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Abstract: This study proposes a syntactic account for the ka-construction in Taiwanese Southern Min.

Southern Min. The thematic properties of ka are subsumed under one general verb predicate encoding affectedness, instead of being traditionally viewed as separate thematic markers, i.e., a Patient/Theme marker, a Goal marker, a Source marker, and a Benefactive/Adversative marker. Meanwhile, ka is more “lexical” than its seeming counterpart ba of Mandarin Chinese so that ka takes ka-NP as its sole argument and assigns a theta role to it. This suggests that ka-NP base-adjunction is at work where it is on the surface structure. A historical perspective favoring ka construction heritage is provided to further confirm our proposal. The apparent strong evidence for the raising of ka-NP is then explained by the Null Operator (NOP) movement approach. We show that the NOP approach correctly predicts the four thematic senses that ka is endowed are simply an effect of second-order predication via strong binding. Our analysis also accounts for three major differences between Taiwanese ka and Mandarin ba in terms of the bare-taking potential, the non-ba/ka-counterpart, and the referentiality of ka/la.

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