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*in Modern Chinese*

创刊·第1期 (2000. 10. JAPAN)

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# When Causatives mean Passive in Mandarin Chinese (1)

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**提要** 汉语的‘叫’和‘让’是使役的标识，但是在以下的条件下可以作被动解释：

(一) 句法结构上有一个位于主动词后的名词空语类，(二) 语意上与‘叫/让’共起的动词是表示状态变化或结果的完成动词或达成动词，(三) 语用上主句的主语和内含于‘叫/让’内的小句所表示的事件之间有一个‘内包’(Inclusive)的关系。

上述诸条件看似分属不同语法层次的问题，但是本文尝试用 Huang (1997)所提议的‘空运符移动’(Null Operator Movement)的概念予以作一个统一的解释。本文主张：

(一) ‘叫/让’句里的主动词后的名词空语类是一个具有‘照应性’(anaphoric)的运符，句法结构上它必须作 A'—移动，此移动在语意结构上导致‘ $\lambda$ —抽取’(Lambda Abstraction)，而将‘叫/让’致使动词后的补语小句转化成—个表述主句主语的述语。

(二) 作被动解的‘叫/让’句是使役及物句的不及物化(或更严格地说，‘作格化’(ergativization))。作格动词一般表示状态变化或结果，因此，作被动解的‘叫/让’句要求其后的动词是完成或达成动词。

(三) 主句主语和‘叫/让’后的小句之间的内包关系建立在主语和被上移的空运符之间的‘同指的’(coreferential)关系上。当‘叫/让’句作直接被动句解时，该空运符生成于内部宾语的位置上。当‘叫/让’句作间接被动句解时，该空运符来自外部宾语的位置。

关键词 'jiao/rang'-construction Accomplishment Achievement Resultative Verb  
Compounds OP- movement Inclusiveness/exclusiveness Causative/Ergative alternation  
Inner Subject/Outer Subject

## 0. Introduction

It is often noted that causative markers *rang/jiao* in Mandarin can function as passive markers<sup>1</sup>. However, the passive reading is possible only under certain restricted environments. Consider the following sentences.

- (1) a. wo rang ta da / la wo.<sup>2</sup>  
I RANG he hit / pull me  
'I had him hit / pull me.' (Causative)
- b. wo rang ta da le.  
I RANG he it Perf.  
'I was hit by him.' (Passive)  
'I had him hit (someone).' (Causative)
- c. wo rang ta la le.  
I RANG he pull Perf.  
'I had him pull (something).' (Causative)
- (2) a. wo rang ta jian wode toufa.  
I RANG he cut my hair  
'I had him cut my hair.' (Causative)
- b. wo rang ta jian le wode toufa.  
I RANG he cut Perf. my hair  
'I had him cut my hair.' (Causative)  
'I had my hair cut by him.  
= I was affected by his cutting of my hair.' (Passive)
- c. wo rang ta jian le Lisi de toufa.  
I RANG him cut Perf. Poss. hair  
'I had him cut Lisi's hair.' (Causative)

In (1) the passive reading is available, when the postverbal object is empty and refers to the subject, as seen in (1b). However, in the case of the verb 'pull', even if the postverbal position is empty, no passive reading is available, compare (1b) and (1c). In (2) the passive reading is possible only if a) there is a perfective maker 'le' existing, as shown in the contrast between (2a) and (2b), and b) there is an 'aboutness' relation (an inalienable possession) between the object

and subject, as seen in the contrast between (2b) and (2c). That is, contrary to (2c), the object 'hair' in (2b) has to be interpreted as belonging to the subject.

This observation suggests that the *rang* construction receives a causative reading basically, but receives a passive reading only under certain restrictions. Then the question arises as to under what kind of restrictions is a passive reading available in *rang* construction.

