

statement (see chapter 18, section 18.4). Thus (232) *a* and *b* convey similar messages:

(232) <i>a.</i>	<i>tā</i>	<i>hěn</i>	<i>hǎo</i>	—	<i>kàn</i>	<i>ba</i>
	3sg	very	good	—	look	SA

S/He is very good looking, don't you agree?

<i>b.</i>	<i>tā</i>	<i>hěn</i>	<i>hǎo</i>	—	<i>kàn</i> ,	<i>duì</i>	<i>bu</i>	<i>duì</i> ?
	3sg	very	good	—	look	right	not	right

S/He is very good looking, isn't s/he?

It is not surprising, then, that in general *ba* cannot be added to an utterance that is already marked as a question, as shown by the unacceptability of the sentences in (233):

(233) <i>a.</i>	* <i>tā</i>	<i>hǎo</i>	—	<i>kàn</i>	<i>bu</i>	<i>hǎo</i>	—	<i>kàn</i>	<i>ba</i> ?
	3sg	good	—	look	not	good	—	look	SA
<i>b.</i>	* <i>shéi</i>	<i>hē</i>	<i>jiǔ</i>	<i>ba</i> ?					
	who	drink	wine	SA					
<i>c.</i>	* <i>nǐ</i>	<i>hǎo</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>ba</i> ?					
	you	good	Q	SA					

The reason that *ba* cannot occur with question-word questions, A-not-A questions, and *ma* questions is straightforward: since these types of questions are already marked as questions whose function is to request certain types of information, in general they cannot be converted into a sentence type that requests the hearer to agree to some statement. Chao (1968:807) gives an interesting counterexample: (234) is a question-word question with *ba*:

(234)	<i>nǐ</i>	<i>dàodī</i>	<i>yào</i>	<i>shénme</i>	<i>ba</i> ?
	you	ultimately	want	what	SA

Tell me, what do you want?

Let us first contrast (234) with (235). Whereas (234) is acceptable, (235) appears unacceptable:

(235)	* <i>tā</i>	<i>yào</i>	<i>shénme</i>	<i>ba</i> ?
	3sg	want	what	SA

The difference between (234) and (235) is, first, that the subject in (234) is *nǐ* 'you', while in (235) it is *tā* 's/he'; and, second, that the adverb *dàodī* 'ultimately' is present in (234) but not in (235). Both of these points have to do with the context in which (234) might be used. The most natural context in which this sentence might occur is one in which two people are quarreling, and one finally says (234) in exasperation; the translation given in (236) gives an idea of the full message conveyed by (234):

(236) OK, don't you think you should let me know what in the world you want?

which clearly makes use of the function of *ba*, namely, soliciting agreement from the hearer that s/he should make his/her wishes clear. When the subject of the question is *tā* 's/he', however, as in (235), it is much more difficult to think of an analogous context in which the speaker requests the hearer to agree that *someone* else should make his/her wishes clear, as suggested in (237):

(237) OK, don't you think you should let me know what in the world s/he wants?

7.4 *ou*

The semantic function of *ou* can best be described as that of a friendly warning showing concern and caring on the part of the speaker. It signals the message 'Let me warn you or tell you in a friendly way'; we gloss it 'Friendly Warning', or *FW*. Chao (1968) correctly characterizes *ou* as a "warning reminder"; but it also has the connotation of friendliness, showing that the speaker is concerned. Thus, it is often used to soften a command, in which situation it converts the command into a concerned warning, as in sentences (238)–(240):

(238)	<i>xiǎoxīn</i>	<i>ou</i>
	careful	FW

Be careful, OK?

- (239) yào zuò gōngkè ou
must do homework FW

Listen, you'd better do your homework.

- (240) bié shēngqì ou
don't angry FW

Say, don't get angry, OK!

Another type of sentence that often can serve as a warning is the conditional sentence (see section 23.1.3 of chapter 23). Thus *ou* often occurs with conditionals. For example:

- (241) nǐ bu lái tā jiu shāng — xīn ou
you not come 3sg then wound — heart FW

Let me tell you, if you don't come, s/he'll be hurt.

