

1. Introduction

In Mandarin Chinese,¹ there is a construction sometimes referred to as simply the *ba* construction *ba zi ju* [sentence with *ba*]. It is one of the most famous constructions in the grammar of Chinese and has attracted the attention of almost every linguist interested in the grammar of Chinese. However, it has also consistently eluded a satisfactory analysis. The construction is complex and seems to be subject to a myriad of difficult-to-characterize, fuzzy constraints. It is generally one of the most difficult constructions for foreign language learners of Chinese. Yet, it is an extremely prominent pattern in Chinese, very commonly used in daily speech. In fact, it seems to be gaining even more prominence in so-called Taiwan Mandarin (Mandarin spoken in Taiwan) because of the influence from the even more extensively used corresponding *ka* construction in Taiwanese.²

It would be impossible, within the limits of this work, to do justice to the complexity of this construction and the rich, endless literature on this topic if we aim for a comprehensive presentation of the properties, problems and past analyses and a detailed and extensive review of the published works. In order to at least provide an understanding of the complexities, we will, therefore, devote much space to the properties of each of the components of this construction which must be considered when analyzing this construction. Moreover, with an aim to setting a more appropriate direction for a more satisfactory analysis, we will bring more empirical generalizations from a closely related structure, providing a new perspective to this study: a comparative dimension based on contrasts between the *ba* construction in Mandarin and the corresponding *ka* pattern in Taiwanese. Syntactic structures for both *ba* and *ka* constructions will be proposed to reflect the similarities and differences between the two constructions. In addition, a substantial part of this work will focus on the constraints on the usage of the *ba* construction, which has been the most controversial in the literature. We will review some recent and most important analyses for the constraints, present the constraints from the perspective of syntactic structures, aspectual structures and semantic-pragmatics and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each of these analyses. We will show that all these different approaches accommodate the canonical cases of the *ba* construction. However, there are many "non-canonical" instances of the *ba* construction which elude any precise structural account. It will be suggested that a vague notion of "affectedness" plays a role in the actual usage of this pattern. Such a notion, however, is pragmatic, not representable by precise structures.

We first characterize the syntactic properties of the *ba* construction by describing each component of the *ba* construction, including *ba*, the types of NPs which can follow *ba*³ and the possible following verbal constituents (section 2). We, then, turn in section 3 to the *ka* construction in Taiwanese, leading towards the establishment of an analysis of the syntactic structures for these two constructions in section 4. Section 5 discusses constraints on the usage of the *ba* construction. Past proposals to capture the constraints have been made from various perspectives, such as semantic-pragmatics, aspectual structures and event structures. We show that accounts based on aspectual structures and event structures are both too weak and too strong

¹ "Mandarin Chinese," the official Chinese language, will simply be referred to as "Chinese" in this work, unless when contrasted with Taiwanese, a Southern Min dialect spoken in Taiwan.

² The version of Mandarin spoken in Taiwan has been significantly influenced by Taiwanese phonologically and even syntactically in some cases.

³ The distinction between NPs and DPs does not concern us in this work and nominal expressions are consistently labeled as NPs (see Abney 1987 for the proposal of DP structures and Li 1998, 1999 for arguments for the existence of DPs in Chinese).

empirically. An account based on semantic-pragmatic constraints is vague and uncertain. However, vagueness and uncertainty are in the nature of the constraints on this construction. There also exist many minimal pairs of sentences which are structurally identical (including identical aspectual and event structure) but differ in acceptability as a *ba* sentence. We, accordingly, suggest that it is important to distinguish form from usage. Form can be represented precisely by syntactic phrase structures, as provided in section 4. Usage, however, is influenced by pragmatic factors which cannot be accommodated solely by clearly-defined grammatical accounts.

2. Syntactic properties

Schematically, a *ba* sentence always has the form in (1a-b), disregarding optional elements.⁴ That is, a *ba* sentence has a subject (NP* in (1a-b)), followed by *ba* and "the *ba* NP" (the NP directly following *ba*), followed by a verb and something else before or after the verb, i.e., the X (X is non-null) in (1a-b). This X can be an adverb or a PP preverbally or almost any type of elements that may independently occur in the postverbal position.

- (1) a. NP* + *ba* + NP + V + X
 b. NP* + *ba* + NP + X + V

In addition to the uncertainty of whether a *ba* sentence always has a non-*ba* counterpart,⁵ controversy exists with respect to the proper description of almost every component of this construction: (i) the status of *ba* (ii) types of NPs allowed in this construction, (iii) types of V's allowed and (iv) what the X is. There have also been substantial and endless debates on whether the *ba* construction carries a special interpretation: whether the *ba* construction expresses some notion of "affectedness" and all the constraints on this construction are reduced to this notion. To begin to understand the controversies, we attempt to describe in the following subsections the important syntactic properties of each component of the *ba* construction.

2.1. A *ba* sentence and a non-*ba* counterpart --- same subject

We begin with the overall pattern. We claim that a *ba* sentence always has a non-*ba* counterpart, sharing the same subject. The first component of a *ba* sentence is the subject, which is also the

⁴ In the following discussions, we concentrate on the constituents necessary for a *ba* sentence and disregard the elements that are allowed in a *ba* sentence but are not obligatory, such as sentential adverbials or other modifiers.

⁵ The usage of "counterpart" here does not necessarily mean that one is transformationally derived from the other. It only means that for a *ba* sentence, it is always possible to find a non-*ba* sentence which only differs from the one with *ba* in the occurrence of this key word and the corresponding difference in word order.

Also note that there are some isolated *ba* sentences spoken in Northern China that do not have a non-*ba* counterpart, such as (i):

- (i) ba-ge Feng yatou bing-le.
 Ba-Cl. Feng maid sick-Le
 '(Something) got the maid Feng sick.'

(i) might be related to the earlier verbal usage of *ba*. We will disregard such cases as they are not productive patterns in modern Mandarin and they are impossible in Taiwanese (section 3).

subject of a corresponding non-*ba* sentence. The following two examples illustrate some clear cases:

- (2) a. wo ba ta sha-le.
I Ba him kill-Le⁶
'I killed him.'
- b. wo sha-le ta-le.
I kill-Le him-Le
'I killed him.'
- (3) a. wo ba yaoshi wang-le.
I Ba key forget-Le
'I forgot the key.'
- b. wo wang-le yaoshi-le
I forget-Le key-Le
'I forgot the key.'

These two types of sentences differ only in where the thematic object of the verb occurs: in a non-*ba* sentence, it occurs postverbally and in a *ba* sentence, it occurs between *ba* and V (see note 6).

In less obvious cases, it is still possible to state that a *ba* sentence has a non-*ba* counterpart with an identical subject. For instance, in cases like (4a) where it is not immediately obvious that the subject 'this bottle of wine' is directly related to the verb *zui-dao* 'be drunk and fall' thematically, there is still a non-*ba* counterpart with the same subject (4b):

- (4) a. zhe-ping jiu ba ta zui-dao-le.
this-bottle wine Ba him drunk-fall-Le
'This bottle of wine made him drunk and fall.'
- b. zhe-ping jiu zui-dao ta le.
this-bottle wine drunk-fall him Asp
'This bottle of wine made him drunk and fall.'

Zui-dao is a compound verb used causatively in (4b).⁷

⁶ The morpheme *-le* can be suffixed to a verb (verbal *-le*) or occur at the end of a clause (clause-final *-le*, allowing only a root clause-final particle to follow it). The verbal *-le* has generally been taken as an aspect marker, indicating completion. The clause-final *-le* has generally been analyzed as a "change of state" marker. A verbal *-le* and a clause-final *-le* can co-occur in a clause. When a clause ends with V-*le*, it is possible that this *-le* is a combination of the verbal *-le* and the clause-final *-le*. There is an immense literature on whether the two *-le*'s should be analyzed as one or two different morphemes (see, for instance, Chao 1968, L. Huang and Davis 1989, T.G. Li 1992, Li and Thompson 1981, Y. Lu 1991, T. Mei 1981, Rohsenow 1978, Sybesma 1999, W. Wang 1965, among many others). Because the exact analysis of the two *-le*'s is not our concern, we will gloss all occurrences of *-le* simply as 'Le'.

⁷ Many verbs in Chinese can be used as both an unaccusative and a causative without any morphological changes. *Zui-dao* in the following example is an unaccusative.

