Teaching the Disposal Construction in the Context of Pedagogical Grammar and Content-based Instruction

Sue-mei Wu(吳 素 美)
Carnegie Mellon University  suemei@andrew.cmu.edu

Abstract

The disposal construction (also known as the *Ba 把* construction) is among the most complex and difficult aspects of Chinese grammar for both elementary Chinese learners and instructors. Pedagogical grammar (PG), which focuses on which grammar elements should be included in language learning and how to teach those elements effectively, has received a great deal of attention by Chinese language professionals recently. Content-based instruction (CBI), which addresses how to combine grammar learning with meaningful interaction and communication is an important concept that can be applied to pedagogical grammar. This paper presents an example of how to integrate these two notions (PG & CBI) in the teaching of the *Ba 把* construction in Chinese in order to achieve more effective and efficient Chinese language pedagogy.

The disposal construction (also known as the *Ba 把* construction) is usually introduced in the 2nd semester of an elementary Chinese course. Of particular difficulty to Chinese instructors is how to present the *Ba 把* construction clearly and systematically, avoid overwhelming the learners, and also make the presentation interesting and practical. From the pedagogical grammar point of view, we propose presenting the commonly-used and special functions of the *Ba 把* construction in a manner that is neither over-simplified or too complex, and setting those functions into the context of meaningful interactions and communication tasks as suggested by CBI.

In order to integrate *Ba 把* construction learning into a meaningful context for college students, we propose to (1) introduce the directional complement (DC) with the *Ba 把* construction in an apartment rental scenario, and then (2) cover the resultative complement (RC) with the *Ba 把* construction in the scenario of moving into the new apartment. We suggest that this order of presentation of the DC, *Ba 把* sentence, and RC provide an effective sequence for introducing these grammar points, facilitating student understanding, survival skills, and interest.

Below is an outline pedagogical grammar presentation of the DC, *Ba 把* sentence, and RC, along with communicative exercises designed to elicit student use of these grammatical structures:

1. Directional Complement 趨向補語 (DC):
   A. The simple directional complement (simple DC)

   *來* and *去* are often attached to a verb to form a simple directional complement to indicate the direction of a motion. When the motion is towards the speaker, *來* is used. When the motion is away from the speaker, *去* is used. The following are some examples of simple directional complements:

   Motion verbs + *來* / *去*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motion Verbs</th>
<th>上 / 下</th>
<th>进 / 出</th>
<th>回</th>
<th>交</th>
<th>起</th>
<th>搬</th>
<th>带</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>來</em></td>
<td>上來</td>
<td>下來</td>
<td>進來</td>
<td>出來</td>
<td>回來</td>
<td>過來</td>
<td>起來</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>去</em></td>
<td>上去</td>
<td>下去</td>
<td>進去</td>
<td>出去</td>
<td>回去</td>
<td>過去</td>
<td>起去</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   *起* can only be combined with *來*, forming *起來*.

   Verb + Object (e.g. place, people) + *來* / *去*

   *他回宿舍去了。*
   *你們都進客廳去吧!*
   *我帶我女朋友來了。*

   B. Compound directional complement (Compound DC)

   The simple directional complements *上來* / *去*, *進來* / *去*, *出來* / *去*, *回來* / *去*, *過來* / *去*, and *起來* may combine with other verbs to function as complements indicating the direction of movement of the action indicated by the verb. Used in this way they are called compound directional complements. Below are some examples:
The verbs, such as 走, 跑, 跳, 拿 (walk, run, jump, pick), state the action, and the simple directional complement indicates the direction of the action in relation to a location. It also can indicate the direction of the motion towards or away from the speaker.

\[
\text{Verb + Object (e.g. person, thing) + simple DC} \\
\text{他要搬桌子过来。} \\
\text{subj. V obj. simple DC} \\
\]

Note: 起来 has an idiomatic usage, Its object should be placed as below:

\[
\text{他拿起一本书。} \\
\text{他拿起书来。} \\
\]

2. Ba 把 construction

The Ba 把 construction is used to stress the effects of an action upon its object. It’s structure is illustrated below:

\[
\text{Subject + 把 + Object + Verb-complement} \\
\]

The following are some characteristics of the Ba 把 construction:

- Used most often with action verbs.
- The object must be definite.
- The verb must incorporate a complement.
- Commonly occurs in imperative sentences. For example, 把飯吃了! (Eat your meal!); 把他帶來! (Bring him over!); 把車開回來! (Drive the car back!)
- The common complements involved with 把 structures are:
  a. degree of complement 他把這個字寫得很好。
  b. 了 may be used as complement for a 把 structure to indicate completion of an action. 我把湯喝了。
  c. directional complement 我要把那張桌子搬過去。
  d. resultative complement 他把我的杯子打破了。
  e. duration and frequency complements 他把這個漢字寫了十遍。