Traditionally, *rang/jiao* are treated as elements to form 'jian-yu-shi'<sup>3</sup> ('pivotal constructions') where the NP following *rang/jiao* functions both as an object of *rang/jiao* and as a subject of the embedded clause as follows:

(3) [<sub>S</sub> *rang/jiao* [<sub>S</sub> NP [<sub>VP</sub> V NP]].<sup>4</sup>

Now consider (2b), which is ambiguous in causative/passive reading. In causative it means 'I caused the event that he cut my hair', whereas in passive it means 'I was affected by the event that he cut my hair'. Obviously, the matrix subjects in both sentences have different interpretations; it is a Causer in the former, but an Experiencer in the latter. Both sentences are in common in that they involve two events, but different in the relation between the matrix subject and the second event<sup>5</sup>:

(4) [<sub>EVENT1</sub> I *rang* [<sub>EVENT2</sub> he cut my hair]].  
 a. Causative: Causer(I) → Event [he cut my hair] (→: the direction of affecting)  
 b. Passive: Experiencer (I) ← Event [he cut my hair]

If we apply structure (3) to (4), the questions arise as to a) why *rang/jiao* assign different theta roles to a position in the same structure, and b) what factor plays a role in the shift of theta roles in the argument structure.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, consider the contrast between (1a) and (1b) again. The obvious distinction between them is the gap in the object position, which appears in a passive reading but not in a causative reading. Most importantly, the gap is co-referential with the matrix subject. Does this mean that the passive is derived from the causative by an NP movement from the object, as is always suggested for the English *be*-passive? However, as shown in (2b), even when no gap is in the object position, the passive reading is still available.

The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to explore these questions, summarized as follows:

- a) Under what conditions can a causative have a passive reading?
- b) What is the syntactic structure of *rang/jiao* in Mandarin? And how can the semantic interpretation be mapped onto the structure with respect to the ambiguity of causative/passive?
- c) What is the mechanism triggering the passive in the *rang/jiao* construction? Is it possible to explain the difference between the passives with the postverbal gap and the ones without the postverbal gap in a uniform fashion?

In section 1, we will show what conditions constrain the passive reading in the *rang/jiao* construction on a descriptive level. Then, in section 2 and 3, we will show how the ambiguity of the causative and the passive can be represented in the syntactic structure of the *rang/jiao* construction. We will argue that causative and passive basically have the same syntactic structure, and the different interpretation between them is due to a null Operator movement from the empty object, as suggested by Huang (1997) for *bei*-passive in Mandarin, involved in the passive but not in the causative. Finally, in section 4, we will relate the analysis of null OP movement to the restrictions discussed in section 1, and argue that these restrictions in fact come from the requirement of a structure involving the null OP movement.

## 1. Restrictions for Passive Readings in *Rang/Jiao* Construction

### 1.1 Empty Object Position

Consider the following contrasts.

- (5) a. Zhangsan rang Lisi sha le.  
       RANG       kill Perf.  
       ‘Zhangsan was killed by Lisi.’
- b. Zhangsan rang Lisi sha le Wangwu/ta / ziji.  
       RANG       kill Perf.           him self  
       ‘Zhangsan had Lisi kill Wangwu/ him/ himself.’
- c. Zhangsan rang Lisi lai le / bian-de geng piaoliang.  
       RANG       come Perf.       become more beautiful  
       ‘Zhangsan had Lisi come/ become more beautiful.’

Let us ignore the cases of indirect passives as in (2b) above at this moment, which will be discussed later. Compare (5a) with (5b). Assuming both have the same structure, it must be agreed that there is a gap in the object position of (5a). So, the difference between a causative and a direct passive is that there is an empty object in the latter but not the former. In (5b) even an anaphoric pronoun *ziji* ‘-self’ that can refer to the matrix subject appears in the postverbal position, however a passive reading is still unavailable. In (5c) since ‘come’ is an intransitive verb and ‘become’ requires an adjective as its complement, there is no empty object licensed and only a causative reading is possible.

### 1.2 the Semantic Properties of Verbs

Compare the following sentences.

- (6) a. ta rang wo sha le, (\* dan mei si ).