There are also cases where a verb is followed by a complement, such as a resultative complement or a locative complement, initially complicating the assessment of whether or not there is a non-*ba* counter-part. When such a complement occurs, it is generally the case that an object cannot occur postverbally because independently, Chinese restricts the number of elements that can occur postverbally (the postverbal constraint): generally one constituent is allowed in postverbal position⁸ (see, for instance, Chao 1968, C.-T. Huang 1982, Koopman 1984, Travis 1984, Y.-H. Li 1985, 1990, Tang 1990, Sybesma 1992).⁹ Under such circumstances, a non-*ba* counterpart is generated by placing the *ba* NP in some preverbal position (such as pre-subject or post-subject position as a topic or a preposed object). (5a), for instance, has a non-*ba* counterpart in (5b) by topicalization and (5c) by object-preposing. In addition, verb-reduplication is another mechanism to create a non-*ba* counterpart without violating the general postverbal constraint as in (5d).

- (5) a. wo ba zhe-shi xiang-de hen ziji.
 I Ba this-matter think-De very carefully
 'I have thought about the matter carefully.'
- b. zhe-shi, wo xiang-de hen zixi.
 this-matter I think-De very carefully
 'The matter, I have thought about carefully.'
- c. wo zhe-shi xiang-de hen zixi.
 I this-matter think-De very carefully
 'I, the matter, have thought about carefully.'
- d. wo xiang zhe-shi xiang-de hen ziji.
 I think this-matter think-De very carefully
 'I have thought about the matter carefully.'

Alternatively, a non-*ba* counterpart may also be generated by placing the *ba* NP counterpart in the subject position of a resultative complement or a locative complement.

- (6) a. haizi ba wo ku-de tou-teng.
 child Ba me cry-De head-ache
 'The child cried so much that my head ached.'

-
- (i) ta zui-dao-le.
 he drunk-fall-Le
 'He got very drunk.'

The verb in (4a) may be an unaccusative or a causative, depending on whether (4a) is derived from (4b) by movement of the object. See section 4 and 5.3.

⁸ Some patterns allow more than one constituent in postverbal position, such as double object structures, control structures and purposive clauses. See Li 1990.

⁹ It has been suggested that the complexity of postverbal elements and the prohibition against more than one postverbal constituents contribute to the proliferation of *ba* sentences (see, for instance, Hu and Wen 1956, 129).

- b. haizi ku-de wo tou-teng.
 child cry-De me head-ache
 'The child cried so much that my head ached.'
- (7) a. zhe-ping jiu ba ta zui-dao-zai di-shang.
 this-bottle wine Ba him fall-at ground-on
 'This bottle of wine made him drunk and fall on the ground.'
- b. zhe-ping jiu zui-de ta dao-zai di-shang.
 this-bottle wine drunk-De him fall-at ground-on
 'This bottle of wine made him drunk and fall on the ground.'

The examples above show that a *ba* sentence always has a non-*ba* counterpart. They only differ in the presence/absence of the morpheme *ba* and word order: the *ba* NP corresponds to an NP in postverbal position in a non-*ba* counterpart or some other position when necessary to avoid violating the general constraint on the number of postverbal NPs possible. The subject of a *ba* sentence and its non-*ba* counterpart stays constant.

Following the subject in a *ba* construction is the key word *ba*, which we turn to next.

2.2. *ba*

Let us begin with some clear facts about the nature of *ba* and then turn to the analyses of *ba* that have been proposed in the literature.

2.2.1. The status of *ba*

Historically, *ba* was a lexical verb meaning 'take, hold, handle' (see Bennett 1981, H. Wang 1957, L. Wang 1954, for instance). It also occurred in the so-called serial verb construction [V1 + NP + V2 + XP],¹⁰ with *ba* as V1 [*ba* + NP + V + XP]. The pattern can mean 'to take NP and do [V XP] (to it)'. Such a historical origin seems to still be detectable in many contemporary *ba* sentences.¹¹ For instance, the following question and answer pairs in modern Chinese look like serial verb constructions:

- (8) a. ni ba juzi zenmeyang-le?
 you Ba orange how-Le
 'What did you do to the orange?'
- b. wo ba juzi bo-le pi-le.
 I Ba orange peel-Le skin-Le
 'I peeled the skin off the orange.'

¹⁰ A "serial verb construction" is not a unified structural notion. It refers to all constructions with the surface form of more than one verb phrase occurring consecutively. Structurally, the series of VPs can be analyzed as different types of coordination or subordination structures. See Li and Thompson 1981, chapter 2, for instance.

¹¹ In modern Shanghai and Wuhan dialects, it is possible in some cases to use *ba* in the pattern [*ba* NP1 V NP2] with NP2 being a pronoun coreferential with NP1 (Bingfu Lu, Yuzhi Shi personal communication).

- (9) a. ni yao ba ta¹² zenmeyang?
 you want Ba him how?
 'What do you want to do to him?'
- b. wo yao ba ta da-duan tui.
 I want Ba him hit-broken-Le leg
 'I want to break his leg.'

These sentences bear great similarity in form to the serial verb construction [Subject + V1 + NP + V2 + XP]. They are interpreted as 'Subject takes NP and does [V + XP] to it; what the subject does to NP is [V+XP]': (8b) means what I did to the orange was peeling its skin and (9b) means what I want to do to him is break (his) leg.

Ba in modern Chinese, however, has lost the standard verbal properties, according to most of the works on this construction (see Zou 1995 for an extensive review of relevant works). It has become "grammaticalized"¹³ and does not behave like a verb according to traditional verbhood tests: (i) it cannot take an aspect marker (10b); (ii) it cannot form an alternative V-not-V question (10c); and (iii) it cannot serve as a simple answer to a question (10d) (see, e.g., Chao 1968, Li and Thompson 1981).¹⁴

- (10) a. ta ba ni hai-le.
 he Ba you hurt-Le
 'He hurt you.'
- b. *ta ba-le ni hai(-le).
 he Ba-Le you hurt(-Le)
- c. *ta ba-mei/bu-ba ni hai(-le).¹⁵
 he Ba-not-Ba you hurt-Le

¹² *Ta* in Chinese is a human and non-human third person pronoun. For simplicity, we will just use one of the many possible translations for each case.

¹³ Several West African languages have similar constructions and grammaticalization of a morpheme like *ba*, such as Twi or Fong; see Zou (1995) for some discussions on cross-linguistic comparisons of such structures and the grammaticalization process.

¹⁴ There have also been proposals claiming that *ba* is a "coverb" (see, among others, L. Wang 1947, 1954, Lü, 1955b, Li and Thompson 1974, 1981, chapter 9, 15). A coverb is a special category created in Chinese grammatical studies to represent the group of words which were verbs but have gradually lost their verb properties. They are so labeled because they are no longer verbs and yet they have not become true prepositions, either: they don't behave like full lexical verbs or typical prepositions.

¹⁵ There are speakers who find *ba* in the V-not-V question form acceptable (see, for instance, M. Wu 1982). Using the V-not-V form as a test for verbhood does not seem to be quite deterministic, even though it is frequently applied in the literature. For some speakers, a preposition, an adjective and an adverb such as *jingchang* 'usually' etc. can also occur in the "V-not-V" form, which should be more correctly labeled as a general A-not-A question form, not just V-not-V.

- d. *(mei/bu-)ba.
(not-)Ba

Such morpho-syntactic tests, however, are not quite satisfactory. There is a very small number of verbs in Chinese that simply do not behave like standard verbs according to these tests. *Shi* 'make, cause' is such an example. It behaves like *ba* with respect to verbhood tests; yet, no linguist has raised doubts as to the verbal status of *shi*:

- (11) a. ta shi ni hen kuaile.
 he make you very happy
 'He made you happy.'
- b. *ta shi-le ni hen kuaile.
 he make-Le you very happy
- c. *ta shi-mei/bu-shi ni hen kuaile.
 he make-not- make you very happy
- d. *(mei/bu-)shi.
(not-) make

What is clear, however, is that the NP following *ba* (referred to as the *ba* NP henceforth) can simply be the object of the following verb, as in (10a). When the *ba* NP is the object of the following verb (V), the object position of the V must be empty. It cannot be occupied by a pronoun or a reflexive coreferential with the *ba* NP, as in (12a-c). Such behavior of *ba* and the *ba* NP cannot be true any other verbs and their objects.

