

Chapter 1

Introduction

Voice, either active or passive, is a grammatical category. The meaning and function of voice have been traditionally exploited and explained within the constraints of sentence context. For example, Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985) defined voice as “a grammatical category which enables us to view the action of a sentence in two ways without any change in the facts reported” (p.159). In a popular communicative grammar book, Leech and Svartvik (1975) further indicated that “the effect of changing into passive is to reverse the positions of the noun phrases acting as the subject and the object in an active sentence” (p.330).

1.1 Motivation

Many linguists have observed the differences in passive types in several languages, and a closer look reveals that different languages show different syntactic and semantic properties of passive construction (Siewierska 1984, Shibatani 1988, Huang 1999). The term “passive construction” will be used here for structures which are syntactically marked with some devices denoting passivity. This excludes what are usually called semantic passives of which, in the absence of any syntactic marker, the

passivity is expressed by the verb or by the patient's preverbal position, as in the sentence:

(1) *Nei ben shu chuban le.*

that CL book publish PFV

'That book was published.'

The passive construction in Mandarin Chinese has been extensively analyzed (Chao 1968, Li and Thompson 1981, Wang 1982, Her 1989, Peyraube 1989, Shi 1997, Ting 1998, Huang 1999, and Li 2007), while there are merely several researchers studying passive construction in Bahasa Indonesia (Chung 1976, McCune 1979, Sie 1988, Vamarasi 1999).

Some Chinese linguists (Li and Thompson 1981, Wang 1982, Hsueh 1989, Liu 1996) have mentioned some verbs that can or cannot occur in *bei* passives. On the other hand, most researchers of Bahasa Indonesia (McCune 1979, Sie 1988, Sneddon 1996, Djawanai 1999) investigated the syntactic structure of two passive types and discourse study of passives, but have not focused much on the discussion of passivized verbs. These previous studies indeed have mentioned and discussed some verbs which can or cannot be passivized. However, they have not yet provided a systematic categorization of those passive verbs. These facts suggest it is necessary for us to study passive verbs in both languages thoroughly.

1.2 Research questions

In contemporary Chinese, the *bei* form has the following structure: NP-Patient + *bei* (+ NP-Agent) + V + C, where C is a post-verbal constituent which can be a resultative, directional or locative complement, or an aspectual particle, or some other element. In the examples below, sentence (2a) has no Agent while sentence (2b) has both Patient and Agent.

(2) a. Ta *bei* pian le.

he BEI fool PFV

‘He was fooled.’

b. Ta *bei* Xiaoming pian le.

he BEI Xiaoming fool PFV

‘He was fooled by Xiaoming.’

Ignoring the post-verbal constituent, (2a) and (2b) correspond respectively to two passive constructions with *bei*, i.e., “*bei* + V” (short passive) and “*bei* + agent + V” (long passive).

Liu (1996) suggested that when the transformation rule of passive voice is applied, the object in an active sentence is changed into the subject. Therefore, the verb must be transitive in order to transform an active sentence into a passive one.

Tien (2000) also claimed that only transitive verbs can appear in Mandarin passives.

(3) Ta chang *bei* tongxue qifu.

3sg often BEI classmate bully

‘He is often bullied by the classmates.’ (Tien 2000:60)

(4) Ta *bei* yisheng jiu huo le.

3sg BEI doctor save PFV

‘He was saved by the doctor.’ (Tien 2000: 60)

Furthermore, he noted that some transitive verbs in Mandarin cannot freely go with the passive voice without any restrictions. Some complements must be added to make the whole sentence grammatical and compatible, as shown in (5).

(5) a. *Na jian maoyi *bei* mama xi.

that piece sweater BEI Mom wash

‘The sweater was washed by Mom.’ (Tien 2000:74)

b. Na jian maoyi *bei* mama xi de hen ganjing.

That piece sweater BEI Mom wash DE very clean

‘The sweater was washed clean by Mom.’ (Tien 2000:74)

Nevertheless, some transitive verbs still cannot occur in *bei* construction, although they appear with a resultative complement.

(6) *Xin *bei* xie hao le.

letter BEI write finish PFV

(7) *Na haizi *bei* ren taoyan le.

that child BEI people hate PFV

(8) *Wo *bei* mama xiang le.

1sg BEI Mom miss PFV

All the sentences above are not acceptable. What are the rules that govern the acceptability?

Fu (1992) argued that an intransitive verb is permitted in *bei* construction as long as it co-occurs with a resultative complement. In other words, without a resultative complement the intransitive *bei*-verb will be unacceptable.

(9) a. *Yanjing *bei* ta ku le.

eyes BEI 3sg cry PFV

b. Yanjing dou *bei* ta ku zhong le.

eyes even BEI 3sg cry swollen PFV

‘Even her eyes are swollen from crying.’

(10)a. *Ta de lian *bei* feng chui le.

3sg GEN face BEI wind blow PFV

b. Ta de lian *bei* feng chui hong le.

3sg GEN face BEI wind blow red PFV

‘Her face becomes red because of the wind.’

Instances (9a) and (10a) are unacceptable because the resultative complements of the intransitive verbs *ku* ‘crying’ and *chui* ‘blow’ do not appear. When the resultative complements *zhong* ‘swollen’ and *hong* ‘red’ follow the verbs *ku* ‘crying’ and *chui* ‘blow’ respectively, the passive sentences (9b) and (10b) become grammatical and acceptable.

Regarding the relation between passives and aspect, Wang (1958, 434) argued that modern passives, just like modern disposals, are required to state the result of the action. The argument is reasonable since speakers use passive voice to emphasize that patients have undergone something or have been affected by some action; therefore, there should be some result or change happening on patients. This notion was also supported by Xiao et al. (2006), who suggested that passive constructions syntactically marked by *bei* are closely linked to aspect. For example, syntactic passives in Mandarin Chinese convey an aspectual meaning of result that cannot be canceled when they interact with perfective aspect (cf. Xiao and McEnery 2004).

From the examples above, it can be concluded that not every verb in Mandarin Chinese can be passivized. Even some transitive verbs whose active forms have objects cannot be passivized. What are the criteria for a verb to be eligible for passivization?

On the other hand, passive in Bahasa Indonesia is marked by prefix *di-*, in which

di- is prefixed to the verb, the Theme (or Patient) is promoted to the surface subject, and the Agent is demoted to adjunct and is optionally headed by preposition *oleh* ‘by’.

The structure of *di*-passive in Bahasa Indonesia is: NP-Patient + *di*-Verb + (*oleh*) + NP-Agent. Like in Mandarin Chinese, passive in Bahasa Indonesia also has short passive and long passive, as shown in (11a) and (11b).

(11)a. Mobil itu *dijual*.

car that DI-sell

‘That car was sold.’

b. Mobil itu *dijual* (*oleh*) pemiliknya.

car that DI-sell by owner

‘That car was sold by the owner.’

Markus (2002) suggested that passive constructions in Bahasa Indonesia are mainly used with transitive verbs, like *membeli* ‘buy’, *membuka* ‘open’, *membaca* ‘read’, *menulis* ‘write’, which normally need an undergoer such as *buku* ‘book’ after all of these verbs. These transitive verbs are passivized by using *di*-root form, *di-beli* ‘be bought’, *di-buka* ‘be opened’, *di-baca* ‘be read’, and *di-tulis* ‘be written’.

(12)a. Dia membeli mobil mewah itu.

3sg MENG-buy car luxurious that

‘He bought the luxurious car.’

b. Mobil mewah itu dibeli oleh dia.

car luxurious that DI-buy by 3sg

‘That luxurious car was bought by him.’

(13)a. Ibu membuka jendela itu.

mother MENG-open window that

‘Mother opened the window.’

b. Jendela itu dibuka oleh ibu.

window that DI-open by mother

‘The window was opened by mother.’

However, intransitive verbs and other types of words such as nouns and adjectives must be transformed first into transitive forms through the affix *me-kan* before passivization can be done. For example, *datang* ‘come’ will become *men-datang-kan* ‘make someone come’, *rumah* ‘house’ will become *me-rumah-kan* ‘make someone stay at home’, and *bersih* ‘clean’ will become *mem-bersih-kan* ‘make something clean’. These active verbs are then passivized by using the *di-root-kan* form, e.g. *di-datang-kan* ‘be made to come’, *di-rumah-kan* ‘be made to stay at home’, and *di-bersih-kan* ‘be made clean’.

(14) a. *Pemerintah mendatang tenaga ahli dari luar negeri.

government MENG-come expert from abroad

b. Pemerintah mendatangkan tenaga ahli dari luar negeri.

government MENG-come-KAN expert from abroad

‘The government invited experts from abroad.’

(15) a. *Ibu sedang membersih rumah.

Mother (be in the process of) MENG-clean house

b. Ibu sedang membersihkan rumah.

mother (be in the process of) MENG-clean-KAN house.

‘Mother is cleaning the house.’

The ungrammaticality in (14a) and (15a) demonstrates that the occurrence of suffix *-kan* is obligatory for transivization, and affixation process of *-kan* precedes passivization. This is an interesting fact of *di-* passives in Bahasa Indonesia where suffixation process of a verb plays an important role.

Besides adding suffix *-kan*, some verbs require the addition of applicative suffix *-i* in both active and passive forms. For example,

(16) Polisi mendatangi rumah Ali kemarin.

Police MENG-come-I house Ali yesterday

‘The police visited Ali’s house yesterday.’

(17) Kemarin rumah Ali didatangi (oleh) polisi.

yesterday house Ali DI-come-I by police

‘Yesterday Ali’s house was visited by the police.’

In (15) and (16) the root verb *datang* ‘come’ is an intransitive verb. In these active sentences, the intransitive verb *datang* cannot occur in *me*-root form (**men-datang*), but it must be attached by suffix *-kan* to become *men-datang-kan* or attached by suffix *-i* to become *men-datang-i*, whereas the addition of the suffix changes the meaning of the derived verb. Following the affixation, these active verb forms are now transformable into the passive verb forms *di-datang-kan* and *di-datang-i*. The attachment of suffixes *-kan* or *-i* to the root verbs is obligatory. Otherwise, the verbs will become ungrammatical. The requirement of suffix addition in some passivized *di*-verb, especially for intransitive root verbs, is a language-specific feature of Bahasa Indonesia, which needs further explanation.

1.3 The objectives

From the above explanation we can make some comparison regarding passivization of verbs in both languages. In Mandarin Chinese, albeit the transitive verbs are basically convertible into passive *bei*, many verbs either transitive or intransitive require co-occurrence with resultative complements. Furthermore, the occurrence of intransitive root verbs in *bei* passive is very limited. In contrast, almost all verbs in Bahasa Indonesia can be passivized by attaching prefix *di-* to the verb. A

unique affixation step is widely conducted to modify a root verb, especially an intransitive root verb, making it become transitive and compatible for passivization.

This thesis combines corpus-based and contrastive approaches, seeking to provide a systematic explanation of passive construction in two typologically distinct languages, Mandarin Chinese and Bahasa Indonesia. On the basis of written corpus data, characteristics of passive verbs in the two languages regarding semantic features such as transitivity of the verbs will be explored. The objective of this study is to compare the similarities and differences of the core syntactic and semantic aspects of passive construction in Mandarin Chinese *bei* and Bahasa Indonesia *di-*, which have not been addressed in the literature.

A thorough analysis on semantic properties in both passives may be directed to explain the restrictions to verbs that may be passivized with regards to transitivity and aspect. Finally, the findings of this study are intended to bring crucial contributions for a better understanding on semantic characteristics of passive construction in Mandarin Chinese and Bahasa Indonesia.

1.4 Organization of the thesis

This thesis is organized as follows. Chapter one explains the topic selection background and formulates the research questions. Chapter two presents the

theoretical fundamental of passive and reviews some previous studies of *bei* passive and *di-* passives. Chapter three first introduces the corpus data, and then examines the eligibility of verbal stems to occur in passive construction in both languages with regard to a semantic feature of transitivity. A contrastive analysis disclosing the distribution and restrictions to verbal stems of *bei* passives and *di-* passives is also presented in this chapter. Finally, the results of this study are summarized in Chapter four and some further researches are suggested as well.

