

***Gei*-VP (*give*-VP) Construction and Mandarin Passives**

There are two views on the formation of passives. View 1 is UTAH compatible, namely the external argument is generated in the same syntactic position in both actives and passives. View 2 is UTAH incompatible, namely the external argument is introduced in passives as adjuncts. This study aims to show that these two mechanisms can exist at the same time in a single language. Instead of being contradictory, they are two mechanisms available in languages. Which mechanism the language takes depends on the functional morpheme inventory the language has and the availability of null pro. I will show this through the properties of *gei*-VP construction in Mandarin.

In Mandarin, *gei*-VP (*give*-VP) can appear *below* functional items used to form long passive *bei*-construction and causative *ba*-construction, but *never above them*. In (1) and (2), if we take *bei* and *ba* as semi-lexical functional heads used to form passives and causatives, we will find that *gei*-VP always appear lower than them. In addition, it is worth pointing out that *gei* in (1) and (2) is optional. These sentences are completely grammatical without *gei*. The tricky thing is that there seems to be very little interpretational difference when *gei* is absent. It poses the question as to what semantic contribution and syntactic function the particle *gei* has. Some Chinese linguists approach the phenomena from a pragmatic and functional perspective and argue that *gei* adds a ‘subjective attitude’, ‘emphasis locus’ or ‘peak of event’ to the interpretation, even though they do not provide a clear syntactic foundation for the source of this extra meaning.

- (1) huaping **bei** Zhangsan **gei** da-po le
vase BEI John GEI hit-broke Perfect
The vase was hit-broken by John.
- (2) Zhangsan **ba** huaping **gei** da-po le
John BA vase GEI hit-broke Perfect
John hit-broke the vase.

In this study, I argue that the underlying structures are very different in sentences with and without *gei*. When *gei* is present, *bei*-NP forms a constituent, and it is a PP as demonstrated in (3). When *gei* is absent, *bei* is a functional head that selects a secondary predicate IP as its complement. In (4), the NP following *bei* does not form a constituent with *bei*, but rather the subject in the secondary predicate clause. The analysis in (4) is the null operator (NOP) analysis of Mandarin long passives proposed by James Huang (1999). Note that (4) is not the same as the smuggling approach because the vP does not precede the *bei*-phrase, but (4) is compatible with UTAH¹. In this sense, I will treat (4) as compatible with View 1 and (3) compatible with View 2.

- (3) huaping [_{PP} **bei** zhangsan] **gei** da-po le]
vase [_{PP} **BEI** John] GEI hit-broke Perfect]
- (4) huaping **bei** [_{IP} NOP zhangsan da-po le (NOP)]
vase BEI [_{IP} NOP John hit-broke Perfect (NOP)]

There are several empirical reasons for the proposal above. First, a crucial difference between *gei*-VP and VP is that *gei*-VP is incompatible with agent, causer, instrument or experiencer in their original external argument position. For example, in (5) the predicate *chui-sui* (blow-broke) is fully compatible with an inanimate causer in the subject position. However, in (6a), when we replace VP with *gei*-VP, the causer subject cannot remain in its original position. Instead, the object must be moved to the preverbal position as shown in (6b). In addition, when *gei*-VP is used, it indicates an external force. This can be tested through the ‘by itself’ test and agent-oriented adverbs. (6b) is incompatible with ‘by itself’, and compatible with agent-oriented adverbs.

¹ Liu & Huang (2016) argues that smuggling is not a universal mechanism. They present empirical evidence to show that Mandarin preposes the object without smuggling the whole vP. They also mention that their approach is UTAH compatible as the DP after *bei* is still generated in the external argument position.

- (5) kuangfeng chui-sui le chuanguhu
 strong wind blow-broke Perfect window
 The strong wind blew-broke the window.
- (6) a. *Kuangfeng **gei** chui-sui le chuanguhu
 strong wind GEI blow-broke Perfect window
 The strong wind blew-broke the window.
- b. chuanguhu **gei** chui-sui le
 window GEI blow-broke Perfect
 The window was broken (by an external force)

The examples in (6) suggest that ‘*bei... gei-VP*’ and ‘*bei... VP*’ do not have the same underlying structure. If they do, we will have a structure below in (7). In the secondary clause, the causer appears with *gei-VP* predicate which is ungrammatical as shown in (6a). However, when *gei* is absent, in *bei...VP* construction, it is perfectly fine to analyse it in (8), because the secondary clause is grammatical just as in (5).

- (7) *window **bei** [_{IP} NOP strong wind **gei**-blow-broke Perfect (NOP)]
- (8) window **bei** [_{IP} NOP strong wind blow-broke Perfect (NOP)]

The example (6b) also leads some scholar to hypothesize that *gei-VP* has the same structure as short passive *bei-VP* as in (9). However, this view is untenable because *bei-VP* can never occur below long passive *bei* or causative *ba* construction as shown in (10) and (11) below.

- (9) huaping **bei** da-po le
 vase BEI hit-broke Perfect
 The vase was hit-broken.
- (10) *huaping **bei** Zhangsan **bei** da-po le
 Vase BEI John BEI hit-broke Perfect
 The vase was hit-broken by John.
- (11) *Zhangsan **ba** huaping **bei** da-po le
 John BA vase BEI da-po Perfect
 John hit-broke the vase.

I propose that in *gei-VP*, *gei* will introduce a null pro argument in the external argument position. Since null pro occupies the external argument position, it explains why *gei-VP* is incompatible with agent, experiencer, instrument, or causer in its base generated position. The null pro gets its reference from the DP in the by phrase. If we take Huang’s (1999) analysis of long and short *bei* passives in Mandarin, and incorporate the current proposal of *gei-VP*, we could summarize the typology as:

- (11) a. **long passives without *gei***: object **BEI** [_{IP} NOP subject VP (NOP)] A’ movement
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predication movement
- b. **long passives with *gei***: object [_{pp} **BEI** DP] [_{VP} pro_{subject} **GEI-VP** (object)] pro subject + PP
└──────────────────┘
EPP attracts object movement
- c. ***gei-VP* passives**: object [_{VP} pro_{subject} **GEI-VP** (object)] pro subject
└──────────────────┘
EPP attracts object movement
- d. ***bei-VP* short passives**: object **BEI** [pro_{object} VP (pro_{object})] A movement of pro object
└──────────┘
predication movement

The core idea is that there is a null pro and various functional items (*gei*, long passives *bei*, short passive *bei*) available in Mandarin. These functional items select different complement types. The null pro can occupy either subject or object position. These choices available and their interaction give rise to various forms of passives in Mandarin on the surface.