

# Resultative expressions in Mandarin Chinese

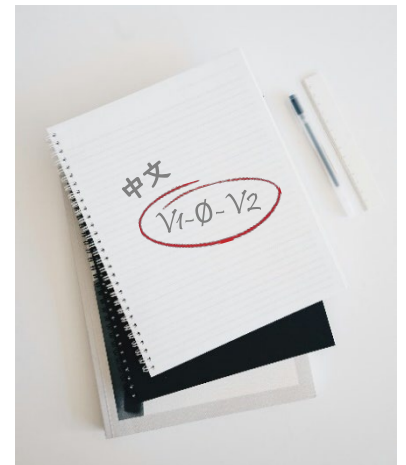
**Speaker:** Dr Tay Wenkai (University College London)  
**Date/Time:** 5 March 2025 (Wed), 10:00am – 12:00pm  
**Venue:** AS8-05-49 Wan Boo Sow Research Centre  
**Host:** Dr Li Yuting (NUS Chinese Studies)

## Abstract

Why are Mandarin V-V resultatives more flexible in their argument structure than other resultatives? In particular, the first verb, or V1, of a Mandarin V-V resultative may omit its agent or its theme. I propose that this is because Mandarin V-V resultatives are compounds built in morphology, with a structure V1- $\emptyset$ -V2. The null affix  $\emptyset$  inherits all of the arguments of V2 and none of the arguments of V1. Thus, there is no requirement for any of the arguments of a V-V resultative to be interpreted as arguments of V1.

This proposal correctly predicts that Mandarin V-*de* resultatives, which are built in the syntax, do not have the same flexibility of argument structure as V-V resultatives. In fact, an obligatorily transitive V1 must project its internal argument in a V-*de* resultative but not in a V-V resultative.

As such, this proposal fares better than the dominant view in the literature that both Mandarin V-V and V-*de* resultatives are built in syntax. This proposal also explains why compound resultatives are more flexible than non-compound resultatives cross-linguistically.



## About the Speaker

**Tay Wenkai** is an honorary research fellow at UCL where he received his PhD. His research interests lie in the interface between syntax and semantics, specifically argument structure. His current research focuses on resultatives and change-of-state verbs in Mandarin and other East Asian languages.