-de* in Mandarin corresponds to *V-dou3* in Cantonese.

The morpheme *de* 得 in “*V-de*” is regarded as a dummy *de* which makes no difference between the semantic meaning of the same sentence presented by RVCs (Huang 1992, Sybesma 1999, Tang 2002). This practice may be true in Mandarin but it is not the case in Cantonese. The alternation between RVCs and *V-dou3* in these two Chinese varieties are different. Consider (15):

- (15) a. 他 的 眼睛 哭紅-了  
3.SG POSS eye cry red-ASP  
‘He cried and his eyes turned red as a result.’

- b. 他 的 眼睛 哭-得 紅-了  
3.SG POSS eye cry-de red-ASP  
‘He cried and his eyes turned red as a result.’

- c. \*佢 對 眼 喊紅-咗  
3.SG CL eye cry red-ASP

- d. 佢 對 眼 喊-到 紅-咗  
3.SG CL eye cry-dou3 red-ASP  
‘He cried and his eyes turned red as a result.’

As shown in (15a) and (15b), RVCs and *V-dou3*/ *V-de* in Mandarin are interchangeable whereas RVCs and *V-dou3* are not in Cantonese sometimes as in (15c) and (15d). Two questions are raised here: (a) How should one explain why (14c) and (14d) are interchangeable while (15c) and (15d) are not?, and (b) Do the sentences (14c) and (14d), presented by different methods, possess the same meaning? Such incompatibility could confuse Cantonese learners on the usage of RVCs and *V-dou3*. Misbelieving the two Chinese varieties are the same, learners might produce ill-formed sentences like (15c) on the basis of their prior knowledge in Mandarin RVCs. Thus, a rule governing the alternation of RVCs and *V-dou3* in Cantonese must be proposed to avoid ungrammaticality.

#### “Strong resultatives” vs. “weak resultatives”

According to Washio (1997:7, 1999: 685-686), “resultatives in which the meaning of the verb and the meaning of the adjective are completely independent of each other will be referred to as STRONG resultatives”. For example, 張三跑丟了車票 ‘Zhangsan has lost his ticket’ is a strong resultative since that *Zhang-san* has lost something is not implicated by the running event. Combined with Washio (1997), we define WEAK resultatives as resultatives in which the result denoted by V2 is either the purpose or the conventional result of the action stated in V1. There are two types of weak resultatives. The first type is that the result (V2) entailed in V2 (i.e. 短 ‘short’) is repeating what the V1 already contain in its semantics. For example, 他剪短了頭髮 ‘He had a haircut’. The second type is that the “restricted” result (V2) can be inferred

by the logical object. For example, in 我跑贏了比賽 ‘I won the running competition’, the result can only be “win”, “lose” or “draw” as restricted by the logical object *competition*.

### “RVC” vs. “V-dou3” Constructions

By examining different RVCs, we observe that it is ordinarily possible for RVCs to be substituted freely by *V-dou3* in Cantonese as in ergatives, unergatives, accusatives (Type 3, 4, 5), pseudo-passives and object-fronting. It is, therefore, important to know under what circumstances that RVCs and *V-dou3* are not interchangeable. We will investigate those resultatives that can never appear as a RVC (V1 and V2 are adjacent) and the RVC that *dou3* 到 can never be inserted, under all six types of sentences in Cantonese.

First of all, it is not the properties of V2 that determines the methods but the semantic relations between V1 and V2 that matter. Resultatives with a verbal V2 such as \*唱喊 (唱哭) ‘sing-cry’, \*聽瞓 (聽睡) ‘listen-asleep’ and \*跑跌 (跑丟) ‘run-lose’ are prohibited. Those V2 are obviously indicating another activity which should be regarded as “strong resultatives”. However, even RVCs with an adjectival V2 are not allowed to appear in a RVC pattern in Cantonese, such as \*寫劫 (寫累) ‘write-tired’, \*跑劫 (跑累) ‘run-tired’, \*追劫 (追累) ‘chase-tired’, \*喊紅 (哭紅) ‘cry-red’, \*睇花 (看花) ‘read-blurred’, \*聽怕 (聽怕) ‘listen-afraid’ etc.. In Cantonese, RVC-pattern is not used when the result (V2) is not unique to a particular action. For example, the result 累 ‘tired’ can be triggered by many action such as 寫 ‘write’, 跑 ‘run’ and 追 ‘chase’ as shown in the examples, these examples in RVC-patterns are therefore prohibited. However, it is not applicable to the cases of Mandarin RVCs.

Without the aid of the logical objects, unergatives select the presentation method based on the uniqueness of V2 to V1. For example, in 我飽了 ‘I’m full’, the action 吃/食 ‘eat’ is probably predictable simply because the adjectival predicate 飽 ought to be fulfilled by the eating event. Thus, the weak resultative can be re-structured in a RVC-pattern as 我食飽喇 in Cantonese.

Apart from those *V-dou3*-only compounds, there are some RVC-only compounds such as 我跑

贏咗場比賽 ‘I won the running competition’ and 我訓醒喇 ‘I woke up’. In the two examples mentioned here, the Cantonese morpheme *dou3* 到 is not allowed to be inserted in between the two predicates in Cantonese. As V1 and V2 are closely related in semantics, this kind of RVC should be considered a “weak resultative”.

To sum up, the concept of “strong/ weak resultative” is critical to the method selection. There are three factors determining whether RVCs and *V-dou3* is interchangeable. Firstly, “weak resultatives” in Cantonese may be presented by means of RVC or *V-dou3* whereas “strong resultatives” can only be demonstrated in *V-dou3* constructions. It should be noted that if a resultative compound is presented as an RVC, that compound must be regarded as a “weak resultative” only. However, a weak resultative is not necessarily a RVC. Secondly, when more than two arguments are found in a sentence (i.e. Type 6 accusative), only RVC-patterns can be allowed. Lastly, non-canonical sentences (i.e. all types of causatives) can only be presented in *V-dou3* constructions.

### Exceptional cases

Without the presence of an active verb, ergatives with both V1 and V2 denoting states should not be categorized as “weak resultative”. However, they can still be presented in both RVCs and *V-dou3* constructions in Cantonese. For examples, 佢嚇呆咗/佢嚇到呆咗 (嚇呆) ‘He is shocked’.

### “V-copying” Constructions

項 (1997) and 趙 (2001) propose that V-copying is used to stress the action taken or the unexpected result. 張 (2002) suggests that the construction is used to give expression to long-distance cause and effect. V-copying construction is not permitted normally if V1 and V2 are semantically-closed. If RVC is not allowed in Cantonese, V-copying construction is used to stress the long distance of the cause and result. If RVC is allowed in Cantonese, V-copying construction is then used to emphasize the unexpected result denoted by V2. It is found that V-copying construction can only be used if the object is the logical object of V1 in canonical sentences (i.e. Type 1, 2 and 4 accusatives). For Type 1 and 2, some of them may be presented in the form of RVC in Cantonese if

the RVC is a weak one. For Type 4, it is possible for them to be presented in *V-dou3* and RVC.

### “Gau2-dou3” Constructions

“*Gau2-dou3*” construction is only used for Type 2 and Type 3 causatives. For Type 2, this construction is used to separate the CAUSER from the predicate and object so as to avoid ambiguity. For Type 3, since the SUBJ of the sentence is an independent causer that can neither be the logical object of V1 nor V2, “*gau2-dou3*” appears to indicate that causer and predicate are not closely related. “*Gau2-dou3*” (攪到) is actually equal to “*ling6*” (令) in Cantonese, but the former is more frequently used by Cantonese speakers.

## 4.2 At the Syntactic Level

It is common to have the same RVCs belonging to different sentence types, and therefore, analyzing RVCs at the syntactic level could be prominent in uncovering the logic behind. In this section, we will analyze the method selected for the same RVC in different sentence types.

### “Accusatives” and “Causatives”

Both accusatives and causatives have all these three elements: subject, verb and object in each of their sentences. The same RVC sometimes belongs to both of them as shown in (16) and (17).

#### Accusatives:

(16) a. 張三 寫累-了 論文  
Zhangsan write tired-ASP essay  
'Zhangsan is tired for he has been writing his essay.'

b. 張三 寫論文 寫-到 好劼  
Zhangsan write essay write-dou3 very tired  
'Zhangsan is tired for he has been writing his essay.'

#### Causatives:

c. 論文 寫累-了 張三  
essay write tired-ASP Zhangsan  
'Zhangsan is tired for he has been writing his essay.'

d. 篇論文 寫-到 張三 好劼  
CL essay write-dou3 Zhangsan very tired  
'Zhangsan is tired for he has been writing his essay.'

In (16), (a) and (c) are Mandarin examples whereas (b) and (d) are Cantonese. As we can see in (a) and (c), the only difference between accusatives and causatives in Mandarin is the word order of the sentences. The subject and the object in (a) switched their positions as in (c). The co-referential RVC “寫累” should be regarded as a strong resultative since 累 ‘tired’ is a state that takes a long period of time to achieve. RVC pattern is therefore not used in Cantonese corresponding sentences. Different methods are selected for accusatives and causatives. V-copying is used in accusatives while *V-dou3* construction is used in causatives. In (16a) and (16b), the AGENTs are in the subject positions. (16b) is re-structured as “張三寫論文”, with the complement “寫到好劼” added to indicate the state of the AGENT. In (16c) and (16d), the THEMES are in the subject positions. Since V-copying construction can only deal with canonical sentences, adopting it in causative would end up producing an ill-formed sentence as “\*篇論文寫張三寫到好劼”. Thus, if the same RVCs belong to both causatives and accusatives while predicates of each RVC are not semantically related, V-copying is used in accusatives while *V-dou3* is used in causatives. If a Mandarin RVC belonging to causatives and accusatives is a weak one, would different methods be used in Cantonese? Consider (17), where (a) and (d) are in Mandarin, and (b), (c) and (e) are in Cantonese:

