

The origin and development of the “Disposal” form in Bouyei language

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1. Introduction

In modern Bouyei language, SVDO (Subject + Verb + Direct Object) is the main pattern of active sentences, but there is also another sentence pattern expressing the active voice by using a preposition (grammaticalized from a verb) to shift the direct object in front of the verb, thus forming the sentence pattern “Subject + Preposition (from a verb) + Direct Object + Predicative Verb + Other Components.” This is the so-called “disposal” construction or “disposal” form, which is akin to the *ba* construction in modern Chinese.

The status of using the “disposal” form in the Bouyei language differs from geographical area to another. In some places the “disposal” form is used frequently, while in other areas the regular “SVDO” construction is used less commonly. Because of the strong influence of Chinese in some places, most of the time people use the Chinese *ba* construction directly. This paper examines the structure of the “disposal” form in Bouyei language on the basis of the data collected in the Fuxing Township of Wangmo County and some other geographical locations in Guizhou Province. Having researched the origin and development of the *ba* construction in Chinese and having made a study of the structural patterns of the *ʔau*¹ construction in the Bouyei religious scriptures, the writer has tried to probe into the origin and development of the “disposal” construction in Bouyei language.

2. The construction types of “Disposal” form

In Modern Chinese, *ba* (in written language sometimes *jiang* is used) is used as the marker of a “disposal” form. In the Bouyei language, the “disposal” form also has a marker, which is a preposition grammaticalized from a verb, inserted between the subject and the direct object. According to the existing data we have, in most of the Bouyei areas, people use *ʔau*¹, *kuə*⁶ as the markers in the “disposal” form. Moreover, besides *ʔau*¹ and *kuə*⁶, people in Wangmo sometimes use *ɔ̃iu*³ (grammaticalized from a

verb which means ‘carry, take with one hand’), and people in Pingba use *tuu*² (grammaticalized from a verb which means ‘bring, take’). Since the early years of this century, as the influence of modern Chinese has increased, people directly borrowed the Chinese *ba* construction into Bouyei; thus, *ba* serves as one of the markers of “disposal” in the Bouyei language. The main syntactic framework of the “disposal” form in Bouyei is “Subject + marker (a verb-like preposition) + Direct Object + Verb.” Around this main framework, according to the grammatical function and construction of the other additional components attached, the “disposal” form in Bouyei language can be further subdivided into the following types:

2.1 Subject + Marker + Direct Object + Verb + Complement.

Samples from Wangmo Bouyei language:

- (1) *te*¹ *ŋon*²*lian*² *kuə*⁶ *ʃen*² *ʃe*¹ *liu*⁴ *pai*.
 s/he today M. money lose all part.
 ‘Yesterday s/he lost all her/his money.’
- (2) *mɯŋ*² *ʔau*¹ *va:n*¹ *ʔjau*⁴ *ʔdi*¹.
 You M. axe hide well
 ‘Please hide the axe well.’
- (3) *te*¹ *ðiu*³ *tui*⁴ *ko*³ *te*¹ *ʔduat*⁷ *liu*⁴ *pai*.
 s/he M. rice bowl soup that drink all part.
 ‘S/He drank all soup in the rice bowl.’

Samples from Zhenfeng Bouyei language:

- (4) *ku*¹ *pa*⁴ *pa*³*tu*³ *ɣuɸ*⁷ *ʔdi*¹ *leu*⁴.
 I M. door close well part.
 ‘I have closed the door already.’

2.2 Subject + Marker + Direct Object + Verb

Samples from Wangmo Bouyei language:

- (5) *ŋon*²*lian*² *pu*⁴*law*² *kuə*⁶ *liam*² *ʃe*¹?
 yesterday who M. sickle lose
 ‘Who lost the sickle yesterday?’

- (6) mjaɪ³ ɔ̌i³ (?au¹) θa¹ luan⁶ ɕit⁷.
 don't M. paper arbitrary throw
 'Don't throw paper everywhere.'

Samples from Zhenfeng Bouyei language:

- (7) te¹ pu⁴lai² kuə⁶ tu²ɕi² kwn² ya:u⁴.
 be who M. cattle eat crops
 'Who let the cattle eat crops?'

2.3 Subject + Marker + Direct Object + Verb + Indirect Object

Samples from Wangmo Bouyei language:

- (8) liu⁴po² ɔ̌i³ te¹ ta:ŋ⁵ pu⁴ŋok⁷.
 everybody M. s/he regard as simpleton
 'Everybody regards her/him as a simpleton.'
- (9) po²ku¹ ?au¹ te¹ ta:ŋ⁵ tsui⁵ ?di¹ ti¹ lau⁴sɿ¹.
 we M. s/he take as most good part. teacher
 'We regard her/him as the best teacher.'

Samples from Zhenfeng Bouyei language:

- (10) mi²?ju²⁴ pu⁴lai² pa⁴ ku¹ ta:ŋ⁵ tu³¹vun³¹.
 not have who M. me regard as human being
 'Nobody regards me as a human being.'

2.4 Subject + Marker + Direct Object + Verb + Prepositional Phrase.

Samples from Zhenfeng Bouyei language:

- (11) ɕ⁵ŋaŋ² ?au¹ hau⁴liə¹ ŋon²lian² te¹ θuaŋ⁵ hau³ ɔ̌au².
 aunt M. leftovers yesterday that send to us
 'Aunt gave us yesterday's leftovers.'
- (12) te¹ fi⁶ ɔ̌i³ (?au¹) tsuo²ŋi² tɕiao¹ hau³ ku¹.
 s/he not M. homework hand in to me
 'S/he hasn't given her/his homework to me.'

Samples from Wangmo Bouyei language:

- (13) pu⁴la:u⁴ mi² kai¹ ɔ̃iu³ ji⁵tsɿ⁵ ?da:ŋ¹kau⁵ tɕhian²tɕia¹ hau³
 adult not should M. will oneself forcibly give
 ɕi²la:n¹.
 children
 'Adults shouldn't force their children to accept their will.'

Samples from Zhenning Bouyei language:

- (14) ti¹ pa⁴ lək⁸ kou¹ ɬoŋ⁵ taŋ² zan².
 s/he M. son my sent arrive home
 'S/He sent my son back home.'

2.5 Subject + Marker + Direct Object + Verb + Numeral Phrase

Samples from Zhenfeng Bouyei language:

- (15) ?au¹ θa:n¹ kua⁵ ta:u⁵ ɔ̃aŋ¹ ?deu¹.
 M. husked rice go over time sieve one
 'Take the husked rice on to the sieve to go over once.'
- (16) muŋ² ɔ̃iu³ pjak⁷ kua⁵ ta:u⁵ ɕian⁶ ?deu¹.
 you M. vegetable go over time balance one
 Please put the vegetable on the balance to weighing.
- (17) te¹ pa⁴ lu³ na² sai¹ θoŋ¹ to⁶ leu⁴.
 he M. rice field plough two time already
 'He has ploughed the rice field twice.'

2.6 Subject + Marker + Direct Object + Verb + Prepositional Phrase + Verb

Samples from Wangmo Bouyei language:

- (18) te¹ ?au¹ mit⁸ ɕo⁵ kwn² ɔ̃in¹pan² pan².
 s/he M. knife put on millstone sharpen
 'S/he put the knife on the millstone and sharpened it.'
- (19) ku¹ ɔ̃iu³ fuŋ² ɕo⁵ ?daw¹ pwn² θuai⁵.
 I M. hand put inside basin wash
 'I washed my hands in the basin.'