- (12) a. *ta ba Zhangsan_i hai-le ta_i.
 he Ba Zhangsan hurt-Le him
 'He hurt Zhangsan.'
- b. *ta ba Zhangsan_i hai-le ziji/taziji_i.
 he Ba Zhangsan hurt-Le self/himself
 'He hurt Zhangsan.'

(12b) should be contrasted with (12c) which allows *shi* 'make, cause' to be followed by a verb and a reflexive:

- (12) c. ta shi Zhangsan_i hai-le ziji/taziji_i.
 he Ba Zhangsan hurt-Le self/himself
 'He made Zhangsan hurt himself.'

The contrast between (12a-b) and (12c) shows that *ba* in modern Chinese is different from lexical verbs.

2.2.2. The analysis of *ba*

Although *ba* has become "grammaticalized" and does not behave like a lexical verb, questions arise as to what it means to be grammaticalized. What morpho-syntactic properties does the "grammaticalized" *ba* have? There have been so many proposals that the logical possibilities have almost been exhausted:

- (13) a. Ba as a lexical verb (Hashimoto 1971)
 b. Ba as a preposition (Li and Liu 1955, Chao 1968, Lü 1980, Travis 1984, Cheng 1986, Li, 1990)
 c. Ba as a dummy Case assigner (Huang 1982, Koopman 1984, Goodall 1987)
 d. Ba as a dummy filler, inserted to fill the head of a CAUSE phrase when verb raising does not take place (Sybesma 1999)¹⁶
 e. Ba as the head of a base-generated functional category (Zou 1995)

The lack of lexical verbal properties in modern Chinese makes the first option less attractive. (13b-c) on the one hand and (13d-e) on the other can be distinguished by one major difference: constituency. For a *ba* construction of the form [*ba* NP VP], the analyses in (13b-c) take *ba* and the *ba* NP as a constituent. For a preposition analysis (13b), *ba* should form a constituent with its object, the *ba* NP. As a dummy Case assigner (13c), *ba* should form a constituent with the *ba* NP. That is, according to (13b) and (13c), the *ba* NP alone (without *ba*) and the VP should not form one constituent. In contrast, according to (13d-e), which view *ba* as the head of a CAUSE Phrase or some other functional projection, the *ba* NP should form one constituent with the VP, not with *ba*. The fact is that the *ba* NP and the VP can form one constituent, as illustrated by the coordination test (see M. Wu 1982).¹⁷

- (14) ta ba [men xi-hao], [chuanghu ca-ganjing]-le
 he Ba door wash-finish window wipe-clean-Le
 'He washed the door and wiped the windows clean.'

This suggests that (13d-e) are more adequate. However, there is a subset of *ba* sentences which indicate that *ba* can form a constituent with the *ba* NP, suggesting the inadequacy of solely relying on the (13d-e) analyses.¹⁸ This subset of sentences is the type of sentence that Sybesma (1999, chapter 6) refers to as "canonical *ba* sentences" (in contrast to his "causative *ba* sentences") --- those sentences whose subject is an animate agent, not an inanimate causer,¹⁹ such as (14). Let us use another simpler example such as (15a). It allows *ba* and the *ba* NP to be preposed as a unit to the sentence-initial position (15b). That is, such "canonical *ba* sentences"

¹⁶ Sybesma 1999 is an extensive revision of Sybesma 1992 and includes many of his other works. We will mainly quote from Sybesma 1999. See Sybesma 1999: 220-221 for many other related references.

¹⁷ It is acceptable if *ba* also occurs in the second conjunct, i.e., *ba*, the *ba*-NP and the following VP can form one constituent.

¹⁸ The preposing is not possible when it is a "causative" sentence (i.e., the type of sentences whose subject bears a causer thematic-role).

- (i) a. zhe-ping jiu ba ta zui-dao-le
 this-bottle wine Ba him drunk-fall-Le
 'This bottle of wine made him very drunk.'
- b. *ba ta, zhe-ping jiu zui-dao-le
 Ba him this-bottle wine drunk-fall-Le

¹⁹ L. Wang (1954) suggests the terms "disposal" and "causative" which are Sybesma's "canonical" and "causative" respectively.

not only allow the *ba* NP to form a constituent with the following VP but also allow *ba* and the *ba* NP to form a constituent.²⁰

- (15) a. ni xian ba zhe-kuai rou qie-qie ba!
 you first Ba this-Cl meat cut-cut Par.
 'Cut the meat first.'
- b. [ba zhe-kuai rou], ni xian qie-qie ba!
 Ba this-Cl meat you first cut-cut Par.
 'Cut the meat first.'
- cf.
- c. ni ba [zhe-kuai rou qie-qie], [na-xie cai xixi]-ba!
 you Ba this-Cl meat cut-cut that-Cl vegetable wash-Par.
 'You cut the meat and wash the vegetable.'

Sentences like (15a-b) show that it is not always sufficient to just take *ba* as the head of a CAUSE phrase or the head of some other functional projection not forming a constituent with the following NP. It is also doubtful that it is adequate to claim that *ba* is an inserted Case assigner. If it were, it is not clear why for instance, (15b), with *ba*, and (15d), without *ba*, are both acceptable. A case marker should not be able to be inserted optionally.

- (15) d. zhe-kuai rou, ni xian qie-qie ba!
 this-Cl meat you first cut-cut Par.
 'Cut the meat first.'

Summarizing, *ba* in modern Chinese does not behave like a lexical verb. The coordination test illustrated in (14), (15c) shows that the structure [*ba* NP VP] can be analyzed as [*ba* [NP VP]]. In addition, when a *ba* sentence is of the "canonical" type, the constituent structure seems to have the possibility of behaving like [[*ba* NP] VP], since *ba* and the *ba* NP can be preposed as a unit (15b). The former observation is in line with the approaches that treat *ba* as the head of a projection, taking [NP VP] as its complement, such as (13d-e). The latter observation goes along with a preposition analysis (13b).

2.3. The *ba* NP²¹

²⁰ It was observed by Zou 1995, for instance, that *ba* and the *ba*-NP cannot form a constituent and be preposed. However, Yafei Li (personal communication) notes that it is not that difficult to prepose the *ba* phrase in some instances. We agree with his judgment, though this pattern occurs only in casual informal speech. It seems that preposing of the *ba* phrase is the best in the contexts where the interpretation of doing something to the *ba*-NP is clearest. A command sentence is a very good example. However, it does not have to be a command:

- (i) ba na-dui wenzhang, wo zao jiu gai-hao-le.
 Ba that-pile article I early then correct-finish-Le
 'I corrected that pile of articles long ago.'

²¹ It should be pointed out that the element following *ba* is not necessarily an NP. A clause is also possible:

- (i) wo ba [ta bu-lai] dang-zuo shi hen yanzhong-de shi.
 I Ba him not-come take-as be very serious-De matter

It has been widely noted in the literature that the *ba* NP is sensitive to a myriad of semantic and syntactic restrictions. In this subsection, we focus on the syntactic properties of the *ba* NP and discuss what a *ba* NP is syntactically.

2.3.1. V-object

First of all, it is quite common for a *ba* NP to correspond to the direct object of the verb in its non-*ba* counterpart. That is, a *ba* NP is simply the object of a verb, as illustrated in (2-3). In fact, the *ba*-NP in the cases we have seen so far is mostly the (direct) object of the verb. However, it can also be an indirect object:

(16) a. wo ba ta wen-le yi-da-dui hen-nan-de wentì.
 I Ba him ask-Le one-big-pile very-difficult-De question
 'I asked him many difficult questions.'

cf.

b. wo wen-le ta yi-da-dui hen-nan-de wentì.
 I ask-Le him one-big-pile very-difficult-De question
 'I asked him many difficult questions.'

(17) a. wo ba ta fa-le henduo qian.
 I Ba him fine-Le much money
 'I fined him a lot of money.'

cf.

b. wo fa-le ta henduo qian.
 I fine-Le him much money
 'I fined him a lot of money.'

There are also cases which seem to take an instrument or locative NP as a *ba* NP, rather than taking an object. (18a-b) illustrate an instrument as a *ba* NP and (18c-d), a locative NP.

(18) a. ta yong shou wu-zai erduo-shang.
 he use hand cover-at ear-on
 'He covered his ears with his hands.'

b. ta ba shou wu-zai erduo-shang.²²
 he Ba hand cover-at ear-on

'I take it as a very serious matter that he does not come.'

