Object Preposing in Southern Min
Huichi Lee
National University of Kaohsiung

Chinese is generally assumed as a VO language, though some Chinese sentences allow both VO and OV word orders, like (1).

(1) a. Wo xi hao yifu le
   I wash finish clothes PERF

   b. Wo yifu xi hao le
      ‘I have finished washing the clothes’

However, unlike the above Mandarin data, Southern Min can only accept SOV rather than SVO word order, shown as (2).

(2) a. *Goa se ho sa^n a
   I wash finish clothes PERF

   b. Goa sa^n se ho a
      ‘I have finished washing the clothes.’

This paper concerns sentences with obligatory SOV word order in Southern Min and the following observations are made: (i) Preposed object occurs to the left of VP-adjunct adverbs, auxiliaries (modal verbs) and negation; (ii) Preposed object is higher than the lian-focus phrase; (iii) Topic and preposed object can co-occur in a sentence; (iv) Double object preposing is not allowed; (v) Preposed object is finite clause bound; (vi) Personal names and pronouns cannot be preposed, and (vii) Preposed object requires specificity.

In addition, the obligatory object shift is assumed to be triggered by case assignment. Phasal markers in Southern Min block the case assignment of the verbs. Objects without cases are forced to move. Opposite to Ernst & Wang (1995), the landing site of the preposed object is considered to be higher than VP. Phasal markers in Southern Min behave differently from Mandarin and the distinction causes the existence of obligatory object shift in Southern Min not in Mandarin.