THE BEI CONSTRUCTION:
A FOCUS DEVICE
IN CHINESE

THESIS

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The *bei* construction has often been identified as a passive construction. This thesis uses Davis's (1983) semantic framework and Hsueh's (1989) descriptive corollaries to account for the various characteristics of the *bei* construction and proposes that the *bei* construction is not a passive construction but a more general Focus device.

It is proposed that 1) the *bei* construction is not a passive construction because it does not always carry a passive sense; 2) *bei* is a Focus marker; and 3) the complex *bei* construction shows a cause/result relationship between the two clauses of the proposition rather than a passive sense. In addition, the result clause provides the foreground information, while the causal clause provides the background information. However, the foregrounded result clause departs from normal coding properties of foregrounded clauses because it is lower in transitivity.
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Of course, all the mistakes in the thesis are mine.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE BEI CONSTRUCTION

This thesis is an attempt to account for the various semantic characteristics of the bei construction in Chinese. The bei construction has been studied from different approaches within various theoretical frameworks. However, these studies and analyses are still not very satisfactory in explaining the semantics of the bei construction. The present thesis will use Philip Davis's framework (1983) and Frank Hsueh's corollaries (1989) of the bei construction in an attempt to give a more unified account of the bei construction.

Chapter I introduces the bei construction and the range of functions under consideration. Chapter II reviews the more prominent studies of the bei construction and shows that there are problems unsolved and unexplained. Chapter III discusses the semantics of the bei construction and offers a proposal for accounting for its range of functions.

The word bei itself has been classified in various ways by different approaches. It has been called a verb, a preposition, and a coverb. For instance, both Ma (1981) and Tiee (1986) classify bei as a 'preposition', equating bei with the preposition 'by' which serves in English to mark
the agent noun phrase in the passive construction. On the other hand, Li and Thompson (1981) and Henne et al. (1977) call bei a 'coverb'. However, how to classify the word bei still remains a problem.

According to Hartmann and Stork (1973), a preposition is 'indeclinable in form, used together with a noun phrase to show the relationship between that phrase and other words in the sentence' (182). Pei and Gaynor (1954) define a preposition as 'a word or particle placed before a substantive to show the syntactical or grammatical relation of the latter in the sentence' (206). Thus, a preposition is always placed before a noun phrase to show the relationship between the noun phrase and the rest of the sentence. However, bei is not always followed by a noun as its object.

There are other linguistic features shared by prepositions in Chinese that bei does not possess. For example, a preposition in Chinese can be repeated in an interrogative sentence in the following way:

1. ni gei mei gei ni mama xie xin?
   you to not to your mother write letter
   Did you write a letter to your mother?

Bei cannot be repeated like this:
2.*1 Zhang San bei mei bei ni da de
Zhang San BEI not BEI you hit CSC2
biqinglanzhong?
black and blue
(Did Zhang San beat you black and blue?)

Alternatively, within the transformational approach, Hashimoto (1975, 1988) and Chu (1973), for instance, treat bei as a verb. Hashimoto thinks that the bei construction can be analyzed as an embedding structure in which bei is a verb, as in SUBJECTIVE + bei (verb) + S (complement) (1975:60). Chu (1973) views the bei construction as having a 'higher sentence with the verb bei' (60). In fact, from examples of Modern Chinese, bei cannot be used as a verb. A verb in Chinese can also be repeated in an interrogative sentence:

1 An asterisk mark occurs before a sentence that is considered ungrammatical by many native Chinese speakers.

2 List of Abbreviations used in Chinese examples:

ADV--adverbial
CL --noun or verb classifier, also called MW (measure word)
COM--complement (or perfective) aspect marker, also called CRS (le)
CSC--complex stative construction (de)
DUR--durative aspect (zhe, zai)
EMP--emphasizer (jiu)
GEN--genitive (de)
MW --noun or verb measure word, also called CL (classifier)
PFV/CRS--perfective or currently relevant state (le)
QUE--question marker (ma, ne)
3. ni qu bu qu tushuguan?
you go not go library
Are you going to the library or not?

4. ni chi bu chi fan?
you eat not eat meal
Are you going to eat or not?

Bei cannot be repeated like this:

5.* Wang xiansheng bei bu bei renjia xiao?
Wang Mr. BEI not BEI others laugh at
(Was Mr. Wang laughed at by other people?)

A verb in Modern Chinese can always take an aspect marker le, but bei cannot:

6. wo gei ta xie le xin.
I to him write PFV letter
I wrote a letter to him.

7.* wo bei le Zhang San da de biqinglianzhong.
I BEI PFV Zhang San hit CSC black and blue
(I was beaten black and blue by Zhang San.)

As has been shown, bei is not a verb in Modern Chinese, at least according to its surface syntactic properties. Hashimoto and Chu's claim is possibly unduly influenced by the fact that bei was diachronically a verb in Classical Chinese.

Li and Thompson (1981) classify bei as a 'coverb'. According to Li and Thompson (1981), coverbs may function in a manner similar to prepositions. Li and Thompson explain
why they are called coverbs:

The answer is simply that the class of coverbs contains words that are partly like verbs and partly like prepositions; the traditional term coverb was coined to avoid labeling them either verbs or prepositions. They have this mixed status because most of these present-day coverbs used to be verbs at earlier stages of the language, and many of them still have characteristics of verbs and can be used as verbs that have similar meanings (360).

However, they say, ba and bei are the most 'prepositionlike' members of the coverb class (364).

In Chinese, one characteristic of a coverb is that it is usually followed by a noun phrase. Bei is an exception. However, bei otherwise seems to fit the category of 'coverb' in that 1) although bei does not have any meaning of its own in Modern Chinese, it historically derives from a verb meaning 'to receive, to suffer' etc., as in the following sentence from Classical Chinese:

8. bao  zhe  bei   huichou
   immoral person receive  punishment
   The immoral will receive punishment.
   (Maozi; Li and Thompson 1974:203)

and 2) as is true of all other coverbs in Chinese, bei cannot occur in a sentence that does not have a main verb:
9.*  Wang Xiansheng bei xuesheng le.
Wang teacher BEI students PFV/CRS

However, since synchronically bei is no longer a verb, and since it does not have any lexical meaning of its own other than functioning as a marker or particle in the bei construction, in the present study the word 'marker' or 'particle' will be used to label bei. The following sentences briefly illustrate some of the basic semantic characteristics of the bei construction that will be explored at length in Chapter III.

10. Zhang San ma le wo yi dun.
Zhang San scold PFV me one MW
Zhang San scolded me.

11. wo bei Zhang San ma le yi dun.
I BEI Zhang San scold PFV one MW
I was scolded by Zhang San.

The difference between the two sentences lies in the semantics of Focus. In 10, the Focus of the sentence is the grammatical subject, Zhang San; in 11, the marker bei marks the preceding element, wo, as the Focus of the sentence.

Davis defines Focus\(^3\) as follows (1983: 152):

The category of Focus is itself constituted from the propositional formation of centrality-peripherality; and empathy, perspective, point

\(^3\) Linguists such as Chomsky frequently use the term Focus to mean Rheme (as opposed to Theme).
of view, etc. are the ways that we, as speakers using the construct, experience and recognize its presence. Briefly, focus is an accompaniment of the participant in a proposition that is the maximally nuclear. Focus is the condition of being the most central participant in the proposition.

Although passives are a kind of focus changing device, the bei construction cannot always be interpreted grammatically as a passive construction, as I will argue, because the main verb in the construction can be intransitive, as in the following sentence:

12. Xiao Lan bei waimian de lang jiao de
danzhanxinjing.

Xiao Lan is very frightened because the wolf is howling outside.

The part of the sentence in boldface is the main clause. Sentences like these with bei have two verbs and can be considered complex sentences that show a cause/effect relationship in the bei clause. Furthermore, the first verb in the sentence is an intransitive verb, which suggests that this kind of complex bei construction cannot be a passive construction.

The bei construction has several special characteristics. One of its most important characteristics
is that the bei construction implies an adverse situation, while the verb itself, when used in a non-bei sentence, has a neutral meaning, as is shown in sentences 13 and 14.

13a. Xiao Wang kan le zhe ge dianying.
Xiao Wang see PFV this MW movie
Xiao Wang has seen this movie.

b. Xiao Wang de riji bei ren kan le.
Xiao Wang GEN diary BEI someone read PFV/CRS
Xiao Wang's diary was read by someone.

14a. John wen le laoshi xuduo wenti.
John ask PFV teacher many questions
John asked the teacher many questions.

b. huishang, John bei renjia wen le xuduo
at meeting, John BEI others ask PFV many
wenti.
questions
At the meeting, John was asked many questions by other people.

In order to make the function of the bei construction clearer I will be comparing the bei construction to constructions with ba. Ba is another kind of Focus marker. The ba construction is considered by many linguists to be a kind of 'mirror image' of the bei construction, as suggested by the glosses in the following examples.
15a. gou ba nei kuai rou chi le.
   dog BA that MW meat eat PFV/CRS
   The dog ate that piece of meat.

b. nei kuai rou bei gou chi le.
   that MW meat BEI dog eat PFV/CRS
   That piece of meat was eaten by the dog.

The verb in the bei clause generally indicates certain
degree of affectedness of the focused experiencer, as in:

16. haizi bei baba da le yi dun.
    child BEI dad spank PFV/CRS one MW
    The child was spanked by his dad.

17. da qiu de shihou, ta bei ren ti le yi jiao.
    play ball CSC time, he BEI person kick PFV one MW
    While playing soccer, he was kicked.

However, it is my impression that certain verbs that do
not signal direct physical affectedness of the experiencer
can be used in the bei construction, provided they signal
mental or psychological affectedness of the experiencer.
This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter III.

As can be seen, bei is used in a range of functions and
construction types. However, previous descriptions have
failed to account for its variety of uses in Chinese. The
following chapters will discuss in detail the various uses of
the bei construction in Modern Chinese.
CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON THE BEI CONSTRUCTION IN CHINESE

This chapter provides a review of the more prominent linguistic studies of the bei construction in Chinese. The purpose of the review is

1) to present and compare the studies of the bei construction;
2) determine what problems in the analyses remain unsolved and unexplained; and
3) to suggest a possible approach to explaining some of the remaining problems of the construction in the analyses.

2.1 Basic Word Order in Chinese

As the issue of word order in Chinese is crucial to the analysis of the bei construction, a brief review of the literature on word order in Chinese will precede the discussion of the bei construction.

Word order in Chinese has been a much-discussed issue. There are different views on this issue, as Chinese displays both VO and OV surface order. Li and Thompson (1981) state
that Chinese is not an easy language to classify in terms of word order. However, taking into consideration the usual pragmatic value for subjects and objects—the prototypical value for subjects being definite, for objects, indefinite—Li and Thompson decide that 'the basic word order for Mandarin will be SVO for sentences that have subjects and objects' (23).

In their discussions of word order in Chinese, Li and Thompson (1981, 1974) conclude that Mandarin (the standard Chinese under discussion) 'has many more SOV features than any of the other Chinese dialects, which suggests that Mandarin, but not the other Chinese dialects, is gradually undergoing a change from being an SVO language to being an SOV language' (1981:26). They think that the change is a result of grammaticalization of serial verb constructions.

