

### Deriving pseudo-gapping in Chinese

**Synopsis.** This talk discusses the derivation of pseudo-gapping-like (PG-like) constructions in Chinese. We suggest that PG-like constructions like (1) should be distinguished from English pseudo-gapping (PG) in (2). While (2) arguably involves remnant movement (Move-R) followed by VP ellipsis (VPE) (Jayaseelan 1990), we propose that (1) involves an empty copula following the spirit in Tang (2001) and Li (2025).

- (1) 張三應該吃三碗, 李四應該  $\Delta$  五碗。 (Wei 2008:82)  
(2) Mary hasn't dated Bill, but she has  $\Delta$  Harry. (Jayaseelan 1990:12)

**Against an English-style pseudo-gapping account.** While (1) is an apparent counterpart of PG in English (2), we argue that (1) does not share the same derivation (Move-R + VPE). An attempted derivation of (1) is given in (7).

- (3) Step 1: Object (remnant) movement → ...李四應該 [VP 五碗 [VP 吃 五碗 ]  
Step 2: VP ellipsis → ...李四應該 [VP 五碗 [~~VP 吃 五碗~~ ]

Although object fronting and VPE are independently attested in Chinese, we argue that (3) both over-generate and under-generate. On one hand, (4) would be predicted to be possible: it would have been derived via VP fronting, followed by VP ellipsis in a similar fashion.

- (4) \*張三能吃三碗, 李四能  $\Delta$  五碗。 (cf. Ye 2024:331)

On the other, (5) would be predicted to be impossible: manner/result clauses are known to be immobile, and thus Step 1 in (3) would be illicit in the first place.

- (5) 張三應該看書看得很快, 李四應該  $\Delta$  很慢。

Furthermore, if an adverb appears in the VP, like (6), the derivation in (3) predicts an adjunct-inclusive reading in the second clause to be available, since VP ellipsis may include adverbs. However, (6) does not convey such a reading, as indicated by its compatibility with continuation (modelled based on Xu's (2003) discussion on VP ellipsis and adjunct reading).

- (6) 張三可以一口氣跑十公里, 李四可以  $\Delta$  十五公里, 不過途中需要休息。

**Proposal.** We propose that (1) is derived via an empty verb (Tang 2001), which is a special type of the copula *shi* (Li 2025), which is licensed only under listing contexts. It is by nature anaphoric and functions as a function variable. It can be recovered in (1).

- (7) 張三應該吃三碗, 李四應該 是 五碗。

It also explain why (4) is ruled out, as the copula is not allowed after control predicates.

- (8) \*張三能吃三碗, 李四能 是 五碗。

Sentences like (5) involve no movement at all, and the  $\Delta$  denoting a function variable takes *kan-de* as its antecedent, relating the subject and the manner.