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BU 'NOT' IN MANDARIN CHINESE: A LEXICAL STATIVE NEGATOR*

Huei-Ling Lin

ABSTRACT

Bu as a negator in Mandarin Chinese cannot co-occur with an aspect marker such as *le*. Moreover, *bu* cannot occur with the first verb in a descriptive/resultative construction. Huang (1988) suggests that the sequences [*bu* V *le*] and [*bu* descriptive/resultative construction] are ruled out for semantic reasons. That is, *bu* is first attached to V and then *le* is attached to the negated verb. Such a sequence [[*bu*-V]-*le*] is semantically absurd since the event that has not happened cannot be said to have been completed. [*Bu* descriptive/resultative construction] is ruled out for similar semantic reasons. The problem this paper proposes to tackle is: At which level is *bu* attached to V? Two arguments may be posited for the proposal that *bu* is lexically attached to V. The first argument comes from a consideration of the status of both *bu* and *le* and it is shown that only when *bu* is attached to V in the lexicon can the ungrammatical sequence [*bu* V *le*] be explained. Further evidence comes from the focus/contrast markers, *shi* and *bu-shi*, which have a flexible distribution. If *bu* is lexically attached to *shi* and then together *bu-shi* is inserted as a focus/contrast marker, then the flexible distribution can be explained. Throughout the discussion, it will be shown that *bu* can be the manifestation of *bu* alone, *bu*-Modal, or *bu-shi*. That is, unlike what it appears to be, *bu* is not just *bu*.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bu, as a negative marker, is used to negate a verb in Mandarin Chinese, as in (1). However, as discussed by several scholars of Chinese linguistics (Huang & Mangione 1985, Huang 1988, Li 1990, Ernst 1995, Lee & Pan

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2001, Lin 2003, among others), unlike the negative marker ‘not’ in English, *bu* cannot co-occur with an aspect marker in the same clause. For example, *bu* cannot co-occur with the perfective aspect marker *le* as in (2).¹

- (1) Zhangsan bu mai shu.
Zhangsan not buy book
‘Zhangsan does not want to buy any books.’
- (2) *Zhangsan bu mai le shu.
Zhangsan not buy ASP² book
‘Zhangsan did not buy any books.’

Moreover, *bu* cannot be immediately followed by the first verb in a descriptive/resultative construction as in (3) and (4).

- (3) *Zhangsan bu zou de kuai. Descriptive
Zhangsan not walk DE fast
‘Zhangsan does not walk fast.’
- (4) *Zhangsan bu zou de lei. Resultative
Zhangsan not walk DE tired.
‘Zhangsan did not walk to the extent that he got tired.’

The co-occurrence restrictions between *bu* and aspect, and between *bu* and descriptive/resultative constructions call for an explanation. Huang (1988) proposes Principle P in order to account for these restrictions, and he suggests that sequences of [*bu* V *le*] and [*bu* V descriptive/resultative clause] are ruled out for semantic reasons. What is stated in Principle P is that “the negative morpheme *bu* forms an immediate construction with the first V⁰ element following it” (Huang 1988:284). According to Principle P, in (2) *bu* is first attached to *mai* ‘buy’ and then *le* is attached to the negated

¹ *Mei* instead of *bu* and *you* instead of *le* have to be used to express negation in an aspectual sentence as in (i). (Wang 1965)

(i) Zhangsan mei you mai shu.
Zhangsan not have buy book
‘Zhangsan did not buy any books.’

² Abbreviations used in this paper are listed below:
ASP: aspect, ASSOC: associative, CL: classifier



verb, *bu-mai*. Such a combination $[[bu-mai]-le]$ is semantically absurd since the event that has not happened, not buying in the case, cannot be said to have been completed. Along the same line of argument, not-walking is a non-event and thus it cannot be said to have occurred in a certain manner, fast as in (3), or have caused a certain result, got tired as in (4). (3) and (4) are both semantically absurd and thus are ungrammatical.