- (242) rúguo tā qù Měiguó wǒ jiu mà tā ou
if 3sg go America I then scold 3sg FW

Let me tell you, if s/he goes to America, I'll scold him/her.

- (243) nǐ chī duō le jiu dùzi téng ou
you eat much CRS then abdomen hurt FW

Let me tell you, if you eat too much, you'll have a stomachache.

Because of the semantic nature of *ou*, it is commonly found in the speech of an adult addressing a child. Similarly, because of the implication of concern and care on the part of the speaker, *ou* will not occur in the speech of an adversary or in impersonal speech or writing. Thus, for instance, it is perfectly imaginable for a parent to warn a naughty child by saying:

- (244) wǒ yào dā nǐ ou
I will hit you FW

Let me tell you, (if you do this,) I will hit you.

On the other hand, though, it would be unimaginable or comical for one fighter to say (244) to another in a boxing ring or in a gang fight, because in these types of situations there is a lack of care and concern.

7.5 *a/ya*

A/ya performs the function of reducing the forcefulness of the message conveyed by the sentence; it is glossed as 'Reduced Forcefulness', or *RF*. Thus when *a/ya* is placed after an A-not-A question or a question-word question, it has the semantic effect of softening the query, in much the same way that the English preambles 'excuse me', 'by the way', and 'to change the subject' do, as observed by Chao (1968:804). The following examples illustrate A-not-A questions and question-word questions with the particle *a/ya*.⁷

- (245) shéi a/ya ?
who RF

Who is it?

- (246) nǐ qù nǎr a/ya ?
you go where RF

Where are you going?

- (247) nǐ xihuan bu xihuan zhèi — ge chēzi a/ya ?
you like not like this — CL car RF

Do you like this car?

- (248) nǐ xiǎng bu xiǎng tā a/ya ?
you think not think 3sg RF

Do you miss her/him?

When one contrasts the questions (245)–(248) and the same questions without the final particle *a/ya*, the first impression one has is that the questions with the particle are much softer and thus tend to suggest kindness on the part of the speaker. This effect, of course, is derived from the meaning of *a/ya*, which reduces the forcefulness of the message conveyed by the utterance.

For example:

- (4) tā bēi mà LE
3sg BEI scold PFV/CRS

S/He was scolded.

- (5) wǒ bēi qiāng LE
I BEI rob PFV/CRS

I was robbed.

We will present other variations of (1) later in this chapter. At this point, the two forms of the passive construction represented by (1) and (3) will be the focus of our discussion. First we will talk about their use and function in Mandarin, and then we will discuss their grammatical characteristics.

16.1 Use and Function

16.1.1 Adversity

The *bèi* passive in Mandarin, like those of Japanese, Vietnamese, Thai, and other Asian languages, is used essentially to express an *adverse* situation, one in which something unfortunate has happened. For instance:

- (6) jiǎozi bēi (gǒu) chī — diào LE
dumplings BEI (dog) eat — down PFV/CRS

The dumplings got eaten up (by the dog).

- (7) qiáo bēi (dà) — shuǐ chōng —
bridge BEI (big — water) wash —

zǒu LE
away PFV/CRS

The bridge got washed away (by the flood).

CHAPTER 16

The *bèi* Construction

The term *passive* in Mandarin is generally applied to sentences containing the coverb *bèi* with the following linear arrangement (where NP = noun phrase):¹

- (1) NP₁ bēi NP₂ verb

For example:

- (2) tā bēi jiějie mà LE
3sg BEI elder:sister scold PFV/CRS

S/He was scolded by (his/her) older sister.

This type of construction has the direct object noun phrase, that is, the thing or person affected by the action of the verb, in sentence-initial position. This direct object noun phrase is followed by the passive coverb *bèi*, which introduces the agent of the action. We will call this the *bèi* noun phrase. The verb occurs in sentence-final position, as it does in the *bǎ* construction. Thus, in sentence (2), the first noun phrase, *tā* 's/he', is the direct object of the verb *mà* 'scold'; the *bèi* noun, *jiějie* 'older sister', is the agent, the one who did the scolding.

Schema (1), however, is not the only form in which the passive construction can occur. There are a number of variations. One important variation of (1) occurs when the agent, NP₂, is not present:

- (3) NP₁ bēi verb

- (8) tā bēi (gōngsī) chēzhí LE
3sg BEI (company) fire PFV/CRS

S/He was fired (by his/her company).

- (9) nēi — zhī niǎo bēi wǒ — de
that — CL bird BEI I — GEN

érzi fàng — zǒu LE
son release — away PFV/CRS

That bird was let go by my son.

- (10) wǒ — de biāo bēi tōu — diao le
I — GEN watch BEI steal — away CRS

My watch has been stolen.

- (11) nǐ wéishenme bēi pǔ le
you why BEI arrest CRS

Why have you been arrested?

- (12) lǐngzi bēi tā sī — pò LE
collar BEI 3sg tear — broken PFV/CRS

The collar was torn by him/her.

- (13) qióng rén cháng bēi dìzhǔ yā - pò
poor person often BEI landlord oppress

The poor are often oppressed by the landlords.

- (14) hái zi bēi fùqin mà de bu zhīdào zěnmē
child BEI father scold CSC not know how

bàn LE
do PFV/CRS

The child was scolded by the father to such an extent that s/he didn't know what to do.

- (15) tā chángcháng bēi tā tàitai dǎ
3sg often BEI 3sg wife beat

He is often beaten by his wife.

- (16) tā yuànyì bēi rén xiào
3sg willing BEI person laugh

S/He is willing to be laughed at by people.

Once it is recognized that the major use of the *bèi* construction is to signal adversity, a number of interesting facts can be explained.

First of all, it has often been noted that the message carried by passive sentences with verbs of perception or cognition is unfortunate or pejorative, whereas the meanings of their verbs are neutral. Consider such verbs of perception or cognition as *kānjiàn* 'see', *fāxiàn* 'discover', and *tīng-dào* 'hear-arrive = able to hear'. They do not convey pejorative meaning by themselves or in nonpassive sentences, such as these:

- (17) wǒ kànjian nǐ le
I see you CRS

I saw you.

- (18) Dǎ-ěr-wén fāxiàn — le jìnhuà — lùn
Darwin discover — PFV evolution — theory

Darwin developed the theory of evolution.

- (19) wǒ tīng — dào — le yǔzhòu de wéiyǔ
I hear — arrive — PFV universe GEN murmur

I heard the murmur of the universe.

The *bèi* constructions containing such verbs, however, have implications of adversity. Thus, (20) implies that Zhangsan shouldn't have been seen or didn't want to be seen, (21) implies that 'that matter' has a pejorative aspect to it, or

should not have been found out, and (22) suggests that 'our conversation' should not have been heard:

- (20) Zhāngsān bèi rén kànjian le
Zhangsan BEI person see CRS

Zhangsan was seen by people.

- (21) nèi — jian shì bèi tā fāxiàn le
that — CL matter BEI 3sg discover CRS

That matter was discovered by him/her.

- (22) wǒmen — de huà bèi tīng — dào le
we — GEN speech BEI hear — arrive CRS

Our conversation was overheard.

Second, it has been observed by practically all Chinese grammarians that the number of *bèi* constructions that do not express adversity is increasing, particularly in the written language of modern China. This increase in the nonadversity usage of the *bèi* constructions in modern Chinese is clearly due to the influence of the Indo-European languages, especially English. In fact, Chao calls such nonadversity *bèi* sentences "translate." He states that "recently, from translating foreign passive verbs, 'by', or some equivalent in the Western language, is mechanically equated to *bèi* and applied to verbs of favorable meanings" (Chao [1968:703]). Elsewhere he explains that

a Chinese translator . . . uses a preposition *bèi* 'by' whenever he sees a passive voice in the original verb, forgetting that Chinese verbs have no voice. . . . Once this sort of thing is done often enough, it gets to be written in originals, even where no translation is involved. . . . Such "translate" is still unpalatable to most people and no one talks in that way yet, but it is already common in scientific writing, in newspapers, and in schools. [Chao (1970:155)]

According to another observer (Kiernan [1969:74–75]),²

a markedly increased use of the passive has perhaps been one of the striking syntactic trends in the development of Modern Chinese. . . . There has been a great deal of translation from foreign languages into Chinese during the past half century, including a perfect flood of Marxist material, which the Soviets translated and sold far below cost and which had a profound and continuing impact upon Chinese intelligentsia. The great majority of the translators were hacks, equipped with neither any real linguistic

sophistication nor even a very secure grasp of the languages involved and their stylistic niceties. They had learned another language in the most straightforward and mindless fashion: Here is a Russian verb *ispol'zovan* [which means 'is used, utilized']. What's the Chinese for that? *Bèi li-yòng* [where *li-yòng* means 'to take advantage of someone or something for one's own benefit'] and ever thereafter, when the Russian *ispol'zovan* crops up, it is doggedly translated *bèi li-yòng*, with never a thought that there might be some possibility of recasting the sentence to put it into idiomatic Chinese, avoiding the passive. Such patterns become enshrined in ritually-admired literature and thence they are imitated in other literature and are read aloud; and in no time people are speaking that way, with no idea that they are participating in radical linguistic change.

Although in spoken Mandarin the *bèi* sentence, as Chao points out, is confined primarily to the expression of adverse messages, from the written language and "translate" the nonadversity usage of the *bèi* passive has been extended into people's speech. This extension most naturally occurs with verbs representing usages borrowed or introduced into the language during the modern age, such as *xuǎn* 'elect', *jiěfàng* 'liberate', *fān(yi)* 'translate':

- (23) Zhāngsān bèi rénmin xuǎn zuò dàibiǎo le
Zhangsan BEI people elect serve:as representative CRS

Zhangsan has been elected by the people to be (their) representative.

- (24) shěng — chéng bèi jiěfàng le
province — capital BEI liberate CRS

The provincial capital has been liberated.

- (25) Losù — de shū yǐjīng bèi tā fān
Russell — GEN book already BEI 3sg translate
— chéng Zhōngwén le
— become Chinese CRS

Russell's book has already been translated into Chinese by him.

The mutual influence between the written and the spoken language is, of course, to be expected. In the case of the nonadversity usage of the *bèi* construction, the written language actually serves as a vehicle for the borrowing of a pattern from Indo-European languages into Mandarin.

The third point to be made is that it has been observed that the English passive often does not correspond to the *bèi* construction in Mandarin. In other words, what is normally best translated into an English passive sentence is often not a *bèi* sentence in Mandarin, and, conversely, an English passive sentence often does not translate into a *bèi* sentence in Mandarin. Here are some examples in which a Mandarin nonpassive sentence corresponds to an English passive sentence:

- (26) a. nèi — bēn shū yǐjīng chūbān le
that — CL book already publish CRS

That book has already been published.

- b. *nèi — bēn shū yǐjīng bèi chūbān le
that — CL book already BEI publish CRS

- (27) a. nǐ — de bāoguǒ shōu — dào le
you — GEN package receive — arrive CRS

Your package has been received.

- b. *nǐ — de bāoguǒ bèi shōu — dào le
you — GEN package BEI receive — arrive CRS

- (28) a. zhèi — ge yǎnjiǎng dēi jìlù — xià
this — CL lecture must record — descend

This lecture should be recorded.

- b. *zhèi — ge yǎnjiǎng dēi bèi jìlù —
this — CL lecture must BEI record —

xià — lái
descend — come

- (29) a. tā shuō de huà rén — rén dōu dōng
3sg say NOM speech person — person all understand

What s/he said was understood by everyone.

- b. *tā shuō de huà bèi rén — rén
3sg say NOM speech BEI person — person
dōu dōng
all understand

As shown by the above examples, the *b* sentences in (26)–(29), which are the *bèi* sentences, are unacceptable because they do not convey a message of adversity. The *a* sentences in (26)–(29), which are normally considered the equivalents of the English passive sentence in translation either from English to Mandarin or vice versa, are topic-comment constructions in which the direct object of the verb is serving as the topic. In other words, when one wishes to say something about the direct object of the verb in Mandarin, one simply makes the direct object into a topic. Thus, the topic prominence of Mandarin together with the restriction of the *bèi* construction to adverse messages combine to reduce the usage of the passive in the language. Any student of Chinese who is also familiar with an Indo-European language will notice that the passive construction is much more rare in Mandarin speech and writing than in the speech and writing of the Indo-European languages.

Another situation in which English uses a passive and Mandarin does not is when the focus is on the agent of the transitive action verb. For example, if one is discussing a novel and wishes to make it clear that his/her mother is the author, one may choose a passive construction in English to convey the message, as in (30):

- (30) This novel was written by my mother.

The Mandarin counterpart of (30) will be (31) *a*, a *shì* . . . *de* construction (see section 20.3 of chapter 20 on the *shì* . . . *de* construction), but not (31) *b*, a *bèi* passive construction. Sentence (31) *b* is unacceptable because 'writing a novel', in general, does not have any pejorative implication, though, as was pointed out above, such sentences as (25) can be found in 'translate':

- (31) a. zhèi — běn xiǎoshuō shì wǒ mǔqīn
this — CL novel be I mother
xiě de
write NOM

This novel was written by my mother.

16.1.2 Disposal

In addition to adversity, the *bèi* construction also expresses disposal in the same manner as the *bǎ* construction does (see chapter 15 on the *bǎ* construction). That is, the *bèi* sentence describes an event in which an entity or person is dealt with, handled, or manipulated in some way. This is why, just as with the *bǎ* construction, *bèi* is not found with verbs that do not signal disposal, even if they have adverse meaning. The following sentences are, thus, unacceptable:

- (35) *Lìsì bèi tā hèn — le
 Lisi BEI 3sg hate — PFV

(Lisi was hated by him/her.)

- (36) *tā bèi qì — le
 3sg BEI anger — PFV

(S/He was angered.)

- (37) *wǒ bèi tā tāoyàn — le
 I BEI 3sg be:sick:of — PFV

(S/He was sick of me.)

Since the *bèi* passive conveys the notion of disposal precisely as the *bǎ* construction does, our description of the disposal function of the *bǎ* constructions is applicable as well to the *bèi* passive, which, of course, has the added function of signaling adversity. We will therefore not repeat that description here. Instead, we will provide a brief summary and examples of the main points concerning the notion of disposal as they apply to the *bèi* construction. For the details, the reader is referred to chapter 15 on the *bǎ* construction.

(i) Just as with *bǎ*, the *bèi* construction allows the affected entity to be a noun phrase other than the direct object:

- (38) wǒ bèi tā bāng — le yī — zhī tuǐ
 I BEI 3sg tie — PFV one — CL leg

I had one leg tied up by him/her.

- b. *zhèi — běn xiǎoshuō bèi wǒ mǔqīn
 this — CL novel BEI I mother

xiě LE
 write PFV/CRS

Sentences (32)–(34) provide some more examples, similar to (31), in which the Mandarin equivalent of an English passive is a *shì* . . . *de* construction:

- (32) a. zhèi — ge fángzi shì Zhāngsān shèjì de
 this — CL house be Zhangsan design NOM

This house was designed by Zhangsan.

- b. *zhèi — ge fángzi bèi Zhāngsān shèjì LE
 this — CL house BEI Zhangsan design PFV/CRS

- (33) a. zhèi — ge zhèngcè shì tā tuījiàn de
 this — CL policy be 3sg recommend NOM

This policy was recommended by him/her.

- b. *zhèi — ge zhèngcè bèi tā tuījiàn LE
 this — CL policy BEI 3sg recommend PFV/CRS

- (34) a. nèi — fu huà shì tā huà de
 that — CL painting be 3sg paint NOM

That painting was painted by him.

- b. *nèi — fu huà bèi tā huà LE
 that — CL painting BEI 3sg paint PFV/CRS

The above examples illustrate that in Mandarin, it is the *shì* . . . *de* construction, not the *bèi* construction, which serves the function of placing the agent noun phrase in focus when the topic of the sentence is the direct object.

(ii) The *bèi* construction, like the *bǎ* construction, allows implied disposal, as in (39) which contains a complex stative construction clause (see chapter 22):

- (39) wǒ bèi tā qì de tóu dōu hūn le
 I BEI 3sg anger CSC head all dizzy CRS

I was angered by him/her to such an extent that my head got dizzy.

(iii) The disposal nature of the *bèi* construction, as with *bǎ*, is incompatible with the potential infixes, whether positive or negative, of resultative verb compounds (see section 3.2.3 of chapter 3 on resultative verb compounds). For example:

- (40) *wǒ bèi tā dǎ - de - sǐ
 I BEI 3sg beat - can - die

(I can be beaten to death by him/her.)

- (41) *nèi - ge yǐzi bèi tā nòng -
 that - CL chair BEI 3sg make -

bu - pò
 can't - broken

(That chair can't be broken by him/her.)

(iv) The disposal nature of the *bèi* sentence is incompatible with the negation of the verb only—that is, placing the negative particle, *bu/méi(yǒu)*, immediately in front of the verb so that only the verb lies in the scope of the negation (see chapter 12 on the scope of negation). The negative of a *bèi* sentence is formed by the placement of the negative particle in front of *bèi*, just as the negative particle is placed before *bǎ* in a *bǎ* sentence:

- (42) a. *wǒ bèi tā méi pīpíng
 I BEI 3sg not criticize

- b. wǒ méi bèi tā pīpíng
 I not BEI 3sg criticize

I wasn't criticized by him/her.

There is one notable difference between the *bǎ* construction and the *bèi* construction with regard to their shared disposal meaning: while the *bǎ* construction occurs freely as a command, the *bèi* construction cannot serve as a command except when it is negated with the negative imperative particle, *bié*. The reason is one of semantic incompatibility, in spite of the fact that the disposal meaning is generally conducive to the expression of commands. Recall that the first noun phrase of the passive construction is the direct object, not the agent, of the verb signaling disposal, whereas the first noun phrase of the *bǎ* construction is the agent of the verb signaling disposal. It makes sense to command the agent to carry out an action with a disposal meaning; but it is senseless to command the direct object with respect to the disposal action, because s/he or it has no control over the action. On the other hand, a command can be formed from a *bèi* sentence by the addition of the negative imperative particle, because commanding someone not to be the receiver of an action is tantamount to commanding him/her to do something to *avoid* an adverse experience. The following sentences are illustrations of this principle:

- (43) a. *(nǐ) bèi māo zhuā - le
 (you) BEI cat scratch - PFV
 (be scratched by the cat)
- b. (nǐ) bié bèi māo zhuā - le
 you don't BEI cat scratch - PFV

Don't get scratched by the cat.

So far we have shown that the passive construction with the particle *bèi* can best be understood in terms of its function of signaling adversity and disposal. We will next examine the structural properties of this construction.

16.2 Structural Properties

Several of the structural properties of the *bèi* construction have already been discussed in the preceding section, where its disposal meaning was presented. One of these structural properties concerns negation; another deals with the use of passive as a command. In chapter 8 on adverbs, the interaction between manner adverbs and the passive construction is described. The following structural properties of the *bèi* passive have not yet been mentioned, however.

16.2.1 Indirect Object Adversely Affected

The indirect object (see chapter 10) can represent the one adversely affected in a *bèi* sentence. Example (44) is a nonpassive sentence in which *wǒ* 'I' is the indirect object:

- (44) tāmen wèn — le wǒ xǔduō wèntí
they ask — PFV I many questions

They asked me many questions.

The passive counterpart of (44) is (45), in which *wǒ* 'I' is adversely affected:

- (45) wǒ bèi tāmen wèn — le xǔduō wèntí
I BEI they ask — PFV many question

I was asked many questions by them (as a harassment).

Very few verbs that take both an indirect object and a direct object can occur in the *bèi* construction with the indirect object 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. A few other verbs that do occur in passive sentences with the adversely affected indirect object include *tōu* 'steal', *qiǎng* 'rob', *duó* 'snatch', *yíng* 'win'. Here is an example with *tōu* 'steal':

- (46) tā bèi péngyǒu tōu — le qián
3sg BEI friend steal — PFV money

S/He was robbed of (his/her) money by a friend.

16.2.2 The *bèi* Noun Phrase Can Be Inanimate

The noun phrase immediately following *bèi* cannot refer to something that is being used by a person or an animate being to carry out an action; in other words, the *bèi* noun phrase cannot be an instrument noun phrase:³

- (47) *mén bèi yàoshi dǎ — kāi LE
door BEI key make — open PFV/CRS

Inanimate noun phrases that can effect action on their own can occur as *bèi* noun phrases in the passive construction, however, as long as an adverse situation can be

inferred. The following examples illustrate this phenomenon:

- (48) qìqiú bèi fēng chuī — zǒu LE
balloon BEI wind blow — away PFV/CRS

The balloon was blown away by the wind.

- (49) bōli bèi huǒ shāo — huà LE
glass BEI fire burn — melted PFV/CRS

The glass was melted by the fire.

- (50) nèi — jian yīfu bèi shuǐ
that — CL clothing BEI water

chōng — zǒu LE
wash away PFV/CRS

That dress was washed away by the water.

- (51) wǔding bèi xuě gài — zhu LE
roof BEI snow cover — firm PFV/CRS

The roof was covered by snow.

16.3 *bǎ* and *bèi*

Bǎ and *bèi* can occur in the same sentence (see chapter 15 for a discussion of *bǎ*):

- (52) wǒ bèi tā bǎ wǒ — de
I BEI 3sg BA I — GEN
dǎzìjǐ dǎ — pò LE
typewriter hit — broken PFV/CRS

What happened to me was that my typewriter was broken by him/her.

As this example illustrates, the *bǎ* noun phrase must occur after the *bèi* noun phrase, and this is for a logical reason: the one who disposes of the typewriter is the

agent (*tā* 's/he' in [52]), not the one affected (*wǒ* 'I' in [52]). Therefore, the agent, which is the *bèi* noun phrase, not the one affected, is the one that immediately precedes the *bǎ* noun phrase.

16.4 Variant Forms

At the beginning of this chapter, we mentioned the existence of variant forms of (1):

- (1) NP₁ *bèi* NP₂ verb
 direct object agent

One important variant form was already pointed out in (3), where the agent noun phrase is absent:

- (3) NP₁ *bèi* verb
 direct object

The most common variant forms involve substituting *bèi* with *gěi*, *jiào*, *ràng*. Thus (53) is well formed with any of the four passive markers:

- (53) *wǒ* $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{bèi} \\ \text{gěi} \\ \text{jiào} \\ \text{ràng} \end{array} \right\}$ *tā* *tōu* *—* *le* *liǎng* *kuài* *qián*
 I 3sg steal — PFV two dollar money

I had two dollars stolen by him/her.

Which of the four passive markers is preferred seems to depend on what dialect of Mandarin is being spoken. A distinction can be made, however, between *bèi* on the one hand and the last three markers in (53) on the other. *Bèi* has no meaning of its own. In other words, it is a function word, or a grammatical word. It has no meaning other than the function of occurring in the passive construction. The other three words, *gěi*, *jiào*, and *ràng*, besides being able to serve in the passive construction, are content words with independent meanings. *Gěi* is a verb meaning 'give', and it can also serve as the benefactive marker by immediately preceding the indirect object; *jiào* is a verb meaning 'call, be named, order'; and *ràng* is a verb

meaning 'let, allow'. Hence, when *bèi* is used in a sequence such as

- (54) NP *bèi* (NP) verb

the sentence unambiguously signals a passive construction. If, however, *gěi*, *jiào*, or *ràng* is used in place of *bèi* in (54), the sentence represented by the pattern given in (54) may be ambiguous. For example, (53) with *jiào* could mean, 'I told him/her to steal two dollars'; with *gěi*, it could mean, 'I stole two dollars for him/her'; with *ràng*, it could mean, 'I allowed him/her to steal two dollars'.