3. Ba 把 and the directional complement

Group A          Group B
我把我的室友带来了。  他要把我的室友搬来。
我把那張桌子搬來了。  他要搬那張桌子搬過去。
我把我的手機帶過去了。  我把我的手機帶過去。

- With the directional complement, if there is a definite object of the action, the Ba 把 construction (Group B) is often preferred.
- The examples in Group A are not often used. They simply describe an event. However, the examples in Group B also imply that the location of the object has been changed due to (related to) the subject. That is, the subject is the cause of the change.
4. More information about the Ba 把 construction

The 把 construction is also called a "disposal" construction. That is, the Ba 把 construction usually indicates that the object is disposed of, dealt with or affected by the subject. The choice between using a 把 construction or a non-把 construction is not an easy task. However, some guidelines are listed below:

I. Situations in which the 把 construction is usually preferred:

- The speaker wants to emphasize that an action has caused the object to change position or change from one state to another.
  e.g. (a) 我吃了那包藥。 (I took that medicine.)
  (b) 我把那包藥吃了。 (I took that medicine.)

Example (a) is a simple statement of fact. Example (b) emphasizes that the medicine has been taken by the subject and is gone.

- If there is a long or complicated direct object, a 把 construction is preferred.
  e.g. 我把我媽媽昨天從藥房買回來的那包藥吃了。

- The 把 construction is preferred in imperative sentences (commands).
  e.g. 把那包藥吃了！

II. Situations in which the 把 construction is obligatory (there is no corresponding non-把 construction):

- With certain resultative complements (結果補語) the 把 construction is obligatory.
  Subject 把 Object V +成 (into/to); V +做 (as); V + 在; V +到
  e.g. 他把那個故事寫成小說了。 (He wrote that story as a novel.)
  e.g. 我把她當作自己的女兒。 (I treated her as my own daughter.)
  e.g. 我把我的車停在河邊。 (I parked my car by the river.)
  e.g. 我把你的書放到桌上。 (I placed your book on the desk.)

- If a sentence has a plural object and the adverb 都, the 把 construction must be used.
  e.g. 我把我們的書都賣了。 (I sold all our books.)

III. Verbs that cannot be used in the 把 construction:

There are certain verbs which do not allow a "disposal" explanation. Therefore they cannot be used in the 把 construction. The following is a sample list of verbs which are incompatible with the 把 construction:

- Intransitive verbs: 来 (to come), 去 (to go), 跑 (to run), 走 (to walk), 旅行 (to travel), 畢業 (to graduate), 工作 (to work), 坐 (to sit)
- Existence verbs: 是 (to be), 在 (to be at), 有 (to have)
- Emotion verbs: 喜歡 (to like), 愛 (to love), 怕 (to fear)
- Sensory perception verbs: 會 (to be able to), 知道 (to know), 認識 (to recognize), 覺得 (to think, to feel), 希望 (to hope), 見 (to see), 聽 (to hear)
- Others: 歡迎 (to welcome), 贊成 (to approve)

CBI Exercise: In terms of content-based instruction (CBI), we provide several commonly-occurring situations where these grammar elements would be used in real-life communication. We hope to advance the learner from basic knowledge of these structural forms to being able to use them appropriately in different contexts. For example, learners should be able to advance from basic sentences to a coherent paragraph, and from knowing basic structure to being able to solve content-rich tasks. Please see the appendix for a text which incorporates the grammar points (Ba 把, DC) in the scenario of renting an apartment. (Appendix 1)

Now let us discuss PG presentation of the use of the Ba 把 construction with RC:
5. 結果補語  Resultative complement (RC)

The resultative complement (RC) indicates the result, extent or goal of an action. It is formed by attaching an adjective or a verb directly to another verb. The RC should be regarded as a unit, which does not allow the insertion of another element between them.