- he RANG I kill Perf. but Neg. die  
 'He was killed by me ( \* but he didn't die.)
- b. ta rang wo la le (dan mei dao).  
 he RANG I pull Perf. but Neg. fall  
 'He had me pull (something).'  
 '\* He was pulled by me ( but he did not fall down).'
- c. ta rang wo la -dao le (\*dan mei dao) .  
 he RANG I pull-fall Perf. but Neg. fall  
 'He was pulled by me and fell down ( \* but he didn't fall down) .'

The contrasts show that only verbs that implicate the resultative/ accomplished /achieved state of an action can license the passive reading of a *rang* construction. For example, in (6b) the verb 'pull' is an active verb that does not implicate the result of the action, therefore, the sentence has a causative reading only.<sup>7</sup>

The same restriction can apply to the indirect passive.

- (7) a. wo rang ta jian toufa (dan ta mei jian).  
 I RANG he cut hair but he Neg. cut  
 'I had him cut (my) hair (but he didn't cut it).'
- b. wo rang ta jian le toufa (\*dan ta mei jian).  
 I RANG he cut Perf. hair but he Neg. cut  
 'I had my hair cut by him (\*but he didn't cut it).'

Perfective aspect 'le' plays a role in this case, since it implicates the accomplishment of the action. Thus, (7a) without perfective 'le' attached to the embedded verb is interpreted only as causative.

However, not all of the verbs that denote a resultative/accomplished /achieved state can license the passive reading, for example:

- (8) a. zhe shuang xie rang wo chuan-po le. (zhe shuang xie po le)  
 this pair shoes RANG I wear-broken LE this pair shoes broke LE  
 'This shoes were worn out by me so that they are torn/broken.  
 ( These shoes broke.)'
- b. \*zhe shuang xie rang wo chuan-guan le. (wo xiguan le)  
 this pair shoes RANG I wear-getting used to LE I get used to LE  
 'These shoes have been well worn into by me.  
 ( I got used to them.)'

The difference between these two Resultative Verb Compounds (henceforth, RVC) is that in

*chuan-po* (wear-broken) it is the theme that is predicated by the resultative state (broken), hence, (8a) entails 'the shoes broke'. On the other hand, in *chuan-guan* (wear-getting used to) it is the agent /experiencer that is predicated by the resultative state (getting used to), therefore, (8b) entails 'I got used to the shoes'<sup>8</sup>. Therefore, only the verbs denoting a resultative state of the theme can license a passive reading in the *rang/jiao* construction.

One of the important properties for these verbs discussed above is that they form a causative/ergative alternation. Given the ergative is an intransitive counterpart of the causative and always denotes a resultative state of an action, it is natural to say that the causative verbs with its intransitive counterpart must implicate a resultative / accomplished /achieved state. Compare the following pairs:

(9) a. wo yijing sha le ta.  
I already kill Perf. him  
'I have already killed him.'

b. ta yijing sha le.  
he already kill Perf.  
'He has already been killed.'

(10) a. wo yijing la le ta.  
I already pull Perf. him  
'I have already pulled him.'

b. ta yijing la le.  
he already pull Perf.  
'He has already pulled (something). / \* He has already been pulled.'

(11) a. wo chuan-po le zhe shuang xie.  
I wear-broken Perf. this pair shoes  
'I wore these shoes and caused these shoes to be broken.'

b. zhe shuang xie chuan-po le.  
this pair shoes wear-broken Perf.  
'These shoes are worn out (and torn).'

(12) a. wo chuan-guan le zhe shuang xie.  
I wear-getting used to Perf. this pair shoes  
'I wore and got used to these shoes.'

b. \*zhe shuang xie chuan-guan le.  
this pair shoes wear-getting used to Perf.  
'These shoes were worn and got used to.'

The active verbs such as *la* ‘pull’ in (10) and the agent-predicating RVCs like *chuan-guan* ‘wear-getting used to’ in (12) cannot have the ergative alternation, whereas the causative verbs like *sha* ‘kill’ in (9) and the causative RVCs like *chuan-po* ‘wear-broken’ can<sup>9</sup>.

To conclude, another restriction under which the *rang/jiao* construction can be licensed as the passive is that the verb in the embedded clause must implicate the resultative state/accomplished/achieved state. Generally, these verbs have the ergative alternation and hence are classified as causative verbs or verb compounds<sup>10</sup>.

### 1.3 the Effect of the Inclusive

Consider the following examples.

- (13) a. *wo rang ta jian le Zhangsan de toufa.*  
 I RANG he cut Perf. Poss. hair  
 ‘I had him cut Zhangsan’s hair.’
- b. *wo rang ta jian le (wode) toufa.*  
 I RANG he cut Perf. (my) hair  
 ‘I had him cut my hair.’  
 ‘I was affected by his cutting of my hair.’

(13a) has only the reading of the ‘exclusive causative’, whereas (13b) is ambiguous in the ‘inclusive causative/ passive’.<sup>11</sup> (13a) is exclusive in the sense that the matrix subject (Causer = I) is not involved in the second event [he cut Zhangsan’s hair]. On the other hand, (13b) is inclusive through a possessive relation: [EVENT<sub>1</sub> I caused [EVENT<sub>2</sub> he cut my hair]]. Obviously, a passive reading is licensed in the *rang* construction only if there is an inclusive relation (affectivity) so that the matrix subject is affected by the caused event.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, not only is the indirect passive like (13b) inclusive, but the direct passive in the *rang* construction must also be inclusive, for example:

- (14) *ta rang wo sha le.*  
 he RANG I kill Perf.  
 ‘He was killed by me.’

In (14) the matrix subject is involved in the second event through the referential relation between it and the gap in the second event:

[he<sub>i</sub> rang [EVENT<sub>2</sub> I kill e<sub>i</sub>]].

All passives must be inclusive, but not necessarily vice versa. For instance, in (15) below, the inclusive relation is confirmed, nevertheless the passive reading is unavailable.

- (15) *ta rang wo sha le ta.*



he RANG I kill Perf. him  
'He had me kill him.'  
'\* He was killed by me.'

(15) is ruled out in a passive reading due to its violation of another constraint (at least, for the direct passive) that requires an empty gap in the postverbal position, as mentioned above.

#### 1.4 Summary

To summarize the discussion so far, the passive reading of the *rang/jiao* construction is available only if the following conditions are satisfied:

- a) Structurally, there is an empty gap in the postverbal object position, at least for the direct passive<sup>13</sup>.
- b) Semantically, the verb selected by *rang/jiao* implicates a resultative / accomplished / achieved state which predicates the patient/theme. Generally, these are verbs that can alter with their ergative forms, and the ergative always expresses the resultative /accomplished/achieved state of a patient/theme.
- c) Pragmatically, there is an inclusive relation between the matrix subject and the second event denoted by the embedded clause. An indirect passive is inclusive through the aboutness relation such as possession, whereas the direct passive is inclusive through the co-referentiality between the subject and the postverbal gap.

In the following discussion, we will show how these restrictions are related to the syntactic structure of the *rang/jiao* construction, and especially how the ambiguity of a causative/passive reading can be expressed in the structure.

(The following discussions, 2.The structure of the causative *rang/jiao* construction, 3.The structure of the passive *rang/jiao* construction, 4.Null OP movement and the conditions on the passive , are continued in the next issue.)

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> There is another passive marker *bei*, which is used in passive only. According to Hashimoto (1987,1988), *bei* developed from the transitive verb meaning 'undergo' in Archaic Chinese, whereas *rang/jiao* developed from their original causative use meaning 'cause/let' through a process of language contact of Mandarin with Altaic languages at a later stage.