In addition to Huang's proposal, there have also been several other semantic accounts of the co-occurrence restrictions. For instance, Ernst (1995) proposes that *bu* requires unbounded aspectual situations, and Lin (2003) suggests that *bu* select a stative situation as its complement. However, neither of them explicitly specifies the mechanism which will ensure that the aspectual requirements of *bu* are met. The required mechanism is exactly what this paper would like to discuss.

Assuming that Huang's Principle P holds,³ this paper aims to tackle the following problem: At which level is *bu* attached to V? Is it inserted in the NEG position and then attached to V in syntax or it is attached to V as a prefix in the lexicon? This paper proposes two arguments for the second option; that is, *bu* is lexically attached to V. To be specific, negated verbs or modals such as *bu-mai* 'not buy' and *bu-hui* 'not will' are argued to be lexically formed, as are negated adjectives in English such as *unforgettable* and *impossible*.

The first argument in Section 2 is constructed under the consideration of the status of both *bu* and *le*. It will be shown that only when *bu* is lexically attached to V can the co-occurrence restrictions be explained. The second argument presented in Section 3 comes from the focus/contrast markers,

³ Lin (2003) considers Huang's Principle P problematic. However, as discussed in Section 3, the problem Lin points out is with the way in which Principle P is applied in Huang (1988), but not with the idea of Principle P itself. Even though as one reviewer pointed out, in recent literature (Klein et al. 2000, Lin 2003) *le* is not taken to mean completion but rather considered an assertion marker or a realization operator, these proposals are alternative accounts of the same phenomenon, and Principle P still works in those frameworks. For instance, under the assumption that *le* is a realization operator, $[bu V le]$ is ruled out for the semantic violation that an event that has not taken place can not be realized. No matter whether *le* is a completion marker, an assertion marker, or a realization operator, the problem with the semantic accounts given by Ernst (1995), Lin (2003), etc. still exists. That is, neither of these semantic proposals explicitly specifies the mechanism which ensures that the aspectual requirements of *bu* are met. Since Principle P works in different frameworks, assuming that Principle P holds, this paper aims to spell out the mechanism.



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shi and *bu-shi*, whose distribution is flexible, and the flexibility can be explained only if *bu* is attached to *shi* in the lexicon and then *bu-shi* as a whole is inserted before the constituent which is to be focused on. Moreover, throughout the discussion, it will be shown that *bu* can be the manifestation of *bu*, *bu-Modal*, or *bu-shi*, and thus *bu* does not simply mean ‘not’.

2. THE STATUS OF BU AND LE

To account for the ungrammatical sequence [*bu V le*], we need to consider the status of both *bu* and *le* and four possibilities arise. Possibility (I): *bu* and *le* are inserted in the Neg and Asp positions, respectively. Possibility (II): *bu* is inserted in the Neg position while *le* is attached to V in the lexicon. Possibility (III): both *bu* and *le* are attached to V in the lexicon. Possibility (IV): *bu* is lexical while *le* is syntactic.

2.1 Lexical BU

Under Possibility (I), *bu* and *le* are inserted in the Neg and Asp positions in syntax, respectively. If Neg has scope over Asp as proposed by Zou (1995),⁴ *le* is attached to V before *bu* does, assuming I (Asp) to V movement (Tang 1990, Zhou 1990, etc.). The resulting sequence [*bu [V-le]*] is semantically well-formed, and thus the ungrammaticality of [*bu V le*] is not captured under this analysis. On the other hand, if Asp has scope over Neg as proposed by Gu (1992), after *le* lowers to V, *V-le* subsequently has to move back to I (Asp) at LF in order to form a proper chain (Chomsky 1991). The subsequent movement at LF, however, violates the Head Movement Constraint (Travis 1984) as stated in (5) because Neg *bu*, which intervenes between I (Asp) and V, is a potential governor and thus the *V-le* to I (Asp) movement violates the Relativized Minimality Condition as in (6) (Rizzi 1990).

⁴ Here I only refer to the structure proposed by Zou (1995), not his analysis. Zou assumes that aspect markers such as *le* are lexically attached to V.