This is not common, however. A noun typically co-occurs:

(ii) ta bu-gan ba [ni shengbing]-de shi gaosu dajia.
 he not-dare Ba you sick-De matter tell everyone
 'He dare not tell everyone the matter that you are sick.'

(iii) *ta bu-gan ba [ni shengbing] gaosu dajia.
 he not-dare Ba you sick tell everyone
 'He dare not tell everyone that you are sick.'

²² See J. Lu and Ma (1985:200-201) for the instrument and locative examples in (18b) and (18d).

'He covered his ears with his hands.'

c. ta zai lian-shang tu-(man-)le hui.
he at face-on cover-full-Le ash
'He covered his face with ash.'

d. ta ba lian(-shang)²³ tu-man-le hui.
he Ba face(-on) cover-full-Le ash
'He covered his face with ash.'

These cases, however, may actually be better regarded as a direct object, since an instrument and locative NP can clearly become the object of a verb:

(19) a. ta wu shou wu-zai erduo-shang.
he cover hand cover-at ear-on
'He covered his ears with his hands.'

b. ta tu hui tu-man-le lian.
he cover ash cover-full-Le face
'He covered his face with ash.'

The instrument NP 'hand' functions as the object of the verb 'cover' in (19a) and the locative NP 'face' in (19b) also functions as the object of the verb 'cover-full'. The occurrence of 'full' with 'cover' in (19b) when the locative NP functions as an object can be used as a test showing that the *ba* NP 'face' in (18d) originates as an object: *man* 'full' must occur with the verb in such a *ba* construction, in contrast to the non-*ba* sentence which does not need *man* 'full' (20):

(20) ta zai lian-shang tu-le hui.
he at face-on cover-Le ash
'He covered his face with ash.'

In brief, the *ba* NP can be a direct or indirect object of the verb. The cases that seemingly are non-V-objects such as instruments or locatives can actually be regarded as V-objects.

2.3.2. Non-V-objects

There are cases where the *ba* NP cannot be a direct or indirect object of the V. It can be a possessor of the object NP (21a-b) or in a part-whole relation with the object NP (21c-d).

(21) a. tufei sha-le tade fuqin.
bandit kill-Le his father
'The bandit killed his father.'

b. tufei ba ta sha-le fuqin.
bandit Ba him kill-Le father
'The bandit killed his father.'

²³ When the location marker *zai* is used as in (18c), a localizer such as *shang* 'top' must be used. With *ba*, such a localizer is optional.

- c. shuiguo, ta chi-le yi-ban.
fruit he eat-Le one-half
'The fruit, he ate half.'
- d. ta ba shuiguo chi-le yi-ban.
he Ba fruit eat-Le one-half
'He ate half of the fruit.'

It can also be the subject of a clause expressing the result of an action (22):

- (22) a. ta ku-de women dou fan-si-le.
he cry-De we all annoy-dead-Le
'He cried so much that we were all extremely annoyed.'
- b. ta ba women ku-de dou fan-si-le.
he Ba we cry-De all annoy-dead-Le
'He cried so much that we were all extremely annoyed.'

Indeed, Sybesma (1999, chapter 6) claims that a *ba* NP is always the subject of a result clause. He quotes Goodall's (1987) study and claims that a *ba* NP is derived by NP movement. Because of the locality conditions on NP movement, a *ba* NP must always be the subject of the result clause, not the object (Specified Subject Condition, Chomsky 1977, 1981). The following examples are from Goodall 1987:234 and Sybesma 1999, 157-158)

- (23) a. na-ge nuhai ku-de Zhangsan nian-bu-xia na-ben shu.
hat-Cl girl cry-De Zhangsan read-not-on that-Cl book
'That girl cried so that Zhangsan could not continue reading that book.'
- b. na-ge nuhai ba Zhangsan ku-de nian-bu-xia na-ben shu.
that-Cl girl Ba Zhangsan cry-De read-not-on that-Cl book
'That girl cried so that Zhangsan could not continue reading that book.'
- c. *na-ge nuhai ba na-ben shu ku-de Zhangsan nian-bu-xia
that-Cl girl Ba that-Cl book cry-De Zhangsan read-not-on
'That girl cried so that Zhangsan could not continue reading that book.'

According to Goodall (1987:234), agreed upon by Sybesma (1999:158), these examples show that it is only possible to raise the subject out of the embedded clause to become the *ba* NP, and not the object, a pattern "typical of movement to an A-position."

We will return to the analysis by Sybesma in section 5.3. For present purposes, we would like to point out that it is not quite true that the *ba* NP cannot be the object of an embedded clause. The *ba* NP in the following instances must be interpreted as the object of the embedded clause:

- (24) a. na-ge nuhai ba shoupa ku-de meiren gan mo.
that-Cl girl Ba handkerchief cry-De nobody dare touch
'That girl cried so that nobody dared to touch the handkerchief.'

This sentence is quite acceptable in the contexts where the girl kept crying and using the handkerchief to wipe off her tears. She cried so much that the handkerchief was completely wet and filthy. Even a sentence like (23c) can be made acceptable in appropriate contexts. For

instance, the girl kept crying, with tears continuously falling on the pages of the book, to the extent that the pages become illegible. Under such circumstances, the following sentence is quite acceptable.

- (24) b. na-ge nuhai ba na-ben shu ku-de meiren neng kan-de-qingchu
 that-Cl girl Ba that-Cl book cry-De nobody can read-able-clear
 'That girl cried so that nobody could read that book clearly.'

What is important is that a relation is established between the *ba* NP and the following verb phrase. To put it more concretely, the *ba* NP is an "outer object" or the object of V' in these cases, related to the subject or object of an embedded clause, as further elaborated on next.

2.3.3. Outer object --- V'-object

The *ba* NP in (21-24) can be subsumed under the concept of the so-called V'-object, which is the object of a complex predicate consisting of a verb and its complement (C.-T. Huang 1982, 1987, 1988). Alternatively, in the terminology of Thompson (1973), the *ba* NP is an "outer object" of the verb, in contrast to a V-object which is an "inner object."²⁴ That is, a *ba* NP can either be a V-object (inner object) as shown in section 2.3.1 or a V'-object (outer object) as shown in section 2.3.2.²⁵ An outer object (V'-object) receives an "affected" theta-role (V assigns an "affected" theta-role to the V'-object in Huang's terms). The affected object of 'father-killing' is 'him' in (21b); the affected object of 'eating a half' is 'the fruit' (21d); in (22b), 'we' were affected by the crying and got annoyed. Similarly, in (24a-b), the *ba* NP is affected by the crying to such an extent that it cannot be touched or read any more. Some other commonly used examples illustrating an outer object/V'-object are those in (25a-c) below. In (25a), *juzi* 'orange' is the outer object of *bo-pi* 'peel skin'. In (25b), 'the clothes' is the outer object of 'packing into a bundle'; in (25c), 'sadness' is the outer object of 'changing into power'.

- (25) a. ta ba juzi bo-le pi.
 he Ba orange peel-Le skin
 'He peeled the skin off the orange.'
- b. wo ba yifu bao-le yige xiaobao.
 I Ba clothes pack-Le one-Cl bundle
 'I packed the clothes into a bundle.'
- c. Lisi ba beitung hua-cheng lilian.
 Lisi Ba sadness change-become power
 'Lisi changed his sadness into power.'

²⁴ In light of recent developments in the structure of VPs (Larson 1988's VP-shell, for instance) and the almost non-existent status of an intermediate category X' in the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1991, 1993, 1995), it is not clear if the term V'-object is appropriate. It, nonetheless, suffices to express the sister relation between an outer object and a complex predicate consisting of a verb and its complement. We will continue using the term "V'-object," alongside the term "outer object," for convenience.

²⁵ More radically, it is possible to suggest that every instance of the *ba* NP is a V'-object (C.-T. Huang 1982, 1987, 1988). When it looks like an inner object (V-object), it actually is an outer object identifying an empty category in the V-object position.

An outer object (V'-object) can become an inner object (V-object) if the V and its complement can be combined (compounded) to become a V (V' reanalyzed as V; see C.-T. Huang 1983 for the distinction between phrasal and word categories; also see Larson 1988 for V'-reanalysis).