<sup>1</sup> *Rang* and *jiao* developed from different sources of lexical verbs meaning 'allow' and 'tell/order' respectively. However, they are neutralized in the causative and passive usage. Henceforth, we will only use *rang* in examples for simplification. At least for all examples in this paper these are interchangeable, although these are different in that *jiao* only takes an animate NP as a causee while *rang* can take all kinds of NPs as its causee.

<sup>1</sup> 'jian-yu-shi' : a form with one word having two grammatical functions/roles (Chao 1968 among others).

<sup>1</sup> See Shen (1996) for a different approach. According to him, *rang/jiao* are 'lian-dong-shi' (serial verb construction) verbs with the structure [ <sub>VP</sub> [ <sub>VP</sub> rang NP ] [ <sub>VP</sub> V NP ] ].

<sup>1</sup> See Washio (1997, p.59) for analyzing the have-construction in English along the same line.

<sup>1</sup> As pointed out by Washio(1993,p.68) a similar shift of theta-roles is also seen in Japanese. However, in contrast to Mandarin, in Japanese the causative and passive are morphologically distinguished (-*(s)ase* vs. -*(r)are*). In other words, in Japanese the shift of theta-roles is morphologically licensed, whereas it is not in Mandarin.

i) John-wa Mary-ni kami-o kir-aseta. ii) John-wa Mary-ni kami-o kir-are ta.

-Top. -Dat. hair-Acc. cut-Caus. -Top. -Dat. hair-Acc. cut-Pass. 'John caused the event that Mary cut his hair.' 'John was affected by the event that Mary cut his hair.'

<sup>1</sup> See Sasaki (1997) for a similar prediction, and Toshima (1988, p. 102-104) for the same restriction for *bei* passive in Mandarin.

<sup>1</sup> See Toshima (ibid.) and references cited there for more detail in RVCs in Mandarin.

<sup>1</sup> Both the causative verb and the causative RVCs discussed here are formed in lexicon, hence are called 'lexical causative', contrary to the *rang* construction, which is formed in syntax, hence 'productive causative'. For the distinction between the lexical and the productive causative see Washio (1997, p. 9). Cheng, Huang, Li, Tang (1997a) argue that the causative RVCs are formed in lexicon in Mandarin but in syntax in Taiwanese, based on the evidence of definiteness of the postverbal NP.

<sup>1</sup> The so-called 'reason causative' (Sasaki, 1997,p.137) marker *shi* 'cause' never can be used in the passive, contrary to *rang/jiao*. This might be due to the fact that *shi* never takes an agentive subject in the embedded clause:

i) wo shi ta chuan-guan zhe xie. (Active RVC)

I SHI he wear-getting used to this shoes  
'I caused him to wear and get used to these shoes.'

ii) wo shi ta chuan-po zhe xie. (Causative RVC)

I SHI he wear-broken this shoes  
'I caused him to wear and have these shoes broken.'

iii) wo shi ta chijing. (Intransitive)

I SHI he surprised  
'I caused him to be surprised.'

iv) \* wo shi ta sha ren. (Causative)

I SHI he kill people  
'I caused him to kill people.'

However, the distinction between *shi* and *rang/jiao* in the causative interpretation needs a further exploration.

<sup>1</sup> For 'exclusive' vs. 'inclusive' in English *have*-construction and French, Korean and Japanese see Washio (1993, 1997).

<sup>1</sup> According to Washio(ibid.), languages differ in whether an exclusive passive is allowed or not. For example, Japanese allows an exclusive passive, so-called 'adversity by the exclusive':

i) John-wa Mary-ni Tom-no kodomo-o home -rare -ta.

-Top. -Dat. -Gen. Child-Acc. praise- Pass- Past  
'John suffered by Mary's praising of Tom's child (not his own child).'

<sup>1</sup> This condition, at this moment, applies to the direct passive only, although we will show in the following discussion that indirect passive also involves an empty object position. However, it is different from that of the direct passive, being preverbal rather than postverbal.

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# 语言研究

2000年第3期(総第40期)  
二〇〇〇年八月

朋友書店発売  
B5判 127頁 1,200円(税別)

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