- (5) Head Movement Constraint (HMC)
Movement of a zero-level category β is restricted to the position of a head α that governs the maximal projection γ of β , where α θ -governs or L-marks γ if $\alpha \neq C$.
- (6) Relativized Minimality: X α -governs Y only if there is no Z such that
- (i) Z is a typical potential α -governor for Y,
 - (ii) Z c-commands Y and does not c-command X.

Under this analysis, sentences like (2) are ruled out because they violate the HMC and thus are syntactically ill-formed, rather than semantically ill-formed. This analysis, however, cannot account for the co-occurrence restriction between *bu* and descriptive/resultative constructions as in (3) and (4) because aspect markers do not co-occur with the first verb in the descriptive/resultative constructions as in (7) and (8).⁵

- (7) *Zhangsan zou le de kuai.
Zhangsan walk ASP DE fast
'Zhangsan walked fast.'
- (8) *Zhangsan zou le de lei.
Zhangsan walk ASP DE tired.
'Zhangsan walked to the extent that he got tired.'

Aspect markers are not involved in (3) and (4), I-to-V and subsequent V-to-I movements are not required, and thus Sentences (3) and (4) do not violate the HMC. As such, these sentences are not syntactically ill-formed and are wrongly predicted to be grammatical under this analysis. Even though this analysis accounts for the co-occurrence restriction between *bu* and *le*, a separate account is needed for the restriction between *bu* and descriptive/resultative constructions.

⁵ A reviewer suggested that *de* be taken as an aspect marker like *le*, and then under an assumption similar to Gu's proposal of V-to-I movement, the ungrammaticality in (2-4) can be attributed to violation of HMC. Moreover, the ungrammaticality of (7) and (8) could be taken to result from the aspect conflict of two aspect markers *de* and *le*. This proposal does sound appealing; however, for this proposal to hold, independent evidence needs to be provided to prove that *de* is indeed an aspect marker.



Under Possibility (II), *le* has to be attached to V in the lexicon before *bu* is attached to V in syntax. Again the resulting sequence [*bu* [V-*le*]] is semantically well-formed and thus sentences like (2) are wrongly predicted to be grammatical. One may assume that V-*le* has to move to Asp at LF for feature checking (Chomsky 1993) and this LF movement violates the HMC because Neg intervenes between V and Asp. Thus (2) is a case of syntactic ill-formedness. However, this analysis still cannot account for the co-occurrence restriction between *bu* and descriptive/resultative constructions since these two constructions do not involve aspect markers and thus no feature checking is necessary. No feature checking means no movement and no violation of the HMC. Therefore, (3) and (4) cannot be cases of syntactic ill-formedness, and another account is called for.

Possibility (III) assumes that both *bu* and *le* are attached to V in the lexicon. *Bu* as a derivational prefix must be attached to V before the inflectional suffix *le* is. After the affixation, the resulting sequence [[*bu*-V]-*le*] is semantically ill-formed. Therefore, this analysis accounts for the co-occurrence restriction between *bu* and *le*.

Possibility (IV) supposes that *bu* is attached to V in the lexicon and then *le* is attached to *bu*-V in syntax. The resulting sequence [[*bu*-V] *le*] is semantically anomalous and thus ruled out. As such, Possibility (IV) also accounts for the co-occurrence restriction between *bu* and *le*.

Moreover, both Possibility (III) and (IV) can explain the ungrammaticality of (3) and (4). Under both analyses, *bu* is attached to V in the lexicon and as discussed above, the combination [[*bu*-V] descriptive/resultative clause] is semantically anomalous because a non-existing event [*bu*-V] cannot be said to occur in a certain manner or cause a certain result. Therefore, the ungrammaticality of (3) and (4) results from semantic anomaly.

2.2 Seeming Counter-examples

However, there are cases where the sequence [*bu* V descriptive/resultative clause] seems to be allowed as in (9).

- (9) Ruguo ni bu zuo de kuai, ni jiu zhui-bu-shang wo. (cf. (3))
if you not walk DE fast you then chase-not-up I
'If you don't walk fast, then you won't catch up with me.'



To account for this type of data, Huang (1988) suggests that *bu* in (9) is supported by an abstract modal element in Infl rather than attached to the verb directly and the sequence $[[bu\text{-Modal}]\ [zuo\ de\dots]]$ is not semantically anomalous. Along the same line of argument, this paper proposes that *bu* in (9) contains an abstract modal element such as *hui* ‘will’ or *yao* ‘want to’. That is, *bu* in (9) denotes ‘will not’ rather than simply ‘not’. Even in cases like (9), *bu* is a lexical prefix, which is attached to Modal in the lexicon. The only difference between *bu*-V and *bu*-M is that V in the former cannot be omitted while M in the latter is optional when the reading of modality is clear or can be inferred from the context.

The proposal assuming the existence of an abstract modal can also account for cases where *bu* seems to co-occur with *le* in the same sentence as in (10). The intentional adverbial *guyi* ‘deliberately’ in (10) clearly indicates that the modality reading is there,⁶ and thus *bu* in (10) is also argued to contain an abstract modal element. The sequence $[[bu\text{-M}]\dots V\text{-}le]$ is not semantically anomalous; therefore, (10) is not ruled out.

- (10) Ta guyi bu ba suoyou de xinjian dou diu-le.
 he deliberately not BA all ASSOC⁷ letter all throw-ASP
 ‘He deliberately did not throw all the letters away.’

At first glance, (10) seems to present another problem for the proposal that *bu* is attached to V or Modal in the lexicon, since *bu* in (10) is immediately followed by *ba*, not a verb or a modal. Other than (10), sentences like (11), where *bu* is immediately followed by a preposition, also present similar problems. However, again the proposal assuming the existence of an abstract modal explains this seeming contradiction, since *bu* in (11) must be taken as a combination of *bu* and Modal. That *bu* in (11) also has a volitional reading can be supported by the fact that it can co-occur with intentional adverbs like *guyi* ‘deliberately’ as in (12).

⁶ The following example where the modal *yao* ‘want’ is overtly shown illustrates the point that *bu* in (10) is not simply *bu*; it also contains an empty modal.

- (i) Ta guyi bu-yao ba suoyou de xinjian dou diu-le.
 he deliberately not-want BA all ASSOC letter all throw-ASP
 ‘He deliberately did not want to throw all the letters away.’

⁷ One of the functions of *de* is as an associative marker, which associates or connects two elements.



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- (11) Ta bu zai jia xiuxi.
he not at home rest
'He does not take a rest at home.'
- (12) Ta guyi bu zai jia xiuxi.
he deliberately not at home rest
'He deliberately does not take a rest at home.'

It is also possible that the action in (11) is taken to be habitual as indicated by the frequency adverb *tongchang* 'usually' in (13). With this reading, *bu* is followed by an abstract habitual aspect marker, as Ernst (1995) proposes. Therefore, (11) can either mean 'he is not willing to take a rest at home' or 'he usually does not take a rest at home.' Its precise reading would have to be determined by the context. What is relevant to our discussion here is that in those examples *bu* is attached to an abstract modal element rather than to a verbal element directly.⁸

- (13) Ta tongchang bu zai jia xiuxi.
he usually not at home rest
'He usually does not take a rest at home.'

To sum up, after the close examination of the four possible combinations of the status of *bu* and *le*, it is argued that only when *bu* is a lexical prefix

⁸ Given the following pair of examples, a reviewer questioned the feasibility of the proposal that the *bu* preceding a preposition must contain a zero modal. Since it is not possible for *bu* in (ii) to co-occur with intentional adverbs such as *guyi* 'deliberately' as the ungrammaticality of (ii) indicates, this proposal does not seem to hold water.

- (i) Ta bu zai kanshu, daodi pao nali qu le?
he not ASP read-book on-earth run where go ASP
'He is not studying. Where on earth did he go?'
- (ii) *Ta guyi bu zai kanshu.
he deliberately not ASP read-book
'He is deliberately not studying.'

However, even if *guyi* 'deliberately' can not co-occur with *bu* in (ii), it does not mean that no empty modal is there in (i) or (ii). The empty modal in (i) can be taken to be *ken* 'willing to'. However, *guyi* is not compatible with the modal *ken* 'willing to' since one cannot be deliberately willing to do something as shown in (iii), and thus (ii) is ungrammatical.

- (iii) *Ta guyi ken zai kanshu.
he deliberately willing ASP read-book
'*He is deliberately willing to be studying.'



can the co-occurrence restrictions between *bu* and *le* and those between *bu* and descriptive/resultative constructions be both accounted for. Moreover, the proposal that in some cases *bu* contains an abstract modal can well explain those seeming counter-examples where the co-occurrence restrictions are violated or *bu* is not immediately followed by a verb.^{9,10}

2.3 Derivation of Negated Forms

As discussed in Section 2.1, the co-occurrence restrictions between *bu* and *le* and those between *bu* and the descriptive/resultative clause can be explained only if *bu* is assumed to be attached to V in the lexicon, while there is no conclusive evidence indicating whether *le* is also lexically attached to V. Under this assumption, this section will further demonstrate the derivation of negated verbs. Take (14) to be a simplified version of sentence structure for Mandarin Chinese. *Bu-mai* ‘not buy’ as in Sentence (1) is inserted into the V slot. As to the *bu*-abstract modal in examples such as (9-13), it is inserted under the M slot.

⁹ A reviewer pointed out the possibility of treating *bu* as an adverb. This possibility, however, is not considered in this paper. As discussed in Section 2.1, under the assumption that Principle P holds, which works even in different frameworks, the lexical status of *bu* accounts for the co-occurrence restrictions between *bu* and *le* and those between *bu* and the descriptive/resultative clause, which would be hard to explain, if *bu* were an adverb.

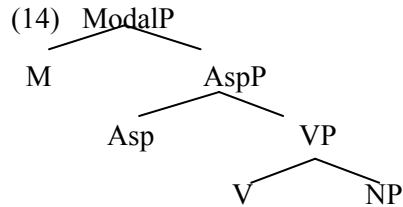
¹⁰ Given the following dialogue, one reviewer wondered how a lexical account of *bu* as an affix can explain its occurrence as a free morpheme.

- Q: Women de zou le.
 we have-to go ASP
 ‘We have to go now.’
A: Bu, shijian hai zao.
 no time still early
 ‘No, it’s still early.’

This conversation is like one of the seeming counter-examples discussed in Section 2.2. *Bu* in this conversation actually contains an abstract element. Another possible explanation is that this *bu* is a different *bu*. As the translation indicates, this *bu* means ‘no’, not ‘not’. In languages such as English, *no* instead of *not* is also used as an exclamation marker.



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Without NegP projection in (14), a problem that immediately arises will be how to account for licensing conditions on negative polarity items (NPI) as illustrated in (15).¹¹

- (15) Ta bu gen renhe ren shuo renhe hua.
he not with any person say any word
'He does not say anything to anyone.'

Even though NegP is not opted for in this proposal, licensing conditions on NPI can still be well-accounted for, if we assume that the negative feature of *bu* is percolated up. That is, in the case of *bu-mai*, once *bu-mai* is inserted into V, V is marked with a negative feature, while in the case of *bu-M*, it is M that gets marked with the negative feature. Since in (15) the negated modal, *bu*-abstract modal, c-commands the NPI, the grammaticality of (15) is accounted for. It should be noted that lexical negations such as *bu-V* and *bu-M* differ from inherently negative verbs such as *fandui* 'oppose', which cannot occur with NPI as shown in (16). The difference between lexical negations and inherently negative verbs is that the latter is not marked with the negative feature; as such, the NPI is not licensed as in (16).

- (16) *Ta fandui renhe shi.
he oppose any matter
*'He opposes any matter.'

3. FOCUS/CONTRAST MARKERS, *SHI* AND *BU-SHI*

Further evidence for a lexical account of *bu* comes from the focus/contrast markers, *shi* and *bu-shi*. As discussed in Li (1990), *shi*, as a

¹¹ This was pointed out by one of the reviewers.



focus/contrast marker, can be placed before a constituent for the purpose of indicating if this constituent or this constituent plus the following constituents are focused on or contrasted as in (17) (Li's (41), 1990:37). (The focused/contrasted parts are in bold face.)

- (17) a. Ta ba ta taitai zhaogu de *shi* **hen hao**.
he BA he wife care DE be **very well**
'He took care of his wife **very well**.'
b. Ta pao de *shi* **hen kuai**.
he run DE be **very fast**
'He runs **very fast**.'

The negative form *bu-shi* also has the function of a focus/contrast marker, as in (18). Like *shi*, *bu-shi* can be placed in front of a constituent to indicate whether this constituent or this constituent plus the following constituents are focused on or contrasted.

- (18) a. (i) *Bu-shi* **ta ba taitai zhaogu de hen hao**.
not-be **he BA wife care DE very well**
'It's not that **he took care of his wife very well**.'
(ii) *Bu-shi* **ta** ba taitai zhaogu de hen hao.
'It's not **him** who took care of his wife very well.'
b. (i) Ta *bu-shi* **ba taitai zhaogu de hen hao**.
'He did not **take care of his wife very well**.'
(ii) Ta *bu-shi* **ba taitai** zhaogu de hen hao.
'It's not **his wife** whom he took care of very well.'
c. (i) Ta ba taitai *bu-shi* **zhaogu de hen hao**.
'As for his wife, he did not **take care of her very well**.'
(ii) Ta ba taitai *bu-shi* **zhaogu de** hen hao.
'It's not **taking care of his wife** that was what he did for her that he did very well.'
d. Ta ba taitai zhaogu de *bu-shi* **hen hao**.
'As for taking care of his wife, he did not do it **very well**.'



If *bu* is inserted in syntax, it should occupy the Neg position, whose exact position might vary depending on one's analysis. In any case, Neg is a fixed position in a sentence. That is, if *bu* is inserted in syntax, it should occupy a fixed position rather than a flexible position. As shown in (18), *bu-shi* can occur at the beginning of the sentence (18a), before the BA-phrase (18b), and before the verb (18c-d). Therefore, if *bu* is inserted in syntax, depending on one's analysis, only one (but not all) of the four sentences in (18) is allowed.¹²

Ernst (1995) proposes that *bu*, as a clitic, must be attached to the following word and it requires unbounded aspectual situations. Both [V *le*] and [V resultative clause] denote bounded situations and thus *bu* cannot co-occur with these sequences.¹³ Ernst's proposal correctly describes the phenomenon and accounts for the co-occurrence restrictions. However, such an account with *bu* being inserted in syntax still cannot account for the flexible distribution of the focus/contrast marker *bu-shi*.

On the other hand, if *bu* is lexically attached to *shi* and then *bu-shi* as a whole is inserted as a focus/contrast marker before the constituent which is to be focused on, the flexible distribution of *bu-shi* is accounted for. Moreover, it should be noted that *bu* alone does not have the floating feature. Even though *bu* in (19) seems to occur in different positions, these two sentences are not derived from the same underlying structure; that is, they have to be considered different sentences as they have different readings, not just the difference in terms of focus/contrast.

¹² A reviewer mentioned the possibility that what is moved around is not the focus marker *bu-shi*, but the focused elements. That is, the focus marker occurs at a fixed position in a sentence and the focused elements are moved into the focal position. However, close examination of the examples in (18) yields no such possible proposal. If we assume the focus marker occurs at the sentence-initial position and whatever is to be focused on is moved to the focal position immediately following the focus marker, no other elements should go before the focus marker. Then, sentences (18b-d) cannot be derived under such an account. In consequence, the flexible distribution of the focus marker simply cannot be accounted for under a movement analysis.

¹³ As for the descriptive construction, Ernst argues that the manner adverbial is base-generated between *bu* and V and then moved to the postverbal position. The trace left by the adverbial blocks the cliticization of *bu* to V. *Bu* thus cannot co-occur with [V descriptive clause].

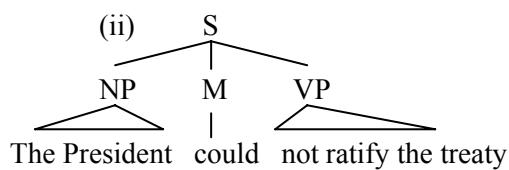
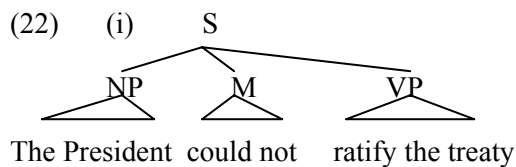


- (19) a. Ta bu neng ba taitai zhaogu de hen hao.
 he not can BA wife care DE very well
 'He cannot take care of his wife very well.'
- b. Ta neng bu ba taitai zhaogu de hen hao.
 he can not BA wife care DE very well
 'He can (choose) not to take care of his wife very well.'

As discussed in Radford (1988), sentences such as (20) (Radford's (42), 1988:66) are ambiguous with two interpretations as shown in (21) (Radford's (43), 1988:66). For reading (21i), (22i) is proposed to be the D-structure, where *not* goes with Modal and thus has scope over *could*, while for reading (21ii), (22ii) is the D-structure, where *not* goes with VP and thus has scope over *ratify the treaty*. ((22) is Radford's (45), 1988:67.)

(20) The President could not ratify the treaty.

- (21) (i) It would not be possible for the President to ratify the treaty.
 (ii) It would be possible for the President not to ratify the treaty.



Along the same line of argument, in the case of (19a), *bu* goes with *neng* 'can' and thus the ability to take good care of his wife is negated, while in (19b) *bu* goes with the following abstract modal and (19b) implies that he has the ability to take good care of his wife but he may



choose not to use it.¹⁴ When *bu* occurs in different positions, the scope of negation is also different, while when *bu-shi* is inserted before different constituents, what changes is mainly the focus. Therefore, it is *bu-shi*, not *bu* alone, that has flexible distribution.

Both *shi* and *bu-shi* have been shown to be able to be inserted as a whole as a focus/contrast marker. It should be noted that just as *bu*-Modal can be manifested as *bu*, *bu-shi* can also be manifested as *bu*. To illustrate, as shown in (23), both *shuo* ‘speak’ and *xie* ‘write’ are in focus, and the contrast can be clearly shown in (24), where the words being focused on, *shuo* and *xie*, are preceded by the focus marker *bu-shi* and *shi*, respectively. Therefore, *bu* in (23) should be taken as a combination of *bu* and *shi*.

(23) Ta **bu shuo** de hen kuai, ta **xie** de hen kuai.
he not **speak** DE very fast, he **write** DE very fast.
‘It’s not that he **speaks** very fast. He **writes** very fast.’

(24) Ta *bu-shi* **shuo** de hen kuai, ta *shi* **xie** de hen kuai.
he not-be **speak** DE very fast, he be **write** DE very fast.
‘It’s not that he **speaks** very fast. He **writes** very fast.’

Lin (2003) considers examples such as (25) as problematic cases against Huang’s Principle P. ((25) is Lin’s (46), 2003:445.) After the stative verb *er* ‘hungry’ raises to I, the sequence [[*bu-er*] *zenme*] should be semantically absurd since the nonproperty denoted by *bu-er* cannot be stated to be in any degree.

(25) Wo hai bu zenme er.
I yet not very hungry
‘I am not very hungry yet.’

However, (25) is not a problem under the current analysis, since what is negated in (25) is *zenme* ‘very’, not *er* ‘hungry’. *Bu* in Mandarin Chinese can be attached to not only activity verbs such as *mai* ‘buy’,

¹⁴ Note that the English example in (20) is ambiguous with there being two interpretations while the Chinese examples in both (19a) and (19b) are not. These conditions exist because, unlike the English negator *not*, which can either go with the preceding Modal or the following VP, the negator *bu* in Mandarin Chinese is a prefix which is attached to the following element. Therefore, *bu* must negate over the following element and never over the preceding element.



modals such as *hui* ‘will’, and the focus marker *shi*, but also to stative verbs such as *er* ‘hungry’ as in (26). (25) is simply a case of *bu* attached to an adverb *zenme* ‘very’ in the lexicon.¹⁵

- (26) Wo bu er.
I not hungry
‘I am not hungry.’

4. CONCLUSION

This paper has argued that the co-occurrence restrictions between *bu* and *le*, and between *bu* and descriptive/resultative constructions can be well accounted for if *bu* is assumed to be attached to V or M in the lexicon. Two arguments are proposed for such a lexical account. The first argument is given under the consideration of the status of both *bu* and *le*. It is argued that only when *bu* is lexical can the co-occurrence restrictions be accounted for. The second argument comes from the focus/contrast markers, *shi* and *bu-shi*, whose distribution is flexible. Again, the flexible distribution of *bu-shi* can be explained only if *bu* is lexically attached to *shi* and then *bu-shi* is inserted as a unit wherever appropriate.

Moreover, as discussed above, *bu* may represent three combinations of negative elements: *bu* alone, *bu* and Modal, and *bu* and *shi*. *Bu* alone may be followed by V, Modal or the focus marker *shi*. *Bu*-Modal occurs in conditionals or sentences with modality or a habitual reading, for example when they occur with intentional adverbs like *guyi* ‘deliberately’ or frequency adverbs like *tongchang* ‘usually’. As for *bu-shi*, it occurs before the elements which are focused on. The account given in this paper which

¹⁵ That *bu-zenme* is indeed a word formed in the lexicon can be further supported by the following example. As shown in the answer, *bu-zenmeyang* ‘not very nice’ is indeed a word, which can not be taken to be composed of two words *bu* + *zenmeyang*, since *zenmeyang* with the meaning ‘nice’ is not a possible word.

- Q: Ta zhei ge ren zenmeyang?
he this CL person how
‘How is this person?’
A: (i) Bu-zenmeyang.
‘Not very nice.’
(ii) *Zenmeyang.
‘Nice.’



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appeals to an abstract element in *bu* can well explain seeming counter-examples where the co-occurrence restrictions appear to be violated.

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中文的「不」：詞庫裡衍生的狀態否定詞

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「不」作為中文的否定詞並無法與時態詞如「了」共用，此外，「不」也無法與描述/結果結構中的第一動詞共同出現。黃(1988)認為[不V了]以及[不描述/結果結構]之所以不被接受是由於語意上的問題。黃認為「不」必須先附著於V上，然後「了」再附於[不V]上。然而[[不V]了]所合成的語意很怪異，因為未發生的事件不可說是已經完成了。[不描述/結果結構]也因類似的原因而不被接受。這篇文章所要探討的是：「不」是在何層次附著於V的？本文提出兩個證據來證明「不」在詞庫中即附著於V。第一個證據來自對「不」以及「了」兩個字身份的探討，討論結果顯示「不」必須是在詞庫中即附著於V才可解釋[不V了]的異常。另一證據則是來自焦點/對比標記，「是」以及「不是」，它們有著彈性的分佈位置。如果「不」是在詞庫中即附著於「是」，之後「不是」再以焦點/對比標記的身份加在句中，那麼「是」以及「不是」的彈性分佈位置便可獲得解釋。這篇文章的討論中並且顯示，「不」可代表三種組合：「不」單獨一字，「不」加語氣詞，以及「不是」。換言之，「不」並不如表面所顯示僅代表「不」一字。

