1. Introduction

- Syntactically, in general, Topic and Focus involve items in a non-canonical position, which denote special information of a sentence.
- In Chinese, the object is allowed to occur between the subject and the verb.

(1) Zhangsan na.ben.shu1 kanguo.le ec1

Zhangsan that.CL.book read.PERF

‘Zhangsan has read that book.’

1.1 The dispute over the medial phrases

- Some literatures refer to the medial phrases as **Topic**, e.g., Tsao (1990) and Paul (2002) argue for the Secondary Topic, as opposed to the sentence-initial Topic.
- Some refer to such medial phrases as **Focus**, e.g., Tsai (1994), Ernst and Wang (1995), and Shyu (1995) argue for the contrastive Focus conveyed by the medial element.

⇒ The sentence-internal domain: below TP and above vP

1.2 The goal of this study

- To show that the sentence-internal domain in Chinese is relevant to Topic/Focus.
- To argue that two distinct projections are needed sentence-internally for Topic and Focus.
- To demonstrate that the so-called “verb-duplicated construction” is better accounted for under the proposed two-projection analysis.

2. The S-internal position is relevant to information-structural notions

2.1 Answers to questions:

(2) ni zuoye xiewan.le ma? ‘Are you done with your assignment?’

a. wo zuoye xiewan _ le
   l assignment write PERF
   ‘I am done with the assignment.’

b. wo xiewan zuoye _ le
   l write PERF (overt and phonologically null are possible)
   ‘I am done with [it].’ ⇒ zuoye is a **Topic**

c. wo xiewan zuoye le
   l write assignment PERF
   ‘I am done with the assignment.’ (redundantly unnatural)

⇒ (2a) (2b) vs. (2c): the S-internal position is **Topic** related.

- The sentence-internal item can be the answer to **wh**-questions and have Focus intonation

(3) ni shemo xiewan.le? ‘What have you finished?’

a. wo zuoye xiewan _ le (zuoye can be stressed)
   l assignment write PERF
   ‘THE ASSIGNMENT, I have finished it.’

b. wo xiewan zuoye _ le (zuoye cannot be stressed)
   l write assignment PERF
   ‘I have finished the assignment.’

⇒ The stressed intonation on the internal item shows that the sentence-internal position is relevant to **Focus**.
- The same position can be used for both **Topic** and **Focus**.
2.2 The emphatic shi

- In cleft sentences, the emphatic shi can sit sentence-internally to mark its following phrases.

(4) a. wo [shi shu] maihao.le (bi hai.mei)
   I SHI book buy.PERF (pen not.yet)
   ‘It is the book that I bought (, not pens).’

b. wo [shi shu] maihao.le (bi hai.mei)
   I book SHI read.PERF (not.yet remember main.points)
   ‘As for book, I did finish reading it.’

- Answers involving Topic is not compatible with shi.

(5) a. ni zuoye xian wan.le ma?
you homeowkr write.PERF Q-PART
   ‘Did you write the homework?’

b. wo (*shi) zuoye xian wan.le
I SHI homework write.PERF
   ‘I wrote the homework.’ (Paul (2002))

(6) a. ni shemo xian wan.le? (Baogao?)
you what write.PERF
   ‘What did you finish? (Paper?)’

b. wo shi zuoye xian wan.le (baogao hai.mei)
I SHI assignment write. PERF paper not.yet
   ‘It is the assignment that I finished (, not the paper).’

⇒(5) vs. (6): It is shown that sentence-internal Topic and Focus behave differently with respect to the emphatic shi.

2.3 Indefinite phrases

- Li and Thompson (1981): Topics in Chinese must be either generic or definite; an indefinite Topic is not allowed.

- Tsai (1994): an indefinite phrase is allowed sentence-internally.

(7) wo yi.pian.lunwen keyi yingfu (, liang.pian jiu bu xing le)
I one.CL.paper can handle 2. CL.paper then not can ASP
   ‘I can handle ONE PAPER (, but not two).’

⇒ sentence internal-position is allowed to host a Focus phrase.

⇒ it is further supported by examples with the emphatic shi.

(8) wo shi yi.pian.lunwen keyi yingfu (, liang.pian jiu bu xing le)
I SHI 1.CL.paper can handle 2. CL.paper then not can ASP
   ‘It is one paper that I can handle (, but not two).’

⇒ (2)-(8) show that both Topic and Focus are allowed S-internally.

3. Two S-internal functional projections: TopP and FocP

- Following the spirit of Rizzi (1997), I claim that two distinct projections should be identified in the sentence-internal domain (i.e., between TP and vP) to host Topic and Focus respectively, and that such projections are present in a structure only if needed.

⇒ Argument #1: Co-occurred Topic and Focus in a fixed order

(9) ‘Speaking of books, it is novels that he reads most.’

a. ta shu xiaoshuo kan.de zui duo
he book novel read.RESULT most many

b. *ta xiaoshuo shu kan.de zui duo
he novel book read.RESULT most many
Argument #2: Answers to wh-questions

(10) a. ta shuiguo zui chang chi shemo?
       he fruit most often eat what
   ‘Speaking of fruit, what does he eat most often?’
b. ta (shuiguo) *(pingguo) zui chang chi
       he fruit apple most often eat
   ‘(Fruit,) he eats apples most often.’

   ➔ While the occurrence of Topic in the answer is optional, Focus is obligatory in answering wh-questions.

The proposed structure

(9)-(11): Two internal positions are involved with different functions and structures.