Verb + adjective / verb --> resultative complement (RC)

- 看 誤 (wrong) --> 看誤 (wrong seeing)
- 看完 (finish) --> 看完 (finish seeing)
- 見 (perceive) --> 見見 (see)

- The first verb 看 indicates the means. The following adjective (or verb) tells the result or goal of the first verb.
- The object and the aspect particle 了 usually occur after the complement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>RC</th>
<th>(Object) （了）</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>我看錯了。</td>
<td>我沒有看錯。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>我看完書了。</td>
<td>我沒有看完書。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>我見他了。</td>
<td>我沒有見他。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following adjectives (or verbs) are commonly used as complements in the RC structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adj. / Verb</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>完</td>
<td>Indicates some work is finished by some action</td>
<td>看完 做完 寫完</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>好</td>
<td>Indicates the desired state of an action or completion of an action</td>
<td>坐好 拿好 放好 收好 搬好 做好</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>到</td>
<td>Indicates the continuation of an action reaching to a certain point or a certain time</td>
<td>找到 看到 回到</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>在</td>
<td>Indicates that a person or thing ends up at a place as the result of an action. The 在 + RV is followed by a place.</td>
<td>放在 坐在 呆在 住 在</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>上</td>
<td>Indicates the completion of an action has brought about a certain result such as coming together or being closed up.</td>
<td>接上 穿上 關上 蓋上 穿上</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>開</td>
<td>Indicates the result of an action that moves an object away from its original position.</td>
<td>打開 拿開 拉開 跑開</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>成</td>
<td>Indicates that the items have become, become treated or become regarded a certain way.</td>
<td>換成 畫成 餐成 翻譯成</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>了</td>
<td>Usually indicates a change of a state but is also commonly associated with the verb structure.</td>
<td>開了 看了 寫了 吃了</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. 把字句和結果補語的搭配  sentences and the resultative complement

Since the resultative complement indicates the result or influence of an action, it is often used with the 把 construction. Note that when the object is definite, the 把 construction is preferred. For example,

- The 把 structure is usually compulsory in the following situations:
  
  | 把 Object + verb 在 / 到 place |
  |
  | For example: | 我把被搬到樓下。 | 我把車停在河邊。 | 我把他們送到機場了。 |

CBI Exercise: Below is an example exercise which applies CBI to the consolidation of the grammar points of DC, RC and Ba sentences:

Scenario: You live with your younger brother in an apartment. Tomorrow the parents of your girl/boy friend are coming to see you. She/he will bring them over to meet you. You want your younger brother to help clean up the apartment so that they will have a better impression of you. (Use Ba 把 construction, resultative complements and directional complements)

Scene one: You and your younger brother are discussing the assigned tasks
Scene two: You are talking while cleaning up
Scene three: Two hours later, you and your younger brother are checking around the apartment
Scene four: The next day, the visitors arrive.
We have provided an illustration of how the notions of PG and CBI may be applied to and integrated with the teaching of the *Ba* 拿 construction. It is hoped that the integration of PG with CBI will help to provide a more practical, interesting and systematic approach for Chinese pedagogy to achieve more effective Chinese learning.

Notes:

Appendix

(1) Scenario: Rent an apartment (租房, 看房)
Grammar points: RC and the 拿 construction (These grammar points are underlined in the dialogue.)

Topic: 我把小謝帶來了

常: 中明,我回來了,我把車開回來了,還把小謝也帶來了。
常: 是小謝啊! 快請他進來。
謝: 我聽說你們這兒有一個人搬出去了,我想搬進來,所以過來看看。
常: 你不想住宿舍了,是不是?
謝: 是的。 宿舍太小了,我想搬出去住。 這兒可以不可以做飯?
常: 可以,我們有廚房。
謝: 太好了! 我很喜歡做飯。 搬出來以後就可以常常做飯了。
常: 你吸煙嗎? 我們這兒不能吸煙。
謝: 沒關係。 以前我吸煙,但是女朋友试我說我不應該吸煙,所以我現在不吸煙了。
常: 還有,我們必須在每個月的第一天付房租。

常: 我們到了, 讓我把車停在旁邊。

謝: 我們先把行李搬上樓去, 然後再分工合作, 怎麼樣?
常: 好主意, 我負責把行李搬下來,放好, 我也會把電腦裝好。
謝: 好, 我來掃地, 整理客廳, 再把書放好。
常: 我來洗碗, 把箱子打開, 再把衣服掛好。
謝: 謝謝你們的幫忙, 這次搬家把你們累壞了。今天晚上想吃什麼, 我請客!
常: 好極了! 我快餓死了。

謝: 我們去那家日本名冠, 你原意去不去?
常: 好, 我去。謝謝你們的幫忙, 這次搬家把你們累壞了。今天晚上想吃什麼, 我請客!
常: 好極了! 我快餓死了。

常: 去地點忘記了。我去找地點。
謝: 我先把門窗打開。
常: 好了, 我們走吧!