jiào and *ràng* also differ from *bèi* in that the former two cannot occur as a replacement for *bèi* in (3), where the agent noun phrase is absent. Thus, (55) is unacceptable:

- (55) **wǒ* $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{jiào} \\ \text{ràng} \end{array} \right\}$ *tōu* *—* *le* *liǎng* *kuài* *qián*
 I steal — PFV two dollar money
 (I was stolen two dollars.)

Speakers differ as to whether *gěi* may serve as a variant of *bèi* in pattern (3), where the agent is absent:

- (56) ??*wǒ* *gěi* *tōu* *—* *le* *liǎng* *kuài* *qián*
 I steal — PFV two dollar money
 I was stolen two dollars.

Two other variants of (1) involve the use of *jiào* . . . *gěi* and *ràng* . . . *gěi* in the following form:

- (57) NP₁ $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{jiào} \\ \text{ràng} \end{array} \right\}$ NP₂ *gěi* verb

The following examples illustrate (57):

- (58) Qín *cháo* $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{jiào} \\ \text{ràng} \end{array} \right\}$ Hān *cháo* *gěi* *miè* LE
 Qin dynasty Han dynasty Han dynasty overthrow PFV/CRS

The Qin dynasty was overthrown by the Han dynasty.

- (59) tā { jiào } dí — bīng gēi shā LE
3sg enemy — soldier kill PFV/CRS

S/He was killed by the enemy soldier.

- (60) fángzi { ràng } tā gēi shāo LE
house { jiào } 3sg burn PFV/CRS

The house was burned by him/her.

The occurrence of *gēi* in addition to *jiào/ràng* in a sentence having the form of (57) seems to strengthen the disposal function of the construction. It is, therefore, not surprising that this *gēi* may also occur in the *bǎ* construction for the same function (see chapter 15 on the *bǎ* construction):

- (61) tā bǎ nimen — de qiánchéng
3sg BA you:PL GEN future
gēi dānwù LE
ruin PFV/CRS

S/He ruined your future.

Notes

1. This chapter has benefited greatly from ideas found in Wang (1957), Chu (1973), and in (unpublished) lectures given by Stephen Wallace ('Adversative Passives') and Timothy Light ('Actively Passive').
2. Kiernan in turn credits these ideas to Paul Kratochvil. The comments in brackets have been added by us.
3. There isn't a grammatical category of instrument noun phrase in Mandarin. If a noun phrase is to denote an instrument, it is expressed grammatically as the direct object of the verb, *yòng* 'use', as in:

- (i) tā yòng yàoshi kāi mén
3sg use key open door

{ S/He opens doors with keys.
S/He uses keys to open doors. }

CHAPTER 17

Presentative Sentences

A *presentative sentence* performs the function of introducing into a discourse a noun phrase naming an entity. There are two ways in which this can happen: either the entity being introduced by this noun phrase can be claimed to exist or be located somewhere, as in (1), or it can be introduced by a verb of motion, as in (2):

- (1) chéng — lí yǒu gōngyuán
city — in exist park

There are parks in the city.

- (2) lái — le yí — ge kèrén
come — PFV one — CL guest

Here comes a guest.

In most languages of the world, the noun phrase naming the entity being presented in a presentative sentence is indefinite. It represents new information, information that the speaker assumes the hearer does not have at the time, and it typically occurs after the main verb of the presentative sentence. These two properties are true of the noun phrase being presented by the Mandarin presentative sentence as well: in fact, since sentence-initial position is the position for topics in Mandarin, and since noun phrases introduced for the first time into discourse cannot be topics (see chapter 4, section 4.1.1), it is clear why a presented noun phrase must follow the main verb of the presentative sentence. Let's consider in greater detail the two ways in which a noun phrase can be presented.