(12) Sentence-internal TP and FocP

4. Further support—
   the so-called V-duplicated construction

4.1 Phenomenon:

   ➔ In Chinese, a verb can be followed by a nominal complement (13a)
   or an adverbial phrase denoting the duration (13b) or resultativeness (13c).

(13) a. ta kan.le [shu] he read.PERF book
   ‘He read books.’
   b. ta kan.le [liang.ge.xiaoshi] he read.PERF 2.CL.hour
   ‘He has read for two hours.’
   c. ta kan.de [hen lei] he read.RESULT very tired
   ‘He read and got very tired.’

Therefore, it seems that an “extra-copy” of the verb is needed to salvage such ungrammatical sentences.

(15) a. ta [kan] shu [kan.le liang.ge.xiaoshi]
       he read book read.PERF 2.CL.hour
   ‘He has read books for two hours.’
   b. ta [kan] shu [kan.de hen lei]
       he read book read.RESULT very tired
   ‘He read books and got very tired.’
4.2 Huang’s (1982) V-duplicated analysis

(16)
\[ \text{he ride horse ride PERF 3.CL.hour} \]
‘He rode for three hours.’

⇒ There are some problems shared by VP-analyses.

4.3 Questions for VP analyses

◆ Q1: It is not clear why V2 always carries aspect markers, but V1 never does, if V1 is the “original” verb and V2 is the “duplicated” one.

(17) ‘He read books for three hours.’
   a. \[ \text{he read book read.PERF 3.CL.hour} \]
   ‘He can read books for many hours.’
   b. \[ \text{he read book read.POS 3.CL.hour} \]
   ‘He trains horses very well.’

4.4 The proposal

4.4.1 VP1 as the internal Topic

◆ Claim: the so-called verb-duplicated construction involves two base-generated VPs.

(20)

⇒ VP1 is optional in the answer.
The proposed analysis predicts that ...

- The **Topic-VP1** cannot take aspect markers, i.e., (17)
- The **Topic-VP1** is licensed at a functional domain outside of the predicate-VP (i.e., (18)), and also that **ba-phrases** cannot precede it (i.e., (19)).
- It accounts for examples that are problematic to VP analyses.

(22) ta (*lian minima) [VP1qi ma] lien minima dou qi bu hao he even mini.horse ride horse even mini.horse all ride not well ‘he can’t ride well, even a mini.horse.’

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**4.4.2 VP1 as the internal Focus**

- According to the proposed two-projection analysis (cf the structure in ), one may wonder another possible location for VP1, the **Spec-Foc**.
- Claim: VP1 can be base-generated at Spec-Foc.
- Argument: answers to **wh**-questions

(24)a. ni shen xue le wu.nian? you what learn.PERF 5.year ‘What have you learnt for five years?’
b. wo xue zhongwen [VP2 xue.le wu.nian] I learn Chinese learn.PERF 5.year ‘I have learnt Chinese for five years.’

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**4.4.3 VPs as the S-internal Topic and Focus**

(26) ‘Speaking of doing exercise, it is playing tennis that he can play for a long time.’

```
ta [Top-VP zuo yundong] [Foc-VP da wangqu] he do exercise play tennis
```

keyi [VP da haoji.xiaoshi]] can play many.hour

⇒ VPs can co-occurred sentence-internally before the predicate.

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**The present analysis also predicts that ...**

- VP1 has to precede V2, since VP1 is licensed at the **TopP** which is higher than the predicate-VP structurally.

(23) ‘He played games for three hours.’

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<td>a. ta [VP1 wan youxi] [VP2 wan.le san.ge.xiaoshi] he play game play.PERF 3.CL.hour</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. *ta [VP2 wan.le san.ge.xiaoshi] [VP1 wan youxi] play.PERF 3.CL.hour play game</td>
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⇒ VPs can co-occurred sentence-internally before the predicate.
4.5 Further examples for VPs as S-internal Topic/Focus

- The relative positions of sentential adverbs and modals:

  (27)
  a. ta (xianran) [vp1qi ma][xianran] [vp[vp.de(*xianran) hen.lei)]
  he obviously ride horse ride.RESULT very tired
  ‘Obviously, he was riding and got very tired.’
  b. ta (keyi) [vp1kan shu] (keyi) [vp[vp[qi.de(*keyi) shi.ge.xiaoshi]]]
  he can read book read 10.CL.hour
  ‘He can read for ten hours.’

  ➔ VPs are licensed outside of the predicate, but below TP.

4.5 Further examples for VPs as S-internal Topic/Focus

- Co-occurred VPs vs. the emphatic shi

  (29) ‘Speaking of doing exercise, it is playing tennis that he can play for a long time.’

  ta (*shi [top-vp zuo yundong] [shi] [foc-vp da wangqui] keyi
  he SHI do exercise SHI play tennis can
  [vp[vp da haoji.xiaoshi]]
  play many hour

  ➔ The emphatic shi is not compatible with Top-VP but it is compatible with the Foc-VP.

- Two functional projections, TopP and FocP, are needed.

5. Summary and conclusion

- The proposed analysis accounts for the Topic/Focus ambiguity of sentence-internal phrases (e.g., bare-prepositional objects and the VP1 in the so-called verb-duplicated construction).
- It is shown that syntactic representation maps the informational structure in Chinese.
- Given the insight of Rizzi (1997), this study suggests that the domain between TP and VP behaves on a par with the left periphery of sentences, with slight adjustments made for Chinese data.

Selected references: