

### **Third International Workshop on Syntactic Cartography (IWSC2019):**

On what has been a regular fixture in the past few years, the biennial [Third International Workshop on Syntactic Cartography \(IWSC-3\)](#) took place on the 26th-27th October 2019 at [Beijing Language and Culture University \(BLCU\)](#). This happened at the end of Open Access Week in China and was preceded by a separate yet related workshop called 'Changing Boundaries' on the 25th, the programme of which can be downloaded [here](#). This year's joint event also had a special significance as it was the first IWSC to take place at BLCU after the establishment and inauguration of the Linguistics Department which was celebrated in [a similar event at the end of October 2018](#) (to which the author was also invited to present [a poster](#)), and these three days were marked by an impressive number of keynote and invited speakers as well as local and external presenters who assembled from all around the world to take part in what was to be a rich and dynamic academic forum on cutting edge issues in biolinguistics and formal cartography in a wide range of languages. I would like to place special thanks to members of the Philological Society for accepting my application to the Martin Burr Fund and for sponsoring my participation in such a prestigious event where I presented a paper entitled '[Chinese \*ba\* \(把\) and \*bei\* \(被\): Voice Applicatives and Argument Alternations](#)' for which I received some very constructive (and largely positive) feedback from some of the leading experts in our field. I am now in the process of incorporating it into my written work which I intend to submit to the forthcoming publication of the conference proceedings. Here is a synopsis of my oral presentation and the feedback I received:

Although Chinese *ba* and *bei*-constructions are two of the most seminal and thoroughly investigated topics in Chinese and theoretical syntax (see Li (2006) and Li (1993) for the research traditions on *ba* and *bei* respectively), there are some weaknesses in the mainstream movement analyses proposed by leading scholars such as Tsao (1987), Feng (1995) and Huang (1999):

BA- and BEI-constructions:

1) subject BA object i verb (PRO i) (Feng (2002a:148))

e.g. 李四 把 壞蛋 殺-了 (他)

Lisi ba huaidan sha-le ta

Lisi BA scoundrel kill-PERF him

'Lisi killed the scoundrel.' (Huang, Li, Li (2009:153))

2) object i BEI subject verb (PRO i) (Feng (2002a:148))

e.g. 張三 被 李四 打-了 (他)

Zhangsan bei Lisi da-le ta

Zhangsan BEI Lisi hit-PERF him

'Zhangsan was hit by Lisi.' (Huang, Li, Li (2009:112))

Since Wang (1959), *ba*- and *bei*-constructions have been identified as parallel constructions of object-preposing since in both constructions the object of the main lexical verb seems to be raised from its base-generated position in the lower VP to a higher position (object i ... PRO i), the copy of which can be resumed by a coreferential pronoun under certain conditions, and this has led to numerous postulations of A'-movement to either an internal Topic/Focus position in the case of *ba* (Tsao (1987), Bender (2000)) or to an operator position in the case of *bei* (Feng (1995), Ting (1998), Huang (1999)). However, while these analyses derive the surface word order, the many attested and documented Differential Argument Marking properties in both constructions, namely nominal and verbal markedness (Serzant and Witzlack-Makarevich (2018)), are not well accounted for. It has been pointed out that *ba* and *bei* involve referential, specific and/or known object arguments which cannot be non-referential even if bare (Zou (1995), Li (2006)):

3) 請 你 把 筆 給 我

qing ni ba bi gei wo

please you BA pen give me

'Please give me the/(\*a) pen.' (Li (2006:424))

However, A'-position to internal Topic/Focus is unlikely in light of the fact that it is not necessarily the case that the preposed object is referential/definite/specific/known but delimited, since there are examples of indefinite and non-specific objects being used in *ba*-construction which are finite and quantised (Ritter and Rosen (2000)):

4) 他 把 一-個 機會 錯過-了

ta ba yi-ge jihui cuoguo-le

he BA one-CL opportunity miss-PERF

'He missed an opportunity.' (Li (1997:94))

Furthermore, the lexical verb phrase can never be a bare verb (Feng (2002)) as it must be accompanied by aspectual markers (5a-b)), adverbs (6a-b)), nominal/clausal complements (7a-b)), or multisyllabicity (8a-b)):

5a) 他 把 那-個 房子 蓋\*(-好-了)

ta ba na-ge fangzi gai-hao-le

he BA that-CL house build-good-PERF

'He finished building the house.' (Liu (1997:63))

5b) 這-個 預算 被 立法院 刪\*(-了)

zhe-ge yusuan bei lifayuan shan-le

this-CL estimation BEI legislative.council delete-PERF

'This estimation was deleted by the legislative council.' (Chappell and Shi (2016:471))

6a) 你 能 不 能 把 書 \*(整整齊齊-地) 放?

ni neng bu neng ba shu zhengzhengqiqi-de fang

you can NEG can BA book orderly-ADV put

'Can you put the books in an orderly fashion?' (Feng (2002b:246))

6b) 張三 被 李四 打 \*(很多次)

Zhangsan bei Lisi da henduo ci

Zhangsan BEI Lisi hit many time

'Zhangsan was hit by Lisi many times.' (Feng (2012:117-118))