Sun and Givon, however, in their quantitative study (1985) hold a different view as to word order in Chinese. They discuss the properties and distribution of verbs and objects in Chinese in their study. Sun and Givon do not agree with Li and Thompson's claim that Chinese has been undergoing a change from SVO to SOV as a result of grammaticalization of serial verb constructions and that the SOV order characteristically codes definite objects while SVO codes indefinite objects. Their text count results show a distribution of OV and VO in a number of written and spoken texts. Their written text consists of 25 pages of
narrative taken from Chapter 3 of the Chinese novel *The First President* (J. Huang et al. 1983). The oral text comprises the transcripts of about 55 minutes of personal reminiscences recorded from three native speakers of Chinese. Both written and oral narratives turn out to use VO overwhelmingly, 94% for the written and 92% for the spoken, and the VO order is predominant for both definite and indefinite objects. They think that the results show rather conclusively that Li and Thompson's hypotheses about the word order change in progress are 'not borne out by the facts of the language as actually used' (336). They feel rather strongly that Chinese 'is as rigid a VO language as, say, English or Biblical Hebrew' (344). They also conclude that the OV construction in Chinese, both with and without the object marker, (e.g. *ba* and *jiang*), is 'a marked, specialized, contrastive/emphatic discourse device' (348), and such a device is 'typical in rigid VO languages and does not necessarily suggest that the language is undergoing a change toward SVO' (348).

M. Wang (1987) agrees with Sun and Givon's quantitative analysis that Chinese is an SVO language in terms of text distribution of SVO and SOV orders and that there is no diachronic drift from SVO to SOV. However, he disagrees with Sun and Givon's suggestion that SOV is an emphatic/contrastive discourse device and thinks that their suggestion is unwarranted because 'the fronting of the
object is more a cohesive device in discourse than an emphatic/contrastive construction' (113).

Davis (1983) in his cognitive-functional study of language proposes that in Chinese and other languages 'an SVO order has the effect of associating KNOWN itself with preverbal position and UNKNOWN with postverbal position' (281). He suggests that Li and Thompson's conclusion that Chinese is changing from SVO to SOV is a misinterpretation of the distributional facts and that they actually represent a change in the semantics/content that word order encodes (282).

My intuitions support Sun and Givon and Wang's analyses of the Chinese word order. While there are instances in which Chinese displays SV, VS, SVO and SOV orders, in sentences that have both S and O, the SVO order predominates over SOV.

Davis (1983) also shows that in relative clauses in Chinese, the particular participant being identified by the role in the identifying proposition is omitted or elided from the grammatical expression and 'it is the position of this elision that determines the role relation of the identified particular to the identifying proposition, and thereby accomplishes the identification' (227). Consider the following examples (277-288):
1. wo xihuan ren.
   I like people
   I like people.

The following two clauses are possible adaptations:

2a. wo xihuan ____ de ren
    the people I like

b. ____ xihuan wo de ren
    the people who like me

De marks the relative clause. It precedes the modified NP ren, which is being identified by the proposition. The only differences between 2a and 2b are the position of elision and their meaning. Sentence 1 shows a simple sentence with 'basic' word order and it is the expectation of a 'basic' word order that enables the contrast in 2a and 2b.

Furthermore, in sentences that have an indirect object, the order is always IO + DO in Chinese (278).

In Chinese, as we have seen, SVO word order is predominant. Derived constructions with overt markers (ba, bei, etc.) have OV word order, as the following examples show:
3a. Mary da John. (SVO⁴)
Mary hit John
Mary hit John.

b. Mary ba John da le. (S ba OV)
Mary BA John hit PFV
Mary hit John.

c. John bei Mary da le. (O bei SV)
John BEI Mary hit PFV
John was hit by Mary.

Examples 3b and 3c show that word order is changed from the basic VO to OV when ba or bei is used. In conclusion, the basic word order in Chinese is SVO and sentences with overt markers have OV word order.

2.2 Historical Background of the Bei Construction

According to scholars, the word bei was originally a noun in Classical Chinese, meaning 'blanket'. Later it acquired the verbal meaning of 'to cover', 'to wear' and then the more passive or middle meaning 'to suffer', 'to receive', or 'to be affected' (Peyraube 1989:348). For example,

⁴ S and O here refer to semantic roles rather than grammatical terms:
S=Agent  O=Patient
4. shen bei shu shi chuang.

body BEI several ten wounds

(Shiji; Liu 1956:32)

His body received numerous wounds.

Bei is a verb here and is followed by a noun as its object.

According to Peyraube (1989), the verb bei, meaning 'to suffer, to undergo, to be affected', began to be used, under the Han Dynasty\(^5\), in the serial verb construction 'V1 + V2' (where V1 = bei) (361). The 'bei + Agent + V' construction has been common since the Sui-Tang period\(^6\). There has been no single lexical replacement. Peyraube claims that an unknown grammaticalization process took place by which the verb bei was interpreted as a preposition bei in the 'V1 bei + NP1-agent + V2' serial verb construction (361).

Bennett (1981) thinks it somewhat 'tricky' to determine the date of origin of the bei passive 'since many of the early sentences are susceptible of more than one analysis' (74). However, he believes that the insertion of the agent after bei seems to begin in the fourth to fifth centuries A. D. (76) (Wang 1958:427).

According to Liu (1956), during the time of the Six

\(^5\) The Han Dynasty: 206 B.C.-220 A.D.

\(^6\) The Sui-Tang period: 581-907 A.D.
Dynasties\textsuperscript{7}, the category of \textit{bei} had changed, from a verb to a marker that indicates a passive.

Most agree then that \textit{bei} began to be used as a passive marker around the time of the Six Dynasties. \textit{Bei} was no longer a verb, but rather functions as a particle introducing the agent:

5. Liangzi \textit{bei} Sujun hai.
   Liangzi \textit{BEI} Sujun murder

\textit{(Fang Zheng Pian Liu:32)}

Liangzi was murdered by Sujun.

Even though it is not easy to pinpoint the exact time when the \textit{bei} passive construction began to be in use, it seems that the use of the \textit{bei} passive construction dates back at least to the Six Dynasties. After then, there has been an increasing use of \textit{bei} constructions recorded in the written language.

2.3 Studies of the Bei Construction as a Passive Construction in Modern Chinese

The \textit{bei} construction has been treated as a passive construction in modern Chinese. The following sections present a review of the studies from different approaches.

\textsuperscript{7} Six Dynasties: 222-589 A.D.
2.3.1 The Bei Construction

The term 'passive' is generally used to refer to sentences containing the word bei (Li and Thompson 1981:492). In Modern Chinese grammar, bei has been treated as a passive marker which precedes the noun phrase playing the pragmatic role of 'agent' in a passive sentence. The noun phrase found at the beginning of the sentence fills the pragmatic role of 'patient'. The traditional pattern for the bei construction is shown below where NP₁ = Patient Subject, NP₂ = Agent, C = Complement (such as resultative complement or aspectual marker le etc.):

\[ \text{NP}_1 \quad \text{Bei} \quad (\text{NP}_2) \quad \text{Verb} \quad \text{C} \]

Bei and the agent noun phrase it precedes are usually referred to as 'the bei noun phrase'. NP₁ is the receiver of the action exerted by NP₂. The agent, NP₂, can be omitted, but bei remains in the construction.

Y. R. Chao states (1968) in A Grammar of Spoken Chinese that

...since there is no distinction of voice in Chinese verbs, the direction of a verb may be outward from the subject as actor or inward toward the subject as goal. If a direction inward is to be made explicit, then the so-called 'passive voice' form with bei is used... (702)
He gives the following examples (702):

6. fangzi bei shao le.
   house BEI burn PFV
   The house has been burned down.

If the agent is to be expressed, as Chao puts it, it is placed after bei as its object:

7. fangzi bei huo shao le.
   house BEI fire burn PFV
   The house has been burned by fire.

Chao further states that the bei construction is usually used with 'disposal' verbs—verbs expressing disposal of something in some way, which have the syntactic property of participating in the construction with ba as well—and usually indicates unfavorable meanings (703).

P. Wang (1970) disagrees with Chao, saying that Chao concerns himself with the semantic interpretation of the surface structure, which is inadequate. He does not think the direction of a verb depends solely on whether the subject is an actor or the subject is a goal (22). For example (Wang 1970:22),

8. ta jiqi gongfen.
   he arouse public anger
   He arouses the public anger (toward himself).

The subject in the sentence, he explains, is both the actor, and the goal or the patient. The directions of the sentence
has to be the following (22):

--->  <-----
ta jiqi  gongfen.

Beyond this, when the direction of a verb is 'inward' alone toward the subject as a goal, Wang argues, the subject has to be specific and inanimate, which makes the use of bei unnecessary (23):

9. jiu he guan le.
wine drunk up  PFV
The wine was drunk up.

Otherwise bei cannot be freely dropped and most of the verbs must be followed by a resultative adverb or other types of adverbs. If a sentence has a verb that goes 'inward', le should be used (23). Wang also points out that there are certain verbs like gaosu, 'tell', that cannot have both inward and outward directions, as in:

10a.* ta keyi bei gaosu nei jian shi. (24)
he may  BEI tell that MW matter
(He may be told that matter.)

When it has the inward direction, gaosu can occur only in the shi...de construction:
b. ta shi keyi gaosu de.
   he is may tell
   He may be told.

What these scholars all agree on is that there are classes of verbs that either allow or disallow bei, and may or may not require bei. Although they do not agree on whether syntactic or semantic factors determine the class, they all agree that there is some kind of 'passive' construction in Chinese. However, no matter how the bei construction is treated in formalist grammar, there are semantic restrictions that formalist grammar cannot explain.

2.3.2 Transformational Approach to the Bei Construction

Chomsky originally proposed to derive passive sentences from underlying forms corresponding most closely to their active sentences. Following Chomsky, M. Hashimoto (1975) has attempted to formulate the passive sentence in Chinese from its active counterpart. However, the conclusion he reaches is that he suspects that 'the surface subject of the so-called passive construction in Chinese may not in general be derived from the object of the corresponding active construction' (57). Following essentially the standard analysis of the English passive construction, he gives an analysis that posits an optional passive marker bei in the underlying string of sentences with active transitive verbs, in the following way (55):
Hashimoto gives the following abstract string of Chinese morphemes and formatives (56):

11. ta + kanjian + BEI + taitai
   he(SUBJECTIVE) see by wife(ACCUSATIVE)

If the marker bei is not used, the string simply generates a transitive verb sentence, such as:

12. ta         kanjian       taitai
   he(SUBJECTIVE) see       wife(ACCUSATIVE)

   He sees (his) wife.

But once the marker is used in the derivation, the string must undergo the passive transformation: the second NP is fronted and the verb is moved to follow bei, as in

13. ta         kanjian       BEI
   he (SUBJECTIVE) see       by
   taitai
   wife (ACCUSATIVE) -->
   taitai bei ta      kanjian
   wife by him be-seen
   (His) wife is seen by him.