- (26) a. Lisi ku-de shoupa hen shi.
 Lisi cry-De handkerchief very wet
 'Lisi cried and got the handkerchief wet.'
- b. Lisi ba shoupa ku-de hen shi.
 Lisi Ba handkerchief cry-De very wet
 'Lisi cried and got the handkerchief wet.'
- c. Lisi ba shoupa ku-shi-le. --- compounding of V-V
 Lisi Ba handkerchief cry-wet-Le
 'Lisi cried-wet the handkerchief.'
- d. Lisi ku-shi-le shoupa. --- compound V + object
 Lisi cry-wet-Le handkerchief
 'Lisi cried-wet the handkerchief.'
- (27) a. na-ping jiu zui-de Lisi dao-xiaqu-le.
 that-bottle wine drunk-De Lisi fall-down-Le
 'That bottle of wine made Lisi get drunk and fall.'
- b. na-ping jiu ba Lisi zui-de dao-xiaqu-le.
 that-bottle wine Ba Lisi drunk-De fall-down-Le
 'That bottle of wine made Lisi get drunk and fall.'
- c. na-ping jiu ba Lisi zui-dao-le. --- compounding of V-V
 that-bottle wine Ba Lisi drunk-fall-Le
 'That bottle of wine made Lisi get drunk and fall.'
- d. na-ping jiu zui-dao-le Lisi. --- compound V + object
 that-bottle wine drunk-fall-Le Lisi
 'That bottle of wine made Lisi get drunk and fall.'
- (28) a. zhejian shi ku-de Zhangsan lei-le.
 this-Cl matter cry-De Zhangsan tired-Le
 'This thing got Zhangsan tired from crying.'
- b. zhejian shi ba Zhangsan ku-de lei-le.
 this-Cl matter Ba Zhangsan cry-De tired-Le
 'This thing got Zhangsan tired from crying.'
- c. zhejian shi ba Zhangsan ku-lei-le. --- compounding
 this-Cl matter Ba Zhangsan cry-tired-Le
 'This thing got Zhangsan tired from crying.'
- d. zhejian shi ku-lei-le Zhangsan. --- compound V + object
 this-Cl case cry-tired-Le Zhangsan
 'This thing got Zhangsan tired from crying.'

In brief, the following generalization can be put forward:

(29) A *ba* NP corresponds to a V-object (inner object) or a V'-object (outer object) in its non-*ba* counterpart.

A V-object can be a direct object, an indirect object, an instrument NP or a locative NP, all occurring in the structure [V__]. A V'-object can be an NP holding a possession or part-whole relation with the V-object or an NP identified with the subject or object of an embedded result clause, which may well be a pro/PRO (see Huang 1982 for conflating pro and PRO in Chinese).²⁶ According to the works referred to earlier by Huang and Thompson, a V'-object is assigned an "affected" theta-role by a V' consisting of a V and its complement.

A question arising out of (29) is how the *ba* NP is derived and specifically how and if the *ba* NP is derivationally related to its non-*ba* counterpart. It corresponds to a V-object or V'-object. However, it no longer is in the typical V-object position [V__], although it is likely that a *ba* NP is in the V'-object position (Huang 1982). We will return to this issue in section 5. For the moment, we simply note that a *ba* NP can form an idiom with the verb, which suggests a movement relation between the non-*ba* V-object position and the *ba* NP position. For instance, the O part of some [V + O] idioms can occur as a *ba* NP: *zhan-pianyi* 'occupy-advantage = take advantage' in (29), *kai-dao* 'open-knife = operate, perform operation' in (30) and *kai-wanxiao* 'open-joke = joke' in (31):

- (29) a. ta ba pianyi zhan-jin-le.
 he Ba advantage take-exhaust-Le
 'He took full advantage.'
- b. ta zhan-jin-le pianyi
 he take-exhaust-Le advantage
 'He took full advantage.'
- (30) a. ta ba dao kai-wan-le.
 he Ba knife open-finish-Le
 'He finished the operation.'
- b. ta kai-wan dao-le.
 he open-finish knife-Le
 'He finished the operation.'

²⁶ A pro generally is identified by the first c-commanding NP (Huang 1982). This means that a pro in an object position generally cannot be identified with an NP outside the clause, due to the intervening subject of the clause. However, it can be topicalized to the peripheral position of the clause first and, then, be identified by an NP outside the clause. This is the analysis proposed by Huang (1982) for cases like (i):

- (i) Zhangsan_i [T_i [e_j renshi pro_i de] ren_j hen duo.
 Zhangsan know De person very many
 'Zhangsan, the people who knew (him) are numerous.'

The pro in the object position of the relative clauses moves to T first in order to be coindexed with *Zhangsan*.

- (31) a. ta ba wanxiao kai-de-guohuo-le.
 he Ba joke open-De-excessive-Le
 'He overdid the joking.'
- b. ta kai wanxiao kai-de-guohuo-le.
 he open joke open-De-excessive-Le
 'He overdid the joking.'

If the components of an idiom ([V+O] in these cases) need to be generated together as a unit, these examples suggest that a *ba* NP can be derived by NP movement.

2.4. The X factor

The examples we have seen so far show the verb following the *ba* NP always occurs with some additional elements. As stated in (1a-b), there is always an X preceding or following the V in a *ba* sentence. A bare verb is not acceptable. The question is why the verb cannot be bare and what additional elements are required; i.e, what the X in (1a-b) is. This topic has been one of the main concerns throughout the literature on the *ba* construction. Various accounts have been provided. Descriptively, L⁺ (1955, 1980)'s classification of the X into 13 patterns has been the foundation of most of the subsequent works. For instance, Sybesma (1999:135-139) combined them into 10 classes. Liu (1997: 68-71) listed nine patterns on the basis of L⁺'s work. In the spirit of these classifications, we discuss in the following subsections important options for such an X.

2.4.1. Result expressions

A typical element for the X in (1) is a resultative complement following V, expressing the result of an activity. Others constructions such as motion-directional complements or certain dative/double object structures may also be regarded as result expressions, as described in the following subsections.

2.4.1.1. Resultative complements

Let us first consider a resultative complement, which may appear as a clause preceded by the marker *de* cliticized to a verb.²⁷ This is illustrated by the examples in (32a-b), with the resultative complement boldfaced. In these instances, *cai* 'vegetable' is interpreted as the object of the verb

²⁷ The morpheme *-de* must occur between V and the result expression if the two are not compounded. It was suggested that this morpheme was reduced from the verb *dao* 'arrive' (Chao 1968: 353). This morpheme is to be distinguished from the potential morpheme *-de*, or the manner *-de*, which cannot occur in the *ba* construction:

- (i) *ta ba youyong xue-de-hui.
 he Ba swimming study-De-able
 'He can learn swimming.'
- (ii) *ta ba gongke xie-de-kuai.
 he Ba homework write-De-fast
 'He wrote the homework fast.'

In some southern dialects of Chinese, such as Taiwanese, the three *de*'s are pronounced differently. The resultative *-de* is pronounced like the morpheme for *dao* 'arrive', the potential *-de* is pronounced like the morpheme 'can, able' and the manner *de* is like *zhao* 'hold'.

chao 'stir-fry' and the subject of the resultative clause *hen lan* 'very mushy' as supported by the acceptability of sentences like (32c). Such an NP is a very common type of *ba* NPs.

- (32) a. ta chao cai chao-**de-hen-lan**.
 he stir-fry vegetable stir-fry-De-very-mushy
 'He stir-fried the vegetable mushy.'
- b. ta ba cai chao-**de-hen-lan**.
 he Ba vegetable stir-fry-De-very-mushy
 'He stir-fried the vegetable mushy.'
- c. cai hen lan.
 vegetable very mushy
 'The vegetable is mushy.'

The main verb and the verb of the resultative clausal complement can generally be compounded into a single verb: [V+Result] (see (26-28) in the previous section).²⁸ After compounding, the *ba* NP generally keeps the interpretation of being object of the V and subject of the result V.

- (33) a. ta ba cai chao-lan-le.
 he Ba vegetable stir-fry-mushy-Le
 'He stir-fried the vegetable mushy.'
- b. ta bu-gan ba cai chao-lan.
 he not-dare Ba vegetable stir-fry-mushy
 'He dare not stir-fry the vegetable mushy.'

However, a *ba* NP need not always be an object of the main V (the first part of the compound [V + result] or [V + resultative clause]). The main V can be intransitive, as in (26-28). In these cases, the *ba* NP is a V'-object related to the complement resultative clause (or more precisely, related to the complex predicate consisting of a V and its resultative complement). A *ba* NP need not always be the subject of the resultative clause either. Indeed, although many of the so-called "aspectual" or "phrase" expressions attached to a verb (to form a complex verb) were originated as the predicate of the resultative clause and taking a *ba* NP as its subject, they no longer function like a predicate of the resultative clause in modern Mandarin Chinese. We briefly discuss the cases where a *ba* NP is not the subject of a resultative clause below.