7a) 請 你 把 書 放 \*(在桌子-上)

qing ni ba shu fang zai zhuozi-shang

please you BA book put on table-LOC

'Please put the book on the table.' (Li (2006:392))

7b) 俞 大娘 被 安天寶 逗 \*(得 六神無主)

Yu daniang bei Antianbao dou de liushenwushu

Yu lady BEI Antianbao tease COMP totally.dazed

'Mrs Yu got teased by An Tianbao that she became totally dazed.' (Li (1993:71))

8a) 把 他們 \*(包)\*(圍)

ba tamen baowei

BA them surround

'surround them' (Feng (2002:249))

8b) \*他 被 太太 罵

ta bei taitai ma

he BEI wife scold

(intended) 'he is scolded by his wife.' (Chu (1973:441))

Moreover, a widely noted property of *ba*- and *bei*-constructions is that *gei* (給), which has been analysed as an unaccusative marker denoting affectedness (Tang (2001), Cao (2012)), can be optionally inserted in the lower lexical verb phrase (9a-b)), which suggests that the preposed object may in fact be merged in an A-position, namely the specifier of *gei* (Kuo (2010)).

9a) 一-把 火 就 把 阿房-宮 給 廢-了

yi-ba huo jiu ba afang-gong gei fei-le

one-CL fire then BA afang-palace GEI ruin-PERF

'One torch was enough to ruin A-fang Palace.' (Chappell and Shi 2016:471))

9b) 杯子 被 他 給 打-破-了

beizi bei ta gei da-po-le

cup BEI he GEI hit-break-PERF

'The cup got broken by him.' (adapted from Tang (2001:259))

In light of the fact that *bei* is merged higher than *ba* which is in turn higher than *gei*, the cartographic arrangement seems to be that *bei* (Passive) is merged above *ba* (Active) which is merged above *gei* (Affect), as seen in the following example:

10) 他 被 朋友 把 一-個 太太 給 騙-走-了

ta bei pengyou ba yi-ge taitai gei pian-zou-le

he BEI friend BA one-CL wife GEI cheat-go-PERF

'He was cheated of a wife by his friend.' (Chen (2003:1173))

The derivation of *ba*- and *bei*-constructions reveals new mechanisms of A-Merge, since in contrast to passivisation in Western European languages where the external argument is absorbed and the internal argument raised due to Case-theoretic reasons in accordance to Burzio's generalisation (Roberts (1987)), Spec-to-Spec A-Move is ruled out in the cartographic projection of BEI-BA-GEI (10)) by considerations of Minimality and Locality. Rather, the evidence in Chinese suggests that new arguments introduced by *bei* ('patient/beneficiary'), *ba* ('agent') and *gei* ('affectee'),

which are in line with their etymological origins are lexical verbs meaning 'to receive', 'to take/hold' and 'to give' respectively (Bennett (1981)), are coreferential with the corresponding thematic arguments in the lower verb phrase. This is reminiscent of Applicatives which, in the case of Chinese, seem to generate grammatical voice and argument-alternations above Asp(ect) (cf Zou (1995)), and since there is no deletion of arguments, the raised arguments are not moved via Case mechanisms but remerged by High Applicatives (Pylkkanen (2008)), which, in conformity to their cross-linguistic behaviour, are known for being sensitive to the thematic and event structure of verbal predicates.

Due to the tightness of time as there were so many presentations that each presentation was only allocated twenty minutes including Q&A, only one question was allowed straight after my presentation, and it was made by Professor Marcel den Dikken who asked whether it was possible to use *ba* and *bei* with set idioms, and if so, whether this would suggest that the object in the idiom could be raised via movement rather than be generated as new arguments by *bei/ba/gei*, which might pose as a counter-example to my analysis. This reminded me of Li's (2006) analysis where she does explicitly use phrasal idioms in Mandarin Chinese (e.g. 佔便宜 'to take advantage of', 開刀 'to have an operation', 幽默 'to be humorous', 小便 'to have a pee') to support her movement analysis as all such idioms are permissible in *ba*- and, by extension, *bei*-constructions, though she also recognises that there are constraints on *ba*-constructions as the raised object must have a certain thematic relationship with the lexical verb (one which is implicit in *gei*-insertion, namely affectedness), which also applies to set idioms (他把便宜(給)佔去了 'he took advantage of it', 他把刀(給)開完了 'he finished the operation', 別把默(給)幽壞了 'don't humour badly', 你趕快把便(給)小了吧 'hurry up peeing') and hence leaves open whether raising of idiomatic objects is as fully productive as movement would entail and if so, whether this would support object movement as opposed to my Applicative analysis. I pursued this discussion with Professor den Dikken afterwards and discussed some of the technical details with him and Professor Ian Roberts whose first book I cited (see above), and these discussions clarified certain technical details of my analysis for which I am very grateful. As the invited speakers were invited to the dinner banquet, non-invited presenters such as myself returned to our accommodation, and since most of us stayed at the same hotel in the vicinity of BLCU, I was able to say goodbye to most participants including the keynote speakers upon their sober return from the banquet. I held longer conversations with Dr Joseph Perry and Professor Roberts and we discussed more about the nature of IWSC-3 and how impressed we were by this year's edition, and as I made my way to the airport, I left our capital feeling not only a sense of mission accomplished but also a job well done.

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