That is, bei is treated as a trigger of the passive transformation.

Hashimoto states that the surface subject of passive sentences should be derived from the underlying object of
the corresponding active sentence, but that it nonetheless
does not represent a syntactic passive construction in
Chinese because of certain examples with intransitive verbs.

Hashimoto (1975) substitutes the notion of an
inflictive construction for the bei constructions instead of
invoking the notion of a passive construction. The example
that he uses to strengthen this conviction is what he calls
an 'intransitive passive' in Modern Chinese (58):

14. kanshou bei fanren paole.
   jailer(SUBJECTIVE) by criminal flee-PFV
   The jailer suffered from the running-away of
   the criminal.

However, this 'intransitive passive' example he cites
to support his view, as he has noticed, is unacceptable to
many Modern Chinese speakers. 8

In a later study, M. Hashimoto (1988:329) argues that
the Modern Chinese bei construction is basically an
embedding structure of the type found in the southern
minority languages. He suggests that a bei sentence can be
analyzed as having a matrix sentence (1975:60): taitai
(SUBJECTIVE) + bei (VERB) + S (COMPLEMENT), and an embedded

---

8 Hashimoto says in his notes (64): 'The example was
given by Mr. Bian Minyan, but many people did not accept it.
In that case, the word rang must be substituted for bei here,
as Prof. Y. R. Chao has suggested'.

It is worth mentioning that with rang as a substitution
for bei, the meaning is different. The sentence means 'The
jailer let the criminal run away'.
As has been mentioned in the previous section, P. Wang (1970, 1972) does not accept Chao's analysis of verbs as having two directions; therefore, Wang has also presented a transformational account of the bei construction. He claims that his rules can explain many phenomena regarding the bei construction. He endeavors to state all the restrictions and generalizations of the passive sentences and show that passive transformational rules can be formulated to generate bei passive sentences. Wang summarizes the syntactic and semantic restrictions of the bei construction under ten headings (1970:31-33), in which he states that bei cannot be followed by the negative markers bu, 'not', mei you, 'have
not', nor the short form mei 'have not'; the bei construction must include le and resultative adverbs or adverbs of frequency, duration, etc.; and the bei sentences do not occur in imperative forms.

Wang develops a fragment of the base in order to provide a framework for the rule (35).

1. S----- NP + VP + (FP)
2. NP---- (number + measure word) N (S)
3. VP---- (Aux) (Asp) VB (Adv) (NP) (NP)
4. VB---- V (Resultative Adverb)
5. Resultative Adverb---- S
6. Adv---- (Duration) (Frequency) (Manner)

FP = Final Particle le
Aux = Auxiliary Verb
Adv = Adverb
Asp = Aspect Marker

Wang formulates the passive transformational rule as follows (35):

SD: NP₁ X V A NP₂ Y
    1 2 3 4 5 6
SC: 5 2 bei 1 3 4 6
He explains that the postverbal NP is preposed to the beginning of the sentence. The other NP is moved to the preverbal position. At the same time, bei is inserted in front of NP1. The condition for A is that A must either be a resultative or some other type of adverb (35).

Chu (1973) disagrees with Wang's statement of the restrictions on the Chinese passive construction. Along the lines of his arguments, he proposes the following structure for the bei passive construction (453).

```
Figure 2, Chu (1973:453)
```

The vertical pair of parentheses indicates an optional element depending on the nature of the V in S1.

Thus, a sentence like the following (441):
15. ta changchang/xihuan bei ta taitai ma/da.
   he often/like BEI his wife scold/beat
   He is often/likes to be scolded/beaten by his wife.

may be viewed as derived from the structure in the following (454):

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{S1} \\
V \\
xihuan \\
\text{like} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{S2} \\
V \\
bei \\
\text{ta} \\
\text{he} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{S3} \\
V \\
da/ma \\
ta \\
taitai \\
ta \\
\text{beat/scold} \\
\text{his wife} \\
\text{he} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{A[NP]} \\
\text{NP} \\
\end{array}
\]

Figure 3, Chu (1973:454)

And with changchang, the sentence can be considered to be derived from the following structure:
He explains that auxiliaries like xihuan, 'like', and adverbs of frequency like changchang 'often', must be treated as verbs in the deep structure and the passive marker bei must also be treated as a verb. One of the NPs in S3 must be in the Agentive or Dative case even if the NP may not be physically present in the surface structure (454-455).

Contrary to Wang, Chu suggests that a Chinese passive construction can be imperativized by using bie, which is analyzable into bu, 'not', and yao, 'to ask for', a non-stative verb. Yao should be treated as the verb in a still higher sentence over the passive as in the following sentence (459):

Figure 4, Chu (1973:454)
16. bie bei jingcha zhuazou le.
don't by police grasp-away LE
Don't be arrested by the police.

To Chu, the passive construction consists of 1) a higher sentence with the verb bei 'to receive', 2) a still higher sentence with a stative verb to be realized as an adverb/auxiliary, or with the verb you, to be realized as le in a positive context, 3) a resultative complement, if the higher verb is you, and 4) a complement sentence embedded in the bei sentence (437).

In the transformational approach, bei is then considered to be a verb. As I have already suggested, there is no synchronic evidence that bei is a verb, and I will assume that it is a marker or particle that marks the preceding participant as the Focus of the proposition.

2.3.3 Adversity

The bei construction is traditionally viewed as an adversative passive. Li Wang (1955:181) states the bei sentences 'must describe an unfortunate or unexpected event'. Chappell (1986) quotes from a research group on grammar in the Linguistics Institute of China's Academy of Sciences (1953:29-30, Chappell 1986:1026):
Bei expresses the phenomenon of suffering ...
According to traditional usage, the bei construction mainly explains that there has been suffering for the subject, naturally the suffering is not of one's own free will, and as a result, it can only express that there has been harm or unhappiness and unwillingness. ...

M. Hashimoto (1988:336) also points out that the Chinese passive maintains an adverse coloring; the passive sentence nearly always implies that something unfortunate has happened. However, he admits that by deriving the passive construction from the corresponding active construction, he fails to account for the additional, adverse, inflictive coloring of the passive counterpart in Chinese.

Hilary Chappell (1986) investigates the question of whether or not predicates of pleasant events as well as those of emotionally neutral flavor can occur in the passive. She concludes

... a semantic transformation takes place upon the use of both 'fortunate' and 'neutral' predicates: for both types, the newly arisen state of affairs is interpreted as an unfortunate one for the subject-undergoer, showing that adversity is not a lexical function of the verb type (1028).
Chappell gives the following examples (1028):

17. wo zuotian bei laoshi hao-haor de biaoyang-
    I yesterday BEI teacher well ADV praise-le.
    COM

She explains that this particular instance of the bei passive could be interpreted ironically as 'Yesterday I was praised resoundingly by the teacher' (she gave me 4 out of 10, or she told me I'd completely misunderstood the point). It could also belong to a context where the person praised finds such an event exceedingly embarrassing.

This adversative interpretation, she explains, results directly from the use of the passive construction; its active counterpart does not have such a semantic connotation, as in the following example (1028):

18. Laoshi zuotian biaoyang-le wo.
    teacher yesterday praise - COM I
    Yesterday the teacher praised me.

Li and Thompson (1981) also suggest that the bei sentence in Chinese, like many other Asian languages, is used essentially to express an adverse situation, one in which something unfortunate or unhappy has happened (493), as seen in 19 and 20 (493).
19. Qiao bei (da - shui) chong zou le.
bridge BEI (big - water) wash away PFV/CRS
The bridge got washed away (by the flood).

20. Lingzi bei ta si po le.
collar BEI 3sg tear broken PFV/CRS
The collar was torn by him/her.

Li and Thompson also point out that in the bei construction, the message carried by verbs of perception or cognition is unfortunate or pejorative, whereas the meanings of these verbs are neutral. The examples they give are kanjian 'see', faxian 'discover, find' and tingdao 'hear-arrive = able to hear'. These verbs do not carry any negative connotations when used in active sentences. But when used in the bei construction, they all imply that the events are somewhat unfortunate or unhappy (495).

The bei construction is generally considered to carry the connotation of adversity. However, sentences do occur in the bei construction without any connotation of adversity and possibly because of the influence of Western languages, the bei constructions that do not convey any adversative meaning are becoming more and more common.

2.3.4 The Passive of Bodily Effect

Chappell (1986) discusses the passive of bodily effect in Chinese. She thinks that in standard Chinese, besides the regular passive form NP (undergoer)--BEI--NP (agent)--
VP, there is a second syntactically related passive with a complex predicate containing a postverbal or 'retained object': NP (undergoer)--BEI--NP (agent)--V--LE-N (part of the body). The second construction is restricted to expressing an inalienable relationship between a person and a part of the body, other relational nouns such as kinship or material alienable possessions being excluded from postverbal position (271).

However, she argues, the postverbal NP is not a case of a 'retained object' in Jespersen's sense (1933) as the body part term 'neither acts as the true semantic undergoer nor can it be considered as a kind of second object' (271).

The passive of bodily effect shows adversity like all the bei constructions in Chinese. A pleasant bodily event cannot be encoded by the construction because it is 'not understood to cause a change of state in the affected body part' (285). In addition, only non-modified, non-specified parts of the body are permissible in the postverbal position.

21. ta bei zidan da-dua-le yi-tiao gebo.
   he BEI bullet hit:break COM one CL arm
   He had one arm hit and broken by a bullet.
22.* ta bei diren da-duan -le liang-ge gebo.

he BEI enemy hit:break COM two CL arm

(??He had two arms hit and broken by the enemy.)

Chappell explains that sentence 21 does not indicate exactly which arm was broken; it is non-specified and non-modified. Sentence 22, on the other hand, would imply the subject had more than two arms, with only two in particular being wounded, since a specific numeral modifier has been used.

2.3.5 Ba and bei

In Chinese, there is another construction, the *ba* construction, which has been considered to express what has been called 'disposal'. To quote from Li Wang, the disposal form 'states how a person is handled, manipulated, or dealt with; how something is disposed of; or how an affair is conducted' (translation by Li [1974:200-201]). For example,

23. wo de mao ba laoshu yao le.

I GEN cat BA rat bite PFV

My cat bit a rat.

Li and Thompson (1981) think that the *bei* construction expresses disposal in much the same way as the *ba* construction. That is to say, the *bei* construction also describes a situation in which an entity or person is dealt
with, handled, or manipulated in a certain way, as is shown in the following example (501):

24. wo bei ta bang le yi zhi tui.
    I BEI 3sg tie PFV one MW leg
    I had one leg tied up by him/her.

Zhen Ma (1981) also proposes that bei and ba are interchangeable if the order of participant roles is reversed. Examples are as follows (118):

25a. diren yi ge pai bei women xiaomie le.
    enemy one ME platoon BEI us wipe out PFV
    A platoon of the enemy was wiped out by us.

b. women ba diren yi ge pai xiaomie le.
    we BA enemy one ME platoon wipe out PFV
    We wiped out a platoon of the enemy.

As a general rule, the verb in the ba construction has to be a transitive verb. However, M. Wang (1987:95) points out that an intransitive verb can be used in the ba construction if it is used as a causative, as in:

26. zhe shi ba ta mang de shou jiao bu ting.
    this thing BA him busy CSC hand foot not stop

(95)

This thing kept him very busy.

In such cases, a complement of result caused by the causative must follow the intransitive verb.

P. Davis (1983) does not accept the traditional view
that *bei* sentences signal passive. Instead, he comes up with another interpretation. He says, 'Like Tagalog, then, we would expect Mandarin to lack a passive, using alternative positioning of particulars in preverbal position as other languages use the passive' (291).

Davis considers the morpheme *ba* to be a Focus marker that marks the following experiencer as the participant from whose perspective the event is viewed. In a sentence that requires *ba*, *ba* marks the existence of a close relationship between the experiencer and the event, which is necessary to support the selection of the experiencer as Focus (293). For example (293),

27. *ta ba ge pibao diu le.*
   he/she *BA CL wallet lose ASP*
   As for him/her, his/her wallet was lost.

Davis explains that *ba* marks the following experiencer *pibao* as Focus, as well as requiring it to have been affected, or to be 'disposed of', in some way. If the experiencer is not perceived as affected, *ba* is not necessary. The participant *pibao* that precedes the verb is treated as *known* in the discourse and it fits the pattern that chooses the *known*, immediately preverbal participant as Focus. *Ta* is the Topic-executor and *pibao* is Focus-experiencer. Thus, the *ba* construction allows the Focus of an utterance to be something other than the Topic, a marked departure from the typical association of Topic and Focus.
He further suggests that bei can be analyzed in a comparable way.

Davis points out that the difference between the ba and bei constructions lies in the fact that the bei construction marks the experiencer as Topic (Topic because it is sentence-initial) as well as Focus, and leaves the executor participant outside the focal point of the sentence. The participant merely fulfills that role and carries no additional pragmatic content (294).

Frank Hsieh (1989) also challenges the view of traditional grammar that the ba construction and the bei construction mean 'disposal' and passive, respectively. Hsieh argues that the ba construction and the bei construction and the passive voice represent different concepts and should not be treated as equivalent. He objects to the traditional analyses of the bei construction as a passive construction and points out that some bei sentences do not carry any passive sense at all (112).

Hsieh's descriptions of the ba constructions are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic structure</th>
<th>A  Ba  B  +  C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semantic implication</td>
<td>in connection to A, B turns out to be what C describes ( (111) )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following sentence illustrates the three elements A, B, and C.

28. wo ba zhuozi ca ganjing le.

A  BA  B  C
I  BA  table  wipe  clean  PFV
I wiped the table clean.

While exceptions exist, element A can be considered to be the agent; B, the experiencer, that follows ba; C is what Hsueh calls 'a descriptive expression'.

Hsueh defines the role that A, the agent, plays in the ba construction like this: 'Connected to B by ba, it is thought (by the speaker) to be responsible for the fact that B turns out to be what C describes' (110).

Hsueh states (111) that the English construction 'A + have + B + passive participial' (e.g. 'John had his car repaired'.) is fairly close to the ba construction. The difference is that, while the English construction often implies that A, the agent, asks somebody else to do it to B, the experiencer, the Chinese construction usually means that A does it himself.

The most important semantic feature of the ba construction is perhaps the restriction that 'C in the above formula must be a "descriptive expression" about the status of B, as a result of a certain action' (99). Hsueh defines 'descriptive expression' as 'a statement, which, serving as the predicate of the sentence, describes the
status or condition of, rather than an action or process about, B, [sic] at a certain point of time' (99). Such a descriptive expression can have various syntactic forms, but it will qualify as C, the descriptive expression, in the pattern described above for the ba construction if it possesses the quality of descriptiveness.

Hsueh summarizes the characteristics of C, the descriptive expression, in the ba construction in six corollaries (99-107). First, C is directly related to B, the experiencer, but has only an indirect relationship with A, the agent. The ba sentence may contain a 'retained object' in C. Second, C describes a specific condition of B, the experiencer, as the result of a certain specific action only in a definite and positive way. Negation is possible only before the marker ba (although an auxiliary verb may intervene), except in an idiomatic expression. Third, an action verb occurring in the passive sense, which is basically stative and descriptive in nature rather than indicating a process or action, qualifies as C to describe B, the experiencer, in a ba sentence. Fourth, the so-called 'verb complement' compound (VC compound), which contains an action verb followed by a word indicating the result or the direction of that action, directly describes the condition of B, and is not immediately related to A, the agent. The complements, also called 'causative verbs', that occur in the ba construction are also used in the passive sense,
describing the status of B, the experiencer. The V in the 'VC compound' is not really the verb but an action adverb, while the C is the real verb. For example,

29a. ni kuai ba wo xiang si le.
   you almost BA I miss die PFV (103)
   You almost killed me by making me miss you so much!

b. ta ba toufa ti guang le.
   he BA hair shave off PFV/CRS
   He has all his hair shaved off.

Fifth, if a 'VC compound' is the predicate in the ba construction, the agent of the action adverb is not necessarily the subject (A) of the sentence.

30. na chu xi ba ta chang lei le. (104)
    that MW opera BA him sing tired PFV
    He became tired by singing that opera.

Finally, when C is a long descriptive phrase, an action word together with the particle de would be used to introduce C. For example,

31. ta ba wo qi de hulihutu. (105)
    he BA I anger CSC muddle-headed
    He made me so mad that I became muddle-headed.

Hsueh thinks that B, the experiencer, is syntactically the subject of the predicate C; and semantically, it is 'the main topic' of the whole sentence (107). Hsueh also
summarizes the characteristics of B, the experiencer (107-109). First, as the main topic of the sentence, B, the experiencer, can never be omitted. Second, B does not have to have the feature 'definite' (or 'specific' or 'generic'). Third, B, a preposed topic, as he calls it, is the real subject of predicate C.

32. yi ping maotai ba ta he de
   one MW Maotai liquor BA he drink CSC
   lanzuiruni.
   drunk completely
   He became completely drunk after a bottle of Maotai.

In the above sentence, the real subject of the predicate C is what Hsueh refers to as 'the preposed topic' B, ta, 'he'. However, this is not always true. Consider the following sentence:

33. wo ba zhuozi ca ganjing le.
   I BA table wipe clean PFV
   I wiped the table clean.

Obviously, the real subject of the predicate C is not B, zhuozi 'table', but A, wo, 'I'. Therefore, B, the experiencer, may be the real subject of predicate C, may be the object of the sentence.

Hsueh strongly disagrees with the previous studies that say B must not be a definite noun serving as the 'preposed object' (107).
According to Hsueh (109), A, the agent, which occurs at the beginning of the ba construction, is also considered a 'topic' according to Y. C. Chao's definition (1968). However, Hsueh thinks that 'unlike B which is the semantic focus of the ba construction, A can only be called the "secondary topic" of the sentence' (109). Hsueh seems to be using the terms 'the main topic' and 'the semantic focus' interchangeably to mean what Davis (1983) would call 'Focus'. What Hsueh means by 'the secondary topic' is what Chao (1968), Li and Thompson (1981) and Davis (1983) would call 'Topic'.

According to Hsueh, the characterization of A, the agent, has certain corollaries (109-111). First of all, the relationship between A and its predicate C, the descriptive expression, is both semantically and syntactically indirect. Second, a ba sentence without A is still a good ba sentence with basically no change in meaning, but B, the experiencer, cannot be omitted.

34. kan, ba ta leide. (110)

look, BA he exhausted

Look, how exhausted he is!

Hsueh also dismisses the notion that the bei construction is a passive. He argues that, first, not all bei sentences are passive in meaning, and, second, not all sentences with passive interpretations are formed with bei (112). The following examples illustrate his point:
35. Lao Zhang bei ta taitai ku de mei le zhuyi.
Old Zhang BEI his wife CRY CSC no PFV idea
Old Zhang was completely at a loss because of his wife's crying.

36. ta bei nei shou ger chang de liuyanlei.
she BEI that MW song SING CSC shed tears
She shed tears due to the singing of the song.

37a. dianhua yijing dale.
telephone already make
The phone call has already been made.

b.* dianhua yijing bei (wo) dale.
Both sentences 35 and 36 have bei, but they do not indicate any passive meanings. Sentence 37a is translated into a passive in English; however, it would sound awkward if bei is used, as in 37b.

The following are Hsueh's descriptions of the bei construction:

Syntactic structure
A Bei B + C

Semantic implication
in connection to B, A turns out to be what C describes

The following sentence illustrates the above description:
While exceptions exist, A in most cases is the experiencer, the element in the sentence-initial position; B is the agent that follows bei; C is what Hsueh calls 'a descriptive expression'.

Hsueh points out that the ba construction and the bei construction are exactly the same except for the marker, 'but they differ drastically in terms of the interrelationship' (113) among the elements A, the experiencer, B, the agent, and C, the descriptive expression. However, he argues, although theoretically these two constructions are readily 'convertible' to each other, there are some pragmatic restrictions.

Since C in the bei construction is identical in nature to the C in the ba construction, Hsueh says, the six corollaries deduced from the characterization of the C in the ba construction also apply to the C in the bei construction (114). First of all, C may contain a 'retained object':

39. A Q ... bei ren jiuzhu le huang bianzi.
   A Q BEI person grab PFV yellow pigtail
   A Q was grabbed by somebody by his pigtail.

Second, negation can be put only before bei. Third, the
lone verb functions in a passive sense. Fourth, the 'complement', part of C, the descriptive expression that tells the result or direction of a certain action, is used as causative verb in a passive sense. For example,

40. tamen de fangzi bei ren ba zhan le.
   they GEN house BEI person occupy PFV
   Their house is occupied by other people with force.

Next, B is not necessarily the agent of the 'verb'. For example,

41. tamen bei lan mi chi bing le.
   they BEI rotten rice eat sick PFV
   They become sick for eating rotten rice.

And finally, A is not necessarily the patient of the 'verb' marked by de in a long C as in the following:

42. Lao Zhang bei dasuan chi de man zui chou qi.
   Old Zhang BEI garlic eat CSC full mouth bad breath
   Old Zhang got bad breath by eating garlic.

A's role in the bei construction is equivalent to that of B in the ba construction (115), and A cannot be omitted. It does not have to be the patient of the action verb in C. For example,
43. ta bei wuxia xiaoshuo du de zhaolemi.
He was addicted to the reading of martial art novels.

A does not have to be definite. For example,

44. wenge qijian, shenmeren dou bei zhengguo.
During the Cultural revolution, everybody was made to suffer at one time or another.

Like A, the agent in the *ba* construction, Hsueh claims, B, the agent in the *bei* construction, is the 'secondary topic' (115). As a secondary topic, B can be omitted, and it does not have to be the agent of the 'action verb'. B is only indirectly related to C.

45. ta bei nei ben xiaoshuo kan de chuleshen. (115)
He was sent out of this world by his reading of that novel.