The [V + result] compounding process is quite pervasive. Some compounded [V+Result] expressions have been so commonly used that the result part has become a very productive "suffix-like" element forming a complex verb with a wide range of verbs. For instance, *wan* 'finish' can be combined with any activity verb to mean finish doing something and a *ba* sentence with V-*wan* is generally acceptable.

- (34) rang wo xian ba zhexie dongxi/shiqing zuo/kan/ting/da-**wan**....
 let I first Ba these things do/watch/listen/hit-finish
 'Let me first finish doing/watching/listening to/typing...these things.'

²⁸ Compounding is subject to syllable structure constraints. See Lu 1998 for a discussions of the syllable structures of compounding.

The same is true with *guang* 'empty' used with many activity verbs:

- (35) ta hui ba dongxi chi/he/yong/na-**guang**!
 he will Ba thing eat/drink/use/take-empty
 'He will eat up/drink up/use up/take up all the things.'

Wan 'finish' or *guang* 'empty' in the complex verb [V + *wan/guang*] does not necessarily retain its verbal status. That is, the result part of in such [V + Result] compounds has become grammaticalized and reduced to a suffix. After grammaticalization, such a "suffix-like" expression has become more like an aspect marker than a verb of result. That is, it is not always identical to the verb of a resultative complement clause in the sense that it can take the *ba* NP as its subject, such as (32c). For instance, in contrast to (32c), the sentence in (36) below containing *wan* 'finish' as the main verb is not acceptable (cf. the V-*wan* expressions in (34)). *Wan* in such instances has become more like an aspect marker indicating completion of an activity.

- (36) *zhexie wan-le.
 dongxi/shiqing
 these things finish-Le
 'These things finished.'

Similarly, *guang* 'empty' in (37a) below expresses the completion of reading and the corresponding sentence (37b) with *guang* as a main verb is not acceptable, showing that the *ba* NP cannot be the subject of a resultative clause with *guang* as its predicate (the importance of such a generalization will be revisited in section 5.3 concerning an event structural approach to *ba* constructions).²⁹

- (37) a. ta hui yixiazi jiu ba suoyou-de shu kan-**guang**.
 he will a while then Ba all-De book read-empty
 'He will read all the books in a short while.'
- b. *suoyou-de shu dou guang-le
 all-De book all empty-Le
 'All the books are empty.'

In such instances, it makes more sense to analyze the *ba* NP as the object of a single verb which is complex morphologically (containing two morphemes, a verb and a suffix) than to analyze the *ba* NP as the object of the first morpheme and the subject of the second morpheme of a compound verb.

2.4.1.2. Directional complement

Another type of "result" complements is a directional complement, indicated by the bold-faced expression in the following examples:³⁰

- (38) a. qing ni na shu **lai/qu**.
 please you take book come/go

³⁰ The directional expressions *lai* 'come' and *qu* 'go' do not necessarily indicate the action of coming and going. They can simply be the indicators of the direction of motion (to or away from the speaker): *qing ni ba ta na-lai* 'please bring it over'; *qing ni ba ta na-qu* 'please take it.'

'Please bring/take the book.'

- b. qing ni ba shu na-lai/qu.
 please you Ba book take-come/go
 'Please bring/take the book.'

- (39) a. qing ni jiao ta jin-lai/shang-lai/xia-qu
 please you ask him enter-come/up-come/down-go
 'Please ask him to come in/come up/go down.'

- b. qing ni ba ta jiao jin-lai/shang-lai/xia-qu
 please you Ba him ask enter-come/up-come/down-go
 'Please ask him to come in/come up/go down.'

Just like the compounding of [V + Result], a motion-directional complement can also be compounded with the V. (38b) and (39b) are such examples. That the compounding has taken place can be shown by the fact that the verbal aspect *-le* follows the directional expression, not the V, as would be expected if the V and motion-directional complement were two distinct lexical items.

- (40) a. wo ba shu na-lai/qu-le san-ci-le.
 I Ba book take-come/go-Le three-times-Le
 'I brought/took the books three times.'

- a'. *wo ba shu na-le-lai/qu san-ci-le.
 I Ba book take-Le-come/go three-times-Le
 'I brought/took the books three times.'

- b. ta yijing ba hua gua-shang(qu)/qu-xia(lai)-le hen-jiu-le
 he already Ba painting hang-up(go)/take-down(come)-Le very-long-Le
 'He has already hung up/taken down the painting for a long time.'

- b'. *ta yijing ba hua gua-le-shang(qu)/qu-le-xia(lai) hen-jiu-le
 he already Ba painting hang-up(go)/take-down(come)-Le very-long-Le
 'He has already hung up/taken down the painting for a long time.'

The directional complement/compound has also been extended, become grammaticalized and can combine with other non-motion verbs, indicating the success or completion of an action or event, such as the verb *ji* 'memorize' in (41) and *ai* 'love' in (42).

- (41) wo dei ba zhexie-shi ji-xia(lai).
 I need Ba these-matter memorize-down(come)
 'I need to memorize these matters.'

- (42) ni qianwan bie ba ta ai-shang, ni
 you absolutely don't Ba him love-up you
 hui hen tongku-de.
 will very painful-De
 'You absolutely cannot fall in love with him; you will be in great pain.'

We see then that directional complements can be subsumed under resultative complements, taking directional complements to express the result of a location change. They can also become grammaticalized and simply denote completion of an action or event.

2.4.1.3. Other "result" expressions

There are other cases which may not have been classified as a resultative complement traditionally but behave like one with respect to interpretation and acceptability of a *ba* NP. These are cases involving verbs subcategorized for more than the direct object, such as dative/double object verbs or placement verbs (*put something somewhere*). One of the objects becomes a *ba* NP and the other stays in the postverbal position. The postverbal complement is very much like a resultative complement. For instance, (43a) below indicates that the book will be at the table upon successful completion of the event; (43b) expresses that the book is to (*gei*) him upon the completion of the event.

- (43) a. qing ni ba shu fang **zai** **zhuo-shang**
 please you Ba book put at table-on
 'Please put the book on the table.'
- b. qing ni ba shu song **(gei)** **ta.**
 please you Ba book give to him
 'Please give him the book.'

In addition to dative/double object or placement verbs, certain "semi-double object structures" behave alike. Such structures refer to sentences like the following where there seem to exist two object NPs but the verb cannot take both objects in postverbal position. One of the objects is preposed or is a *ba* NP.

- (44) a. *ta bao yifu yi-ge xiao-bao.
 he pack clothes one-Cl small-bundle
 'He packed clothes into a small bundle.'
- b. ta yifu bao **yi-ge** **xiao-bao.**
 he clothes pack one-Cl small-bundle
 'He packed clothes into a small bundle.'
- c. ta ba yifu bao **yige** **xiao-bao.**
 he Ba clothes pack one-Cl small-bundle
 'He packed clothes into a small bundle.'

The postverbal complement in (44c), again, looks like a resultative complement: the clothes becomes a small bundle after the (clothes-)packing.

Purposive complements also behave like result expressions. They indicate the purpose of the action, which is similar to a result, and can occur in a *ba* pattern:³¹

³¹ When the direct object becomes a *ba* NP, the main verb must be able to be compounded with the verb of the purposive clause; otherwise, *qu* 'go' or *lai* 'come' must occur between the two verbs. Thus, (45b) is acceptable with or without *lai/qu* because *na* and *gei* can be compounded. In contrast, (46b) cannot delete *lai/qu*, as indicated by the unacceptability of (i) because *mai* and *rang* cannot be compounded:

- (45) a. wo na shu (lai/qu) **gei ta kan.**
 I take book come/go for him read
 'I brought a book for him to read.'
- b. wo ba shu na (lai/qu) **gei ta kan.**
 I Ba book take come/go for him read
 'I brought a book for him to read.'
- (46) a. wo mai shu (lai/qu) **rang ta yong.**
 I buy book come/go let him use
 'I bought the book for him to use.'
- b. wo ba shu mai lai/qu **rang ta yong.**
 I Ba book buy come/go let him use
 'I bought the book for him to use.'

The discussions so far show that the X in (1a) is or originated as a result expression, which in fact is the most commonly found example for the *ba* pattern.