#### Accusatives:

(17) a. 他 吃膩-了 蛋糕  
3.SG eat bored-ASP cake  
'He was sick of eating the cake.'

b. 佢 食厭-咗 蛋糕  
3.SG eat bored-ASP cake  
'He was sick of eating the cake.'

c. 佢 食蛋糕 食-到 厭  
3.SG eat cake eat-dou3 bored  
'He was sick of eating the cake.'

#### Causatives:

d. 那個 蛋糕 吃膩-了 他  
That CL cake eat bored-ASP 3.SG  
'He was sick of eating the cake.'

- e. 個 蛋糕 食-到 佢 厭-咗  
 CL cake eat-dou3 3.SG bored-ASP  
 ‘He was sick of eating the cake.’

In (17), “吃膩” is a weak resultative since the result can be predicted if we have “SUBJ + V1 \_\_\_ + OBJ” (他吃\_\_\_了蛋糕). Since 吃 and 膩 are semantically related, its RVC pattern is preserved in a Cantonese accusative sentence as in (17b). V-copying construction is also accepted as in (17c). It should be noted that (17b) and (17c) have different readings where (17b) is simply making a statement while (17c) is to stress the boredom of eating that cake which is an unexpected state.

It can be concluded that even if the RVC is a weak resultative, causative RVCs in Cantonese are not allowed due to the non-canonical word order.

### “Unergatives”, “Accusatives”, “Causatives” and “Object-fronting”

As mentioned in Section 4, the same RVC in Mandarin may belong to different types due to the transitivity and canonicity. 吃膩 ‘eat-bored’ is found to be fell into the categories of “unergatives”, “accusatives”, “causatives”, and “object-fronting”. The structures of their corresponding sentences in Cantonese are shown below:

Mandarin	Cantonese
<b>Unergatives:</b> (18) 他吃膩了	a. 佢食厭咗喇 b. 佢食到厭喇
<b>Accusatives:</b> (19) 他吃膩了這款蛋糕	a. 佢食厭咗呢款蛋糕喇 b. 佢食呢款蛋糕食到厭喇
<b>Causatives:</b> (20) 這款蛋糕吃膩了他	a. *呢款蛋糕食厭咗佢喇 b. 呢款蛋糕食到佢厭喇
<b>Object-fronting:</b> (21) 這款蛋糕吃膩了	a. 呢款蛋糕食厭咗喇 b. 呢款蛋糕食到厭喇

As shown in (18) - (21), the weak resultative 吃膩 ‘eat-bored’ is allowed in unergatives, accusatives and object-fronting since RVCs are not allowed in causatives. However, RVC-patterns in causatives are strictly prohibited. It is also

observed that only accusatives use V-copying construction instead of V-*dou3* construction. Hence, it is assumed that V-copying construction can only be used in a canonical sentence which has at least two arguments on the surface of the sentence.

## 5 Conclusion

In this paper, we introduced different types of resultative verb compounds, re-defined the properties of ergatives, re-categorized the accusatives based on their referentiality, and proposed to add two new sub-types (i.e. Type 3 and Type 5) to causatives and clearly distinguished object-fronting constructions from pseudo-passives based on the frameworks of Cheng & Huang (1994) and Wang (2001).

We also discussed how the presentation of RVCs is affected at the lexical level and syntactic level. V-*de* and V-*dao* have been proved to be equal in certain situations. RVC and V-*dou3*/ V-*de* are always interchangeable in Mandarin, while they are sometimes restricted in Cantonese. Thus, V-*dou3* in Cantonese should not be deemed as a dummy like V-*de* in Mandarin. Other methods used to present resultatives in Cantonese, namely V-copying and “*gau2-dou3*” constructions, are introduced as well. The method-selection for each sentence type is also suggested. The analyses of the factors affecting the method-selection are illustrated at both the lexical and syntactic levels with the help of the concepts of ‘strong resultative’ and ‘weak resultative’ (not applicable to ergatives and causatives).

Ubiquitously found in Chinese, ‘V-R compounding is a rich source of new verbs in Mandarin Chinese...’ (Lin 1998). This work is meant to provide a systematic way of how resultatives are presented in Cantonese to the non-native speakers of Cantonese, especially those of a Mandarin-speaking background.

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