According to Hsueh, the difference between the two constructions lies in the shift of emphasis between the participants A, the agent and B, the experiencer. He states, 'the most fundamental difference between the *bei* construction and the *ba* construction is whether the speaker intends to direct the listener's attention to A or to B,
respectively' (118). He gives the following sentences to illustrate this point:

46a. Maotai ba wo chi zui le. (118)
   Maotai liquor BA I drink drunk PFV/CSR
   The Maotai liquor that I drank got me drunk.

b. wo bei Maotai chi zui le.
   I BEI Maotai liquor drink drunk PFV/CRS
   I became drunk by drinking the Maotai liquor.

Hsueh also discusses the fact that the ba and the bei constructions can be put in the same sentence, as in the following examples (117):

47. wo bei zei ba qian touguan le.
   I BEI thief BA money steal PFV
   I had all (definitely my) money stolen by a thief.

48.* wo ba qian bei zei tou guan le.

49. ta bei wo ba zuichun yao po le.
   he BEI I BA lip bite cut PFV
   She had (definitely her) lip cut by (definitely my) biting.

50.* ta ba zuichun bei wo yao po le.

He argues that in the sentences that have both constructions, bei takes priority over ba both syntactically and semantically. Although the reverse syntactic order (ba precedes bei) is not acceptable, its degree of acceptability would increase if bei is replaced by the more colloquial form rang or jiao. In a ba sentence, if B is not specified
as to its ownership, one can generally assume that it belongs to A. By saying that in a sentence with both ba and bei, the latter takes priority it is meant that bei must occur before ba and that C, the descriptive expression, describes the status of A, the nominal expression, in front of bei, rather than the one in front of ba (117-118).

Hsueh gives a number of examples to support his analysis. He is probably one of the first to point out that the bei construction does not always carry a passive sense and his formula addresses the nature of the semantic relationship between the noun phrases used in the bei construction. His corollaries of the bei construction are mostly convincing. However, even though Hsueh's characterization of the bei construction, as he claims, is broad enough to cover all grammatical bei sentences, he ignores some of the most important semantic characteristics such as the adversity of the construction, which seems too important to neglect. His terms, such as 'primary topic' and 'secondary topic', are not well defined and sometimes can be confusing. A discussion of the meanings of his primary and secondary topics will be presented in Chapter III.

Hsueh and Davis both disagree with the traditional studies of the bei construction. They both argue that the bei construction is not a passive construction. Even though Davis makes some of the semantic connections Hsueh
overlooks, while Hsueh details all the grammatical properties Davis leaves out, the similarity between Hsueh’s descriptions of the ba and bei constructions (though without semantic labels) and Davis’s analyses of the constructions as Focus devices are striking. Their studies of the constructions are illuminating and they provide more adequate functional explanations of the two constructions in Chinese.

In the next chapter, Davis’s framework and Hsueh’s corollaries of the bei construction will be used to further analyze the bei construction.

2.3.6 The colloquial forms of Bei

The colloquial forms of bei are jiao, ‘let, ask’, and rang, ‘allow’. Some linguists would add a third form gei, ‘give’. However, gei is mainly used by speakers of some southern dialects and is not considered to be standard Chinese. These colloquial forms have the same meaning as bei, and are found mainly in spoken, rather than written, Chinese. Rang and jiao are also used as causative markers. The following is the pattern for the colloquial forms:

\[
\text{NP}_1 \quad \text{jiao/rang/gei} \quad \text{NP}_2 \quad \text{Verb}
\]

Chappell (1986) summarizes two points of general
consensus (1037):

1. The colloquial passives invariantly express adversity as part of their grammaticalized meaning.

2. The agent marked by jiao or rang must be overtly expressed.

He adds one more point, that the colloquial use of the two forms partly explains why there are no 'translatese' counterparts (a modified version of the passive resulting from translation from foreign languages).

Chu (1973) suggests that the get passive in English is closer in meaning to the Chinese bei passive than the be passive. The reason is that both imply the speaker's attitude to some extent and the adversative nature of the happening and that they both express a change of status (468).

Chappell (1986), however, argues that a semantic parallel can be made between the be passive and the get passive in English on the one hand and the bei and rang passive in Chinese on the other hand. Chappell claims that

... the adversative get passive has many more components of meaning in common with the rang passive than it does with the bei passive. The get passive also parallels the rang passive in its
exclusion from the more formal registers of speech such as news broadcasting ...
(1039)

He suggests that the rang passive indicates 'avoidable events' (1043). The following are the examples he gives (1039-1040):

If the occupation of parts of Kampuchea by Vietnamese forces is regarded by the speaker as unprovoked by Kampuchea, then the English speaker would not use the get passive and neither would the Chinese speaker use the rang passive:

51.[40] Jianpuzhai de da pian lingtu bei Kampuchea GEN large part territory BEI Yuenan qinzhan-le. Vietnam occupied-COM
A large part of Kampuchean territory was occupied by Vietnam.

52.[41]* Jianpuzhai de da pian lingtu rang Kampuchea GEN large part territory RANG Yuenan qinzhan-le. Vietnam occupied-COM
??A large part of Kampuchean territory got occupied by Vietnam.

The use of rang in Chinese or get in English in this context implies, for example, that the Kampuchean government
did not actively resist the invasion of its own territory. In other words, the government could have foreseen the possibility of an invasion and thus tried to prevent it but did not do so. Chappell also points out that the event is considered less serious when speakers use rang than when they use bei.

Chappell claims that the jiao passive can be considered a 'hot news' passive (1043). When the speaker wishes to encode the unexpected nature of the passive event, jiao is more often used. Chappell concludes that there are no grounds for giving a unified treatment of the rang and jiao passives (1043).

Hashimoto (1988:343) discusses two conspicuous syntactic differences between the literary and colloquial passive markers. One is that jiao, rang and gei cannot occur without their object, the other is that jiao and rang are derived from causative verbs. He classifies these words as prepositional passive markers.

Li and Thompson (1981) note that which of the four markers is preferred seems to depend on what dialect of Chinese is being spoken. One distinction between bei and the other three is that bei is a function word or grammatical word and it has no lexical meaning of its own; it has no meaning other than to function in the passive construction. The other three words, besides being able to serve in the passive construction, are content words with
independent meaning (506).

Li and Thompson have pointed out two other variants of the bei construction (507):

NP₁  jiao/rang  NP₂  gei  Verb

The occurrence of gei in addition to jiao/rang, they explain, seems to strengthen the disposal sense of the construction, and therefore, this gei may also occur in the ba construction in the same function.

2.4 Summary

A number of prominent analyses of the bei construction have been reviewed. As the review shows, there is a wide divergence of opinion as to treatment of the bei construction. One of the major problems is that in most studies, bei sentences are considered to be passive constructions. However, there are sentences that do not carry any passive sense in Chinese and do not translate as passive in English. Worse for the passive analysis is the grammatical evidence that there are sentences that have an intransitive verb, as is shown below.
53. yanjing bei ta ku hong le.

  eyes BEI her cry red PFV

Her eyes are red due to crying.

Obviously, this sentence cannot be considered a passive, as one of the characteristics of a passive sentence is that the verb is a lexically transitive verb. Furthermore, there are two clauses here: ta ku, 'she cries' and yanjing hong, 'eyes are red'. Ta ku provides the cause of the complex proposition; yanjing hong is the effect in what appears to be a complex sentence.

A bei sentence like 53 has the following characteristics:

1). It is not a passive sentence because there is no transitive verb;
2) bei is, therefore, not a passive marker;
3) and since it is followed by a clause, it looks more like a complementizer than a preposition; and
4) there is a cause and effect relationship within the proposition rather than a passive sense.

Any adequate account of bei must integrate examples such as these with traditional observations of bei, as well as Hsueh's syntactic description and Davis and others' functional accounts. I will elaborate on the above points in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 3

THE BEI CONSTRUCTION: A FOCUS DEVICE

As has been shown, most scholars think that the bei construction in Chinese is a passive construction. In this chapter, an analysis using both Davis's (1983) framework and Hsueh's (1989) syntactic descriptions of the bei construction will be presented to account for the various characteristics of the bei construction in Chinese.

3.1 Bei: a Focus Marker

As we have seen, many believe that the bei construction in Chinese is a passive construction. Sentences like 1 are considered to be passive sentences because they are often translated into English as passive sentences:

1. qiū bei Honglei ti dao hé lǐ le.
   ball BEI Honglei kick to river in PFV/CRS
   The ball was kicked into the river by Honglei.

Now consider sentences 2a and 2b:

2a. yīfū xi de gāngānjīngjīng.
   clothes wash CSC clean
   The clothes were washed very clean.

b.* yīfū bei xi de gāngānjīngjīng.
   clothes BEI wash CSC clean
This sentence is also translated as a passive in English; however, *bei* is not necessary in the sentence and in fact renders it ungrammatical. Now let's consider sentence 3:

3. Lao Zhang bei taitai ku de mei le zhuyi.
   Old Zhang BEI wife cry CSC have not PFV idea
   (Hsueh 1989:113)
   Old Zhang was completely at a loss because of his wife's crying.

This is also a *bei* sentence. However, it cannot be treated as a passive because, first, the verb *ku*, 'cry', is not a transitive verb of which *Old Zhang* could be the patient. Secondly, the sentence does not carry any passive sense. Obviously, considering the *bei* construction to be simply a passive construction is not adequate to explain examples such as this. If, however, a semantic approach such as Davis's is used to analyze the above *bei* constructions, the function of *bei* can be explained more satisfactorily.

Chinese has been described as a 'topic prominent' language (Li and Thompson 1981:15). There is only one topic in a Chinese proposition and it is signaled by sentence-initial position (Davis 1983:290). Consider a scenario in which a boy called Honglei went to play ball and he accidentally kicked it into the river. So to answer the question,

-- Where is Honglei?
One would say,

4. Honglei ti qiu qu le.
   Honglei kick ball go PFV/CRS
   Honglei went to play ball.

Here the participant Honglei is in the sentence-initial position, so it is the Topic of the proposition. But if the question is,

-- What happened to the ball?

The answer would be

5. qiu bei Honglei ti dao he li le.
   ball BEI Honglei kick to river in PFV/CRS
   The ball was kicked into the river by Honglei.

Qiu is the Topic of the proposition. In each example, there is only one Topic.

Although basically an SVO language, Chinese is not confined to the SVO construction as noted in Chapter II. In sentences that have SVO as the basic word order, the prototypical association is for the Topic also to be Focus. Therefore, a change in word order can encode a change in the semantics. For instance, a formerly non-focused participant can be brought into Focus by employing certain markers, parallel to ang in Tagalog, thus removing the typically focused Topic participant from propositional Focus. In Chinese, ba and bei are markers that can be used to shift the status of the participants for pragmatic purposes. Ba and bei constructions promote the experiencer to the nucleus
of the proposition. For example, the following sentence is
a 'normal', unmarked sentence:

6. gou chi le rou.
dog eat PFV meat
The dog ate the meat.

However, to answer the following question,
-- What did the dog do to the meat?
one has to use ba:

7. gou ba rou chi le.
dog BA meat eat PFV/CRS
The dog ate the meat.