2.4.2. Duration/frequency phrases

Another expression that commonly serves as the X in (1a) is a postverbal duration or frequency phrase. (47a-b) are examples of duration phrases and (47c-d), frequency phrases:

- (47) a. ni ba ta da **yi-zheng-tian** ta ye bu-pa.
 you Ba him hit one-whole-day he also not-afraid
 'You hit him for a whole day and he still will not be intimidated.'
- b. qing ni ba ta kan **yi-xia.**
 please you Ba it watch a while
 'Please watch it for a while.'
- c. ni ba ta da **shi-ci**, ta ye bu-pa.
 you Ba him hit ten-times he also not-afraid
 'You hit him ten times and he still will not be intimidated.'
- d. qing nimen ba zhe-pian kewen xie **san-bian.**
 please you Ba this-Cl text write three-times
 'Please write this lesson three times.'

2.4.3. V-(yi-)V

-
- (i) *wo ba shu mai rang ta yong.
 I Ba book buy let him use
 'I bought the book for him to use.'

It seems that the following generalization exists in Chinese: when two bare Vs occur next to each other, they must be compounded. If the two cannot be compounded, the sentence becomes unacceptable.

Quite similar to the cases with a duration phrase, especially the expression *yixia* 'a bit, a while' (cf. (47b)), some verbs, especially activity verbs, can occur in the form V-*yi*-V 'V-one-V (V a bit)', creating an acceptable *ba* sentence:³²

- (48) women dei xian ba zhe-wenti **xiang-yi-xiang/kan-yi-kan.**
 we should first Ba this-question think-one-think/read-one-read
 'We should first think about/read this question a bit.'

Alternatively, the verb can simply be reduplicated to render the “a bit” reading; that is, *yi* 'one' in the above pattern need not occur:³³

- (49) women dei xian ba zhe-wenti **xiang-xiang/kan-kan.**
 we should first Ba this-question think-think/read
 'We should first think about/read this question a bit.'

2.4.4. Verbal measurement

Another similar pattern is the use of measure expressions indicating the extent of the action:

- (50) a. ta hui ti ni **haoji-jiao.**
 he will kick you many-foot
 'He will give you many kicks.' : or kick you many times
- b. ta hui ba ni ti **haoji-jiao.**
 he will Ba you kick many-foot
 'He will kick you many kicks.' see above
- (51) a. wo bu da ta **liang-quan** bu zou.
 I not hit him two-fist not leave
 'I won't leave without giving him two punches.'
- b. wo bu ba ta da **liang-quan** bu zou.
 I not Ba him hit two-fist not leave
 'I won't leave without giving him two punches.'

³² Verb reduplication can take the form of V-V or V-*yi*-V 'V-one-V' for those verbs with one syllable. For verbs with two syllables AB, an activity verb is reduplicated as ABaB and a stative verb as AABB (such as *piao-liang* 'pretty'/ *piao-piao-liang-liang*, *gan-jing* 'clean'/ *gan-gan-jing-jing*). A stative verb generally does not occur in a *ba* sentence; the reduplicated stative verb AABB does not occur in a *ba* sentence either.

³³ Verbs that have more than one syllable can only occur in the pattern V-V as in (i), not V-*yi*-V as in (ii):

- (i) women dei xian ba zhe-wenti kaolü-kaolü/taolun-taolun.
 we should first Ba this-question consider-consider/discuss-discuss
 'We should first consider/discuss this question a bit.'
- (ii) *women dei xian ba zhe-wenti kaolü-yi-kaolü/taolun-yi-taolun.
 we should first Ba this-question consider-one-consider/discuss-one-discuss
 'We should first consider/discuss this question a bit.'

2.4.5. V-object

The postverbal X elements discussed so far, which make an acceptable *ba* sentence, mostly are not subcategorized for by the verb. Instead, the *ba* NP is the subcategorized object of the verb in most cases. However, it is also possible to find a postverbal element X in a *ba* sentence which is simply the direct object of the verb. That is, the X in (1a) can simply be a direct object. As noted in section 2.3.2, a *ba* NP can be an "outer object," the object of a complex verb consisting of a verb and its complement (inner object). In that section, the examples used all contain an aspect marker suffixed to the (compound) verb (see the next section on an aspect marker alone making a *ba* sentence acceptable; i.e., an aspect marker by itself can be the X in a *ba* pattern). Nonetheless, such an aspect marker is not necessary. A single inner object as the X is sufficient to make a good *ba* sentence.

(52) a. ta zhi ba shuiguo chi yi-ban.
he only Ba fruit eat one-half
'He only ate half of the fruit.'

b. jide ba juzi bo pi.
remember Ba orange peel skin
'Remember to peel the skin off the orange.'

The same generalization is true for double object structures such as those discussed in section 2.3.2 and 2.4.1.3, where we saw that a direct object can be grouped with a result expression. There are also double object cases occurring in a *ba* pattern whose postverbal object, which cannot be grouped with postverbal result expressions, is simply the direct object of the verb. No aspect markers are necessary, either (see the next section on aspect markers). That is, similar to (16-17) in section 2.3.1, the following cases are acceptable:

(53) a. wo dasuan ba ta wen yi-da-dui hen-nan-de wenti.
I plan Ba him ask one-big-pile very-difficult-De question
'I asked him many difficult questions.'

b. wo hui ba ta fa henduo qian.
I will Ba him fine much money
'I will fine him a lot of money.'

2.4.6. Aspect markers

The cases discussed so far are generally clearly grammatical to native speakers: they generally accept such *ba* sentences more readily. Next, let us consider the less clear cases, i.e., those *ba* sentences whose VPs only require an aspect marker after the verb.

2.4.6.1. *Zhe*

Among the cases using an aspect marker to fill the role of X in (1a), the durative marker *-zhe* is a common one and quite easily accepted with certain verbs. Some examples are given below:

(54) qing ba ta bao/na/qian/fang/gua-**zhe**.
please Ba it(him) hold/take/hold-in-had/put/hang-Zhe
'Please hold (in hand)/put (it) down/hang it(him).'

(54) should be contrasted with (55), unacceptable as a *ba* sentence:

- (55) *qing ba ta da/chang/he/ca/nian/gai-zhe.
 please Ba it(him) hit/sing/drink/wipe/read/build-Zhe
 'Please hit/sing/drink/wipe/read/build it(him).'

Why is there such a contrast? This has to do with the types of verbs used in these examples. The first type involves verbs which have the interpretation of an end-state realized. The clearest example is *gua* 'hang': hanging is hanging up something and then it is hung up there. There is an end state as a result of the action. The other verbs in the first type have the same interpretation. The first action of *fang* 'put' is putting something at some place and then the result is that this something ends up being at some place. *Qian* 'hold in hand', *na* 'take' and *bao* 'hold' also have the initial action and a result end-state: the first activity is to get something/somebody to be held in the hand and then the something/somebody ends up being in the state of being held by hand. Adopting the insight of Chen (1978a,b), we assume that these verbs contain the notion of "transition" or "path" of motion, resulting in an end-state. Let us call this interpretation a resultative interpretation. The "durative" marker *-zhe* marks an end-state that continues. That is, there is an inception and an end-state that continues. Such a resultative interpretation, however, is not available to (55). The verbs *da/chang/he/ca/nian/gai-zhe* 'hit/sing/drink/wipe/read/build-Zhe' do not have the "path-end state" interpretation. They only have the progressive interpretation when suffixed with *-zhe*; *-zhe* in such cases is a progressive marker. The distinction between these two types of verbs can be further illustrated by the following contrasts. One contrast is that the first type of verbs can be more easily compounded with a directional complement (the notion of path is relevant) than the second type (lack of path):

- (56) a. bao-lai qian-lai fang-xia na-xia gua-shang
 hold-come hold-come put-in take-down hang-up
- b. *da-shang *he-lai *ca-qu *nian-xia *ting-xia *gai-shang
 hit-up drink-come wipe-go read-down listen-down build-up

Another contrast is that the first type of verbs, not the second type, can be combined with *zhu* 'stay' to mean that an end-state holds:

- (57) a. bao-zhu na-zhu qian-zhu fang-zhu gua-zhu
 hold-stay take-stay hold-stay put-stay hang-stay
- b. *da-zhu *chang-zhu *he-zhu *ca-zhu *nian-zhu *gai-zhu
 hit-stay sing-stay drink-stay wipe-stay read-stay build-stay

In brief, the durative marker *-zhe* generally can be suffixed to the "path-endstate" type of verbs to express that the end-state continues or holds and a *ba* pattern is available. On the other hand, verbs not expressing "path-endstate" only express progressive actions when suffixed with *zhe* and a *ba* pattern is not available.³⁴

2.4.6.2. *Le*

³⁴ The non-occurrence of *zhe* in a *ba* sentence is only true when the verb is bare and *zhe* plays the role of the X in (1). If there is an additional X, *-zhe* need not play the role of the X and a *ba* sentence is available: We will discuss such examples later in the text.

