

From WEI...SUO passives to BEI passives: a diachronic analysis (a talk or a poster)

Background: This paper analyzes two passive constructions in Chinese: the WEI...SUO passives (WS passives) as shown in (1a) and the BEI passives, as in (1b). Both constructions embed an agent and a verb under the matrix predicate, WEI and BEI respectively. The matrix subject is interpreted as the internal argument of the embedded verb. The WS passives started to appear in Late Classical Chinese (5th ~ 3rd centuries BCE). It was replaced by BEI passives in around 5th century CE.

- (1) a. 負石自投於河，為河鱉所食。 (Zhuangzi, Daozhi)
fu shi zi tou yu he wei hebie suo shi
bear rock self throw into river WEI tortoise SUO eat
'(he), bearing a rock, threw himself into the river. (he) was eaten by a tortoise.'
b. Zhangsan bei Lisi piping le.
Zhangsan BEI Lisi criticize ASP
'Zhangsan was criticized by Lisi.'

Proposal: In this paper, I propose that WS passives and BEI passives have similar syntactic constructions, as shown in (2). Both constructions embed a *vP* under the matrix predicate. I propose that the diachronic development from WS passives to BEI passives involves two steps: a. the loss of SUO; b. the lexical replacement of WEI with BEI.

- (2) a. [_{v2P}Matrix Subj_i[_{v2'}WEI[_{v1P}Op_i[_{v1'}Agent[_{v1'}SUO[_{EPP}] [_{VP}V *t*_{Op_i}]]]]]]] WS passives
b. [_{v2P