Title of paper
Operationalizing the “Disposal” Form: L2 Pedagogy of the *Ba*-construction

Significance of the study
The *ba*-construction (“Subject + *ba* + *ba*-NP + *ba*-VP”) represents language-specific features of Chinese, namely topic-prominence and non-grammatically governed word order (Jin, 1992). In this study, the investigator proposes a pedagogical model to facilitate L2 learners' acquisition of the *ba*-construction as a “disposal” form (Wang, 1947). This model combines contextualized instruction of both the *ba*-VP and the *ba*-NP with meaningful input and communicative tasks. By applying this model to a series of instruction sessions, the investigator intends to find out:

1. Is the pedagogical model effective in explaining the *ba*-construction and facilitating L2 learners’ comprehension and production?
2. Are the instruction sessions beneficial to L2 learners’ understanding of different form-meaning mappings of the *ba*-construction?
3. Do the effects of the pedagogical model and the instruction vary for L2 learners at different proficiency levels?

Results of this study may yield implications for L2 instruction of the *ba*-construction as a “disposal” form in relation to its key syntactic-semantic features, and further illustrate the connection between L2 grammar pedagogy and learners’ overall proficiency development.

Theoretical framework/background
The usage-based approaches to SLA consider language construction (form-meaning mapping) as the basic unit of acquisition, and L2 learners extract regulations from frequent exposures to meaningful input and language use that contain prototypes of the construction (N. Ellis, 2012). In this process, instruction is needed to help L2 learners overcome their preexisting L1 knowledge’s influence and interference, and learners’ conscious registration and noticing of L2 constructions/features in the input are necessary for effective learning (Schmidt, 1990).

Research procedure
The investigator recruits 14 English-speaking learners of Chinese at a Midwestern university. Participants are from different instructional levels (second-year through fourth-year). The experimental procedure includes a pre-test, a series of instructional sessions, a post-test, and a delayed post-test. Instruments for the tests include (1) a contextualized sentence production task, (2) a translation task, (3) a grammaticality judgment task, and (4) a cloze task. Results from the three tests are compared to see participants’ acquisition
outcomes after the instruction, and a semi-structured interview is conducted at the end to gain learners’ perspectives.

**Major findings**

Data collection and analysis are currently at the final stage (post-test and delayed post-test). Preliminary analysis of the pre-test and instruction sessions shows that intermediate-level participants have better grammar knowledge than novice-level participants, participants’ performances in comprehension are better than those in production, and the production rate and accuracy rate of ba-constructions are low among all participants.

**References**