With the use of ba, the experiencer is brought into the
focal point of the proposition. Davis explains that ba 'is
present where the relation of the experiencer to the event
would be otherwise too distant to support Focus' (1983:293).

If, however, from the speaker's perspective, the
experiencer is not only the Focus of attention but also the
Topic, bei would be used instead of ba to answer the
question:

-- What happened to the meat?

8. rou bei gou chi le.
meat BEI dog eat PFV
The meat was eaten by the dog.

In sentence 8, rou, 'the meat' is the Topic as well as the
Focus of the proposition. Bei marks the preceding
participant as the Focus.
Davis (1983) points out that 'preverbal position admits participants that are occasionally of a shape that suggests a *known* particular' (283). He also suggests that the postverbal position is associated with and expresses *unknown* particulars. Once the positioning of *known* and *unknown* particulars is recognized, 'word order is--simultaneously--freed to exploit the semantic content of ___V and V___' (291). Similar to Tagalog, Chinese has the category 'Focus' to adopt the perspective of the most immediate participant on the Immediate--Remote continuum of information structure. Focus selects the leftmost (most immediate) Role on the continuum. In Chinese ___V (preverbal position) indicates known and Focus of the participant that fills it. Chinese uses various selections of Roles in preverbal position as other languages employ the passive construction.

Just as there is only one Topic in Chinese, there is only one Focus. Since Topic exists in Chinese, it is marked by sentence-initial position, potentially leaving the immediately preverbal spot for Focus. Therefore, the so-called 'double-nominal' construction can occur, as in the following (Teng 1974; Davis 1983:290):

9. xiang bizi chang.
   elephant nose long
   As for elephants, their noses are long.

If there is only one preverbal participant, the sentence-initial #___ and preverbal ___V will merge in effect, thus
making the participant the Topic, as well as the Focus, simultaneously (Davis 1983:291).

Chinese has different ways to place participants preverbally. To place an element preverbally so as to indicate a change of Focus, Chinese employs bei. It marks the preceding participant as the Focus and pushes the following participant (the executor, which would be the Focus in the basic unmarked sentence) outside of the focal point. The executor, which was nuclear, central-to-event, and sentence-initial in the non-bei sentence, is now only optionally present in the narrated event and no longer is the Focus of the proposition. Hsueh's (1989) observation that it is omissible while the experiencer is required goes along with the executor no longer being in Focus.

Crosslinguistically, the change of the Focus from the executor to some other role is often achieved by passivization. The bei construction has a similar function; therefore, many bei sentences are translatable as passives—the patient/experiencer is focused and the previously focused executor is 'demoted' and placed after the focused experiencer and the marker bei.

However, as has been argued here, the bei construction is strictly speaking not a passive construction. Chinese does not have a grammatical passive construction per se in the sense of English—a language that uses a grammatical passive construction to shift Focus from the executor to
some other role. However, Chinese does employ bei to indicate a shift of pragmatic Focus just like a canonical passive construction does in a language such as English, as 10 and 11 illustrate.

10. zhe tiao gou yao le Lao Wang de erzi.
    this MW dog bite PFV Lao Wang GEN son
    This dog bit Lao Wang's son.

As Davis points out, the norm in unmarked sentences is for Topic<-Focus, i.e. the Topic is not necessarily the Focus, but the Focus implies that an NP is also the Topic. In the above sentence, 'this dog' is the Topic since it is sentence-initial, and also the Focus.

In 11, from the speaker's point of view, the experiencer participant is what is to be focused on, so to bring the experiencer, 'Lao Wang's son', into the Focus of the proposition, the speaker uses bei and rearranges the word order. Thus, marked by the word bei, the experiencer is the Focus and the sentence-initial position identifies it as the Topic, as in the following example:

11. Lao Wang de erzi bei gou yao le.
    Lao Wang GEN son BEI dog bite PFV/CRS
    Lao Wang's son was bitten by the dog.

Chinese is not alone in using a marker to mark the Focus. Tagalog, for instance, a verb initial language with word order otherwise free (Davis 1983:205), uses ang, si to mark Focus (Davis, 1983:227), as in the following sentences
(Foley and Van Valin 1985:313):

12a. Actor Focus:

\[
B[um]ili \quad \text{ang lalake ng isda ng pera}
\]

\[\text{[PrP}^2=\text{ACT]-buy PrP man } p \text{ fish INS money}\]

sa tindahan

LOC store

The man bought fish with money in the store.

b. Patient Focus:

\[
B[in]ili-0 \quad \text{ng lalake ang isda ng}
\]

\[\text{[PFV]-buy-PrP=P ACT man } \text{ PrP FISH INS}\]

pera sa tindahan

money LOC store

The man bought the fish with money in the store.

c. Locative Focus:

\[
B[in]ilh-an \quad \text{ng lalake ng isda ng}
\]

\[\text{[PERF]-buy-PrP=LOC ACT man } P \text{ fish INS}\]

pera ang tindahan

money PrP store

The man bought fish with money in the store.

---

9 List of Abbreviations used in Tagalog (Foley and Van Valin 1985):

INS--Instrument
LOC--Locative
P--Patient
PrP--Pragmatic pivot
d. Instrumental Focus:

\[ \text{Ip[im]am-bili } \text{ng lalake ng isda} \]
\[ \text{[PERF]-PrP=INSTR-buy} \text{ ACT man P fish} \]
\[ \text{ang pera sa tindahan} \]
\[ \text{PrP money LOC store} \]

The man bought fish with money in the store.

The actor Focus construction in a is similar to an active sentence in English. The b, c, and d sentences are non-actor Focus constructions; \text{ang} marks the experiencer 'fish' as the focus in b and c marks the locative 'store' as the Focus. \text{Ang} in d marks the instrument 'money' as the Focus. In Tagalog, focused noun phrases may bear a wide range of semantic roles and when marked by \text{ang}, they are PrPs, pragmatic pivots.

The semantic role properties of the noun phrase in Focus are marked by a verbal affix, the Focus affix. Tagalog has actor Focus, patient Focus, instrumental Focus constructions, etc (Foley and Valin 1985). \text{Bei} in Chinese is similar to \text{ang} in Tagalog in that they both mark the Focus of the sentence, however, \text{bei} cannot mark as many roles as \text{ang}; it mainly marks the experiencer.

3.2 The Three Main Constituents of the \text{Bei} Construction

As has been discussed, \text{bei} is not a passive marker, but a Focus marker. In a simple \text{bei} construction, there are three major constituents: A, the focused participant found
in the sentence-initial position, hence the Topic of the proposition; B, the participant that follows the Focus marker *bei*; and C, the descriptive expression.

Hsueh describes the *bei* construction as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic structure</th>
<th>A  Bei  B + C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semantic implication</td>
<td>in connection to B, A turns out to be what C describes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(116)

A, B and C are three major constituents in a *bei* sentence, and each has its own characteristics.

3.2.1 Characteristics of C, 'the Descriptive Expression'

C always describes the focused participant A: what A's status is as a result of a certain action. Hsueh labels component C the 'descriptive expression' (1989:116).

Syntactically, this descriptive expression takes one of the following four forms:

1). V + perfective marker 'le' + numeral-measure word

   Zhang San BEI Li Si hit PFV one MW
   Zhang San was hit by Li Si.

10. In Chinese, numeral-measure words are found not only before nouns but after verbs as well.
2).  V + perfective marker 'le'

14. Li Hu bei jiegu le.
Li Hu BEI fire PFV/CRS
Li Hu was fired.

15. she bei nongfu zhuazhu le.
snake BEI farmer catch PFV/CRS
The snake was caught by the farmer.

3).  V + perfective marker 'le' + obj.

16. mama bei haizi lazhu le yifu.
mama BEI child grab PFV clothes
The mother was grabbed by her child by her clothes.

4) V + resultative V /Adv. + perfective marker le

17. haizi bei baba da ku le. (V + V)
child BEI dad spank cry PFV/CRS
The child cried because he was spanked by his dad.

18. Zhuozi shang de rou dou bei gou chi
table on GEN meat all BEI dog eat
guang le. (V + Adv.)
off PFV
All the meat on the table was eaten by the dog.

Sentences like 17 show a cause and a result; both are expressed with a clause. These kinds of 'resultative'
sentences are complex sentences. If the result is expressed with an intransitive verb, or an adverb, the causal verb should be followed immediately by the following verb or adverb (sentences 17 and 18). If the result is expressed with an adjective, or a transitive verb and an object, 'de' is used between the causal V and the adjective, or the transitive verb and its object (sentences 19, 20 and 21):

19. ta bei dajia xiao de buhaoyisi.
   she BEI everyone laugh CSC embarrassed
   
   (V + de + Adj.)

   She felt embarrassed because everyone
   laughed (at what she said).

20. ta bei Zhang San da de
    he BEI Zhang San beat CSC
    biginglianshong. (V + de + Adj.)
    black and blue

    He was beaten black and blue by Zhang San.

21. Zhang San bei Li Si bi de sha le
    Zhang San BEI Li Si drive CSC kill PFV
    ren. (V + de + V + Obj.)
    person

    Compelled by Li Si, Zhang San killed someone.

   As 4) describes it, C in the formula can be V + resultative V/Adv. to show the result of an action. Hsueh calls this the 'verb complement' compound (VC compound). The VC compound expresses a cause/effect relationship.
22. diyi tian xin yifu jiu bei haizi
    first day brand-new clothes EMP BEI child
    chuan po le.
    wear tatter PFV/CRS
    On the very first day, the brand-new clothes
    were worn out by the child.

23. ta gege bei ren yong qiang da
    her elder brother bei person use gun shoot
    shang le.
    injured PFV/CRS
    Her elder brother was injured because he was
    shot by someone.

Hsueh argues that verbs such as chuan, 'wear', in 22
and da, 'hit, shoot', in 23 are 'action adverbs' and the
word following the action verb, po, 'tattered', in 22, or
shang, 'injured' in 23, is actually the verb (1989:102). In
my opinion, it seems more appropriate to say that 'wear', or
'hit or shoot', is the causal verb and the word following it
shows the event/situation that results from the causal
event.

In a bei construction, participant B does not have to
be the agent of the verb in C. For example,
24a. tamen bei lan mi chi bing le.
   they BEI rotten rice eat sick PFV
   (Hsueh 1989:102)
   They become sick for eating rotten rice.

b.* tamen bei chi lanmi bing le

In this sentence, participant B, lan mi, 'rotten rice', is not the agent of the verb chi, 'eat'. The real experiencer is the focused participant A tamen, 'they', and the effect of eating the rotten rice is bing, 'sick'. Therefore, unless the proposition carries a passive meaning, participant A is not the patient of the verb in the cause clause.

As a general rule, negation can be put only before the Focus marker bei, as is shown in the following sentence:

25a. zhege fangfa meiyou bei zong jingli caina.
   this method not BEI general manager adopt.
   This method was not adopted by the General Manager.

b.* zhege fangfa bei meiyou zong jingli caina.
   this method BEI not general manager adopt.