In addition to *-zhe*, the completive aspect marker *-le* (the verbal *-le*) may also make a *ba* sentence acceptable.³⁵ The effect of *-le* on the availability of a *ba* pattern, however, is inconsistent. Some predicates are quite ready to occur with *-le* to make a *ba* sentence and others are not. For instance, the sentences in (58) are acceptable but those in (59) are much worse.

- (58) a. ta ba Lisi pian-le.
 he Ba Lisi cheat-Le
 'He cheated Lisi.'

³⁵ The literature generally focuses on the verbal aspect marker *-le* and does not discuss the sentence-final *-le* with respect to the acceptability of a *ba* sentence. It seems that in most cases, a sentence-final *-le* does not make a *ba* sentence available.

A sentence-final *-le* is typically used in the following cases which express that a new state of affair has just been realized:

- (i) wo bu-xihuan ta-le.
 I not-like him-Le
 'I do not like him (now; it used to be the case that I liked him)'
- (ii) ta hui shuo-hua-le.
 he can speak-word-Le
 'He can speak now (it used to be the case that he could not speak).'
- (iii) ta bu-ting zhe-ge-le.
 he not-listen this-song-Le
 'He does not listen to this song any more (he used).'

The *ba* counterpart of these sentences seems to be generally less acceptable than those with a verbal *-le*:

- (iv) a. ni ba zhe-che xi-le (jici?) ---verbal *-le*
 you Ba this-car wash-Le how many times
 'How many times did you wash the car?'
- b. wo bu xi zhe-che-le. ---sentence-final *-le*
 I not wash this-car-Le
 'I don't wash this car any more.'
- c. *wo zai ye bu-ba zhe-che xi-le. ---sentence-final *-le*
 I again also not-Ba this-car wash-Le
 'I will no longer wash this car.'
- (v) a. wo ba ta pian-le. (yici) ---verbal *-le*
 I Ba him cheat-Le one time
 'I cheated him (once).'
- b. wo zai ye bu-pian ta-le ---sentence-final *-le*
 I again also not-cheat him-Le
 'I will no longer cheat him.'
- c. ??wo zai ye bu-ba ta pian-le. ---sentence-final *-le*
 I again also not-cheat him cheat-Le
 'I will no longer cheat him.'

- b. ta jingran ba wo da-le.
 he unexpectedly Ba I hit-Le
 'Unexpectedly, he hit me.'
- c. wo ba shu mai-le.
 I Ba book sell-Le
 'I sold the book.'
- d. wo yijing ba men guan-le.
 I already Ba door close-Le
 'I already closed the door.'
- (59) a. *ta ba na-difang likai-le.
 he Ba that-place leave-Le
 'He left that place.'
- b. *ta jingran ba qiu-sai canjia-le
 he unexpectedly Ba ball-game participate-Le
 'Unexpectedly, he played the ball game.'
- c. *ta ba na-ge canting baifang-le.
 he Ba that-Cl restaurant visit-Le
 'He visited that restaurant.'
- d. *ta ba wode mingling fucong-le.
 he Ba my order obey
 'He obeyed my order.'

Moreover, this seems to be an area where speakers disagree significantly on the judgment. Take the examples in (60-61) for example. Sentences like (60a) and (61a) are more or less acceptable for some speakers but sound terrible to others, who prefer to have the expressions discussed in section 2.4.1-2.4.4. following the verb:³⁶

³⁶ The other aspect marker, the experiential marker *-guo* has not received much attention in the literature regarding its relation to a *ba* sentence (cf. J. Lu and Ma 1985). It seems that it is less acceptable than the verbal *-le* in allowing a *ba* sentence, though it is still quite acceptable in some cases such as (id). This may be due to the semantic/pragmatic factors to be discussed in section 3.

- (i) a. ?ta ba na-pi-ma qi-guo-ma?
 he Ba that-Cl-horse ride-Guo-Q
 'Did he ride that horse before?'
- b. ?ta ba zhexie-haizi ma-guo.
 he Ba these-boys scold-Guo
 'He has scolded these boys before.'
- c. ?ta ba yaoshi wang-guo.
 he Ba key forget-Guo
 'He has forgotten the key before.'

- (60) a. ??wo ba ge ting-le.
I Ba song listen-Le
'I listened to the song.'
- b. wo ba ge ting-wan-le.
I Ba song listen-finish-Le
'I finished listening to the song.'
- (61) a. ??wo ba ta kuajiang-le.
I Ba him praise
'I praised him.'
- b. wo ba ta kuajiang-le ji-bai-bian-le.
I Ba him praise-Le several-hundred-times-Le
'I praised him several hundred times.'

2.4.7. Preverbal modifiers

In addition to the postverbal elements discussed so far, a *ba* sentence can also be made acceptable by the addition of certain preverbal adverbials (the X in (1b)):

- (62) a. bie ba ta **luan-reng**.
don't Ba it disorderly-throw
'Don't throw it around.'
- b. qing ba zhuozi **wang ta nabiar** tui.
please Ba table towards him there push
'Please push the table towards him.'
- c. ba ta **haohaor-de** zhaogu, ta jiu hui zhang-de-hao.
Ba it good-De care it then will grow-De-well
'Take good care of it and it will grow well.'
- d. ni bu ba wenti **zixi-de** yanjiu, zen hui zhao-chu daan?
you not Ba problem carefully study how will find-out answer
'If you don't study the problem carefully, how can you find an answer?'
- e. ni bu ba zhe-wenzhang **zixi-de** nian, zenme keneng dong-ne?
you not Ba this article carefully read how can understand-Q
'If you don't read the article carefully, how can you understand (it)?'
- f. ta ba jiu **bu-ting-de** he. - from Chao (1968, 348).
he Ba wine not-stop-De drink
'He drank without stop.'

-
- d. ni you-mei-you ba zhongyao-de shiqing wang-guo?
you have-not-have ba important-De thing forget-Guo
'Have you forgotten important matters (before)?'

g. wo ba ta yi-tui, ta jiu dao-le.
 I Ba it one-push it then fall-Le
 'It fell as soon as I pushed it.'

Note that some such adverbials may be related to the *ba* NP. For instance, *luan* 'disorderly' in (a) may describe the endstate of the stuff that is being thrown as disorderly. However, this is not the case with all such adverbials. For instance, *zixi-de* 'carefully' in (d) and (e) cannot describe the *ba* NP: the problem in (d) cannot be careful, neither can the article in (e) be careful. It is the studying and the reading that are careful. We will return to such differences in section 5.

2.4.8. Summary

Summarizing the types of X in (1a-b), we note that a very common one is that the X is a result expression (63i). Other possibilities are listed in (63ii-viii):

- (63) i. V + result
- ii. V + duration/frequency
- iii. V + (*yi* +) V
- iv. V + measure phrases
- v. V + object
- vi. V + *le*
- vii. V + *zhe*
- viii. Adv + V

(ii-iv) are similar because they all contain a number expression [number + classifier + noun]: duration/frequency phrases are expressed by a number expression; *yi* 'one' + V is also a number expression ('one' is a number, the V may be taken as a classifier-like element) and measure phrases are number expressions as well. (63i-viii), therefore, may be re-stated as follows:

- (64) i. V + result
- ii. V + number expression
- iii. V + object
- iv. V + *le*
- v. V + *zhe*
- vi. Adv + V

(i-v) of (64) include almost all types of elements that can occur postverbally in Chinese. The only one that can occur postverbally in this language but does not make a *ba* sentence acceptable is a descriptive complement (a postverbal manner expression modifying the V), illustrated below.

(65) a. ta jintian-de gongke xie-de hen kuai.
 he today-De homework write-De very fast
 'He wrote today's homework fast.'

b. *ta ba jintian-de gongke xie-de hen kuai.
 he Ba today homework write-De very fast
 'He wrote today's homework fast.'