However, if C is a resultative in a complex construction, as is described in 4), negation can be put within the C, but only the C is negated, not the whole proposition:
   Zhang San BEI hit CSC stand not up PFV
   Zhang San was hit, so he couldn't stand up.

Hsueh neglects this point and states that negation can be put only before bei (114).

3.2.2 Characteristics of Participant A

Syntactically, A is the subject of the sentence.
Semantically, A is the Topic and, marked by the Focus marker bei, is also the Focus of the proposition. Therefore, as both Topic and Focus, which is maximally nuclear to the proposition, generally speaking, participant A cannot be omitted, the bei sentences require the expression of A. This has been discussed in Hsueh's corollaries. Here are some more examples,

27a.*bei tou le.
   BEI steal PFV/CRS
b. wo de che bei tou le.
   I GEN car BEI steal PFV/CRS
   My car was stolen.

28a.*yinbing bei song jin le yiyuan
   because of illness BEI send in hospital
b.* bei yinbing song jin le yiyuan
   BEI because of illness send in hospital
c. ta yinbing bei song jin le
he because of the illnes BEI send in PFV
yiyuan.
hospital
He was sent to the hospital because of the
illness.

Wo de che, 'my car' in 27, and ta, 'he' in 28 are both the
most central participants and the focal point of the
propositions. If they were omitted, the sentences would be
unacceptable.

Both Hsueh and Davis have emphasized the above point.
However, it is worth mentioning that a salient feature of
Chinese grammar is that a noun phrase (including the Topic),
if understood from the discourse context, does not need to
be repeated or specified. For example,

29a. wo de qiu ne?
I GEN ball QUE
Where is my ball?
the answer can be:

b. bei Honglei ti dao he li le.
BEI Honglei kick to river in PFV
(The ball) was kicked into the river by Honglei.

In 29b, English would use a pronoun to begin the sentence.
However, the use of a third person pronoun to refer to 'the
ball' would be inappropriate in Chinese, because the Chinese
pronouns refer primarily to persons. A third person pronoun
is rarely used to refer to animals, even more rarely used to refer to inanimate entities, even though such uses do occur under the influence of Western languages, especially English. Li and Thompson (1981) point out, 'In general, a third person pronoun is used to refer to an inanimate entity only when the absence of a pronoun or other noun phrase would render the construction ungrammatical (134).'

If a referent is referred to in the first sentence, in the following sentence or sentences, the same referent, even if it is the Topic of the sentence, does not have to be overtly mentioned. This is referred to as topic chain by Li and Thompson (1981:659). 29a and b provide a short example of the topic chain. In addition, proper names serving as Topic can either be repeated or omitted in a topic chain.

If the bei construction is a passive construction in Chinese, one would expect the grammatical subject, A, to be the semantic patient of the verb in C. However, this is not always the case. For example,

30. ta bei wuxia xiaoshuo du de zhaolemi.
   he BEI martial art novel read CSC addicted
   (Hsueh 1989:115)

He was addicted to the reading of martial art novels.

Obviously, the object of the verb du, 'read', is wuxia xiaoshuo, 'martial art novels', instead of the focused participant ta, 'he'. 
Hsueh calls A, the element in the sentence-initial position, 'the main topic', or 'primary topic' and sometimes calls it 'the semantic focus'. However, he never illustrates the difference among these terms. Davis uses the term 'Focus' to describe the semantic function of A and since A occurs in the sentence-initial position, according to Chao (1968), Li and Thompson (1981) and Davis (1983), it is also the Topic of the sentence.

3.2.3 The Characteristics of Participant B

In an unmarked basic transitive sentence, participant B of a corresponding bei construction in most cases is the executor in the sentence-initial position, and therefore, the Topic of the sentence. In a bei construction, some other role takes its place and participant B is de-focused. Therefore, B can be omitted if it is unimportant or unknown.

31. bu yi huir, huoshi bei kongzhizhu le.
not one moment, fire BEI control PFV/CRS
Very soon, the fire was brought under control.

If B does occur in the proposition, it always follows the Focus marker bei. For example,

32. wo de shu keneng bei ren tou le.
I GEN book might BEI person steal PFV/CRS
My book might have been stolen by someone.

Hsueh labels B as a 'secondary topic', and he does not elaborate on the reason. According to Chao (1968), Li and
Thompson (1981), and Davis (1983), in Chinese, there is only one Topic; it is found only in the sentence-initial position. In a bei construction, B is the de-focused participant that would normally be the Focus in a non-bei construction. Therefore, labeling B as a 'secondary' topic does not seem to be enlightening.

As can be seen, in his mixed semantic/syntactic treatment of bei, Hsueh seems to be using 'the main topic', 'primary topic' or 'the semantic focus' interchangeably. Davis, on the other hand, is more consistent in his semantic labeling of the bei construction. He, along with other linguists such as Chao (1968) and Li and Thompson (1981), uses Topic to label the participant appearing in the sentence-initial position, and Davis reserves the term Focus to label the maximally nuclear participant in a proposition.

3.3 Adversity

One important semantic characteristic of the bei construction is adversity. By adversity is meant that most of the bei sentences tell of something unfortunate or unpleasant happening to the focused Topic.

The bei sentence, whether signaling a passive meaning or not, is generally viewed by the speaker to indicate an unfortunate event. 'It is the whole event and not the subject that is viewed by the speaker as "unfortunate"' (Deng 1975:14; Davis 1983:294). In an unmarked proposition,
there may not be any adversative connotation, but when placed in the bei construction, the whole event is, from the speaker's perspective or point of view, considered to be unhappy, unlucky or unfortunate, as in

33. fangzi bei da shui chong zou le.
house BEI big water wash away PFV/CRS
The house got washed away by the flood.

34. tushuguan de shu zai yi chang da huo zhong
library GEN book in one MW big fire in
dou bei shao guang le.
all BEI burn off PFV/CRS
All the books in the library got burnt in a big fire.

Verbs which themselves carry a neutral meaning acquire the sense of an unhappy occurrence in the bei construction. In Chinese, words such as 'dian ming', 'call the roll, mention someone by name', kanjian, 'see', faxian, 'find, discover', kan, 'read, look, see', tingjian, 'hear', carry a neutral meaning. However, when found in the bei sentence, they acquire an adversative sense: the bei construction having these verbs indicates an adverse or undesirable happening 'suffered' by the Topic.
35a. wo jin jiaoshi de shihou, laoshi
I enter classroom CSC time, teacher
zhengzai dian ming.
DUR call roll
When I entered the classroom, the teacher was
calling the roll.

b. da hui shang, Zhang San bei
big meeting at, Zhang San BEI
changzhang dian le ming.
Factory Director mention PFV name
At the factory meeting, Zhang San was
reprimanded by the Factory Director.

In sentence 35a, dian ming means 'call the roll'; in
35b, the same expression is used, but with a Focus marker
bei in the sentence, the message is a different one. The
scenario for 35b is that a costly accident happened in the
factory because of Zhang San's negligence. To prevent such
an accident from happening again, the Factory Director
called a meeting. At the meeting, Zhang San's name was
mentioned in the course of being reprimanded by the Factory
Director. From the speaker's point of view, the event is
unfortunate.

36a. wo kanjian John he Mary le.
I see John and Mary PFV/CRS
I saw John and Mary.
b. John he Mary bei ren kanjian le.
John and Mary BEI person see PFV/CRS
John and Mary were seen by others (doing something which they did not want others to see).

In sentence 36a, *kanjian* means 'to see', while in 36b, the same verb is used, but the connotation is that something unfortunate has happened to the patient: the patient, John and Mary, did not want to be seen by any one else, but unfortunately, somebody saw them anyway.

37a. wo zhongyu zai tushuguan faxian le
I finally in library find PFV
zhe ben shu.
this MW book
I finally found this book in the library.

b. tamen zai gan this jian shi de shihou bei
they DUR do this MW thing CSC time BEI
ren faxian le.
person discover PFV/CRS
They were found out while they were doing that.

In sentence 37a, *faxian* means 'discover, find', while in sentence 37b, the same verb *faxian* is used, but the actual message is 'they were found out while they were doing something bad'. 
38a. Laoshi kan le wo de riji.
    teacher read PFV I GEN diary.
    My teacher read my diary.
    b. wo de riji bei ren kan le.
    I GEN diary BEI person read PFV/CRS
    My diary was read by someone (without my consent).

Sentence 38a implies 'my teacher had my permission to read my diary', while in 38b, the passive indicates that something undesirable has happened: I didn't want anybody to read my personal diary; however, someone stole my diary and read it without my consent.

39a. Lao Wang tingjian ta de linju zai changger.
    Old Wang hear he GEN neighbor DUR singing
    Old Wang heard his neighbor singing.
    b. wo de hua bei Zhang San tingjian le.
    I GEN words BEI Zhang San hear PFV/CRS
    What I said was heard by Zhang San.

Similarly, a sentence like 39b would mean 'I didn't want Zhang San to hear what I said, but unfortunately, somehow, he overheard it.'

An indirect object in a non-bei sentence can be adversely affected if it is found in a bei sentence, as is shown in the following examples (Li and Thompson 1981:504):
40a. tamen wen le wo xuduo wenti.
    they ask PFV I many questions
They asked me many questions.

The focused counterpart of 40a is 40b, in which wo 'I' is adversely affected:

b. wo bei tamen wen le xuduo wenti.
   I BEI they ask PFV many questions
I was asked many questions by them (as a harassment).

40b implies that 'they asked me many questions not to seek any information, but to give me a hard time or harass me'.

There are only a few verbs that take both direct and indirect objects and at the same time can be used in the bei construction with the indirect object adversely affected. Li and Thompson give the following explanation (1981:504):

... Very few verbs that take both an indirect object and a direct object can occur in the bei construction with the indirect being adversely affected, however. The reason is that most of the verbs taking a direct and an indirect object cannot have an adverse meaning either explicitly or implicitly.

Most complex bei sentences that show a cause/result relation, including the intransitive bei sentences, are also characterized by adversity. For example, to answer the following question,
Where is your baby's nanny? (She is not here taking care of your baby. What happened to her?)

one can say,

41.--baomu bei haizi chao de shoubuliao, bu
d nanny BEI baby whine CSC can't bear, not gan le.
do PFV/CRS

The nanny couldn't bear the baby's whining, so she quit.

In this sentence, baomu is the Topic and the Focus. The result is that the nanny shoubuliao (couldn't put up with something), and the cause is that the baby whined all the time, the end result being that she quit. The second speaker considers it an unfortunate unpleasant event.

Here is another scenario:

Lao Li saw his friend Wang Lu, who looked very angry.

Lao Li asks:
-- What's the matter? (e.g. Why are you so angry?)

Wang Lu answers:
-- I just had a fight with my wife.

and then says:
42.--wo zhe ge jia jianzhi bei wo laopo gao de
my this MW home simply BEI my wife make CSC
buchengyangzi.
shapeless
My home is simply destroyed because of my wife
(or: because of my wife's bad management or what
she did to the house).

The answer indicates that the listener has previous
knowledge about the Topic. The speaker tells the listener
the cause and effect of the situation, and implies that the
situation is an unhappy one.

The bei construction with an intransitive verb can have
an adverse coloring as well, as in:

43. tade lian bei feng chui hong le.
her face BEI wind blow red CRS
Her face is red due to the wind.

Even though often the bei construction signals a
passive meaning, sentences that translate with a passive
meaning do not necessarily have bei in them and may in fact
not allow bei:

44a. xin xie hao le.
letter write finish PFV/CRS
The letter was written (finished).

b.* xin bei xie hao le.
letter BEI write finish PFV/CRS
45a. wenzhang ji chuqu le.
article mail out PFV/CRS
The article was mailed.

b.* wenzhang bei ji chuqu le.
article BEI mail out PFV/CRS
Those sentences all have the experiencer as the Topic.
As has just been discussed, the bei sentences usually signal
unhappy or unfortunate situations. Since those sentences do
not carry any adverse meaning, bei is not necessary.

Then, when is the bei construction used? Usually,
whether the Focus marker bei is used in a sentence depends
on the attitude of the speaker towards the situation the
utterance describes. If the speaker wants to tell of an
undesirable or unlucky event with the focused participant as
the Topic, bei is more likely to be present; otherwise, it
is not necessary. Compare the following sentences:

46a. yixie xigua bei ren cong shuigu
some watermelons BEI person from fruit
dian li tou zou le.
store in steal away PFV/CRS
Some watermelons were stolen from the fruit
store.
b.* xigua bei women yun dao le shuiguo
watermelons BEI we transport to PFV fruit
store
dian.
(The watermelons were sent to the fruit store.)

47a. henduo yizi bei ban chu le jiaoshi, suoyi
many chairs BEI move out PFV classroom, so
you jige xuesheng meiyou zuowei.
have several students without seats
Many chairs had been moved out of the
classroom, so several students were left
without seats.

47b.* yizi bei tamen dou ca ganjing le.
chair BEI they all wipe clean PFV/CRS
(All the chairs were wiped clean.)

48a. zhe fu hua bei yan xunhei le.
this MW painting BEI smoke blacken PFV/CRS
This painting was blackened by smoke.

48b.* zhe fu hua bei hua hao le.
this MW painting BEI paint finish PFV/CRS
(This painting was finished.)

Sentence 46a tells of an unhappy situation: some
watermelons were stolen from the fruit store—a typical
adverse situation—so bei is used. Use of bei in 46b is not
necessary since there is nothing adverse about the
situation. The same explanation applies to sentences 47 and 48.

3.4 Affectedness

Some linguists such as Li and Thompson (1981) use the term 'disposal' to characterize the bei construction. It seems to me that what the linguists actually mean by 'disposal' is the degree to which the verb affects the direct object. When ba marks the following experiencer and bei marks its preceding experiencer as the Focus, they also require the experiencer to be highly affected in a certain way. Consider the following examples:

49. Wang taitai ba erzi da le yi dun.
   Wang Mrs. BA son beat PFV one MW
   Mrs. Wang spanked her son.

50. Xiao Zhang ba shu na zou le ma?
   Xiao Zhang BA book take away PFV QUE
   Did Xiao Zhang take away the book?

51. Baobao bei ta mama shuo le yi dun.
   Baobao BEI his mom scold PFV one MW
   Baobao was scolded by his mother.
52. na fu hua bei Li Si song ren le.
   this MW painting BEI Li Si send person PFV
   That painting was given by Li Si to somebody
   (as a gift).

   The scenario for sentence 52 is that someone asks Li
   Si's wife where the painting is, and she tells that person
   that Li Si gave it to somebody as a gift, indicating Li Si
   perhaps did not ask her opinion before he gave the painting
   to someone as a gift. So the whole event is considered to
   be 'unfortunate' from Li Si's wife's point of view.

   In the above examples, the experiencers (the direct
   objects of the verbs) are all affected in some way. Compare
   the following sentences:

53.* nei haizi bei ren taoyan le.
   that kid BEI person fed up with PFV/CRS
   (That kid was irritating to everybody.)

54.* Mary bei John ai le.
   Mary BEI John love PFV/CRS
   (Mary was loved by John.)

55.* Mary bei ta yiqian de nan pengyou hen le.
   Mary BEI her past GEN boy-friend hate PFV/CRS
   (Mary is hated by her ex-boyfriend.)
56.* Mama bei erzi de suozuosuowei shang xin
   mother BEI son GEN behavior break heart le.
   PFV/CRS
   (The mother is heartbroken because of her son's behavior.)

57.* wo bei wo mama xiang le.
   I BEI my mom miss PFV.
   (I was missed by my mother.)

The above sentences are not acceptable. What are the rules that govern the acceptability? Generally speaking, if the event expressed by the verb does not affect the experiencer, the bei construction cannot be used. That is to say, even though the verb refers to an adverse situation, the sentence is not acceptable if the Topic experiencer of the sentence is not dealt with, handled or manipulated by the agent experiencer. In sentence 53, taoyan, 'be irritating to others', shows adversity, but the patient object nei haizi, 'that kid', is not handled or dealt with, so the sentence is not acceptable. Therefore, certain verbs expressing emotions cannot be used in the bei construction. Verbs like ai, 'love', hen, 'hate', shangxin, 'break one's heart', xiang, 'miss', etc. do not indicate any manipulation or handling of the experiencer. As a result, such verbs do not involve or affect their experiencers to a degree that warrants their functioning as the empathetic Focus of a
proposition.

However, it is worth mentioning that there are a few verbs that can be used in the bei construction but do not seem to indicate any direct affectedness of the objects. Such verbs include kan, du, 'read', kanjian, 'see', dian ming, mention the name of (criticize)'. They do not imply any physical contact; however, it seems to me that the experiencers are mentally or psychologically adversely affected to a considerable degree, as in the following sentence:

58. Zhao Ming jintian zai keshang bei laoshi dian le ming.

Zhao Ming today in class BEI teacher mention PFV name

In today's class, Zhao Ming was criticized by the teacher.

In this sentence, the experiencer is not physically affected, but he is certainly psychologically affected.

3.5 Transitivity and the Cause/Result Complex Bei Construction

Hopper and Thompson (1980) discuss at length the notion of transitivity in the grammars of the world's languages. They define transitivity as follows:

Transitivity is traditionally understood...
as a global property of an entire clause, such that an activity is 'carried-over' or 'transferred' from an agent to a patient (251).

They further state that the separate components of the transitivity relationship have only an arbitrary relationship if there is no connection to a communicative function (280). Therefore, the defining properties of transitivity are determined ultimately by discourse. One of the features associated with the notion of transitivity is referred to as GROUNDING. According to Hopper and Thompson (1980), 'The part of a discourse which does not immediately and crucially contribute to the speaker's goal, but which merely assists, amplifies, or comments on it, is referred to as BACKGROUND. By contrast, the material which supplies the main points of the discourse is known as FOREGROUND' (280).

In a complex sentence, one part of the discourse may be more important than the other because that part supplies the main point of the discourse. Therefore, that part of the discourse is considered to be foregrounded. Usually, the main clause which is typically higher in transitivity provides the foreground information. The subordinate clause, as Hwang (1990) suggests, 'has a linking function, ... linking a nonsignificant event to a significant event in an independent clause' (70).

However, as Hwang points out (1990:65-66), there are
cases showing that a skewing from the normal coding pattern can occur, i.e. there are cases in which features generally considered to be backgrounding, such as lower transitivity properties, actually provide crucial information in the narratives.

It seems to me that the complex bei construction is one of the cases that shows a skewing from the normal pattern. In both simple and complex bei constructions, the focal attention is on the experiencer and the result of the event. In a complex bei construction, there are two clauses: the main clause, which shows the result, and the subordinate clause, which shows the cause. The main clause provides foreground information and the subordinate clause usually provides background information. Consider the following complex sentence:

59. Xiao Lan bei waimian de lang jiao de 
   Xiao Lan BEI outside GEN wolf howl CSC
danzhanxijing.
very frightened
Xiao Lan is very frightened because the wolf is
howling outside.

Xiao Lan is the Topic and Focus of the sentence. The main clause provides the result, 'Xiao Lan is frightened'. It is the foregrounded clause. The subordinate clause provides the cause, 'the wolf is howling'. It is the backgrounded clause. The causal clause is posited right
after the Focus marker *bei*. Note a skewing from the normal coding pattern occurs: the foregrounded clause is lower in transitivity, because it tells of a stative event instead of dynamic event. On the other hand, the subordinate clause, 'the wolf is howling,' is higher in transitivity since it has a dynamic verb.

Recall that 'howl' is an intransitive verb, which is a piece of evidence against the analysis of the *bei* construction as a passive. Here is another example: to prove the speaker's speculation that the Topic, 'she', has cried a great deal because something unfortunate or tragic happened in her family, the speaker would say,

60. \[ \text{yanjing dou bei ta ku zhong le.} \]
\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{eyes} & \text{even BEI she cry swollen PFV/CRS} \\
\end{array}
\]
Even her eyes are swollen from crying.

An intransitive verb is permitted in the *bei* construction only if it expresses this causal relationship and thus modifies the result event that is the final main verb. Without a resultative complement or final main verb, the intransitive *bei* construction is unacceptable, as in:

61.* \[ \text{Xiao Lan bei waimian de lang jiao} \]
\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{Xiao Lan BEI outside GEN wolf howl} \\
\end{array}
\]
62.* \[ \text{yanjing bei ta ku le} \]
\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{eyes BEI she cry PFV/CRS} \\
\end{array}
\]
Now comparing 61 and 62 with the following sentence, one can see the differences:
63. Lao Wang de erzi bei gou yao le.

Lao Wang GEN son BEI dog bite PFV/CRS

Lao Wang's son was bitten by the dog.

In 63, the main verb 'bite' is a transitive verb, and since there is only one verb in the sentence, it is a simple bei sentence. In 62, however, the verb 'howl' is an intransitive verb, and without a resultative, the sentence is unacceptable. This kind of cause/effect sentence has two verbs (or an adjective used in the sense of a verb), at least one of them can be an intransitive verb.
CHAPTER 4
CONCLUSION

In this treatment of the bei construction, the function of bei as a Focus marker has been discussed. The characteristics of the main elements of the bei construction, identified by Hsueh, A, B, and C, have been detailed to provide for a better understanding of the construction. It has been shown that the use of intransitive verbs in the complex bei constructions and their causal rather than passive sense argues against treating the Chinese bei construction simply as a grammatical passive like English. I suggest that the result clause is the focal attention and 'backbone' of the entire situation and therefore provides foreground information and the causal clause is background information. However, it is worth mentioning that the result clause, although provides foreground information, is lower in transitivity.

Since the bei construction is a fairly rare construction in Chinese, and the thesis is not based on a quantitative study of the construction, I cannot conclusively say that the result clause provides the foreground information. For further studies of the construction, a quantitative study of both written and spoken Chinese text should be conducted. Distribution of
reference type such as pronouns should also be studied. There are still controversies on the semantic function of the *bei* construction; therefore, more studies of the construction in discourse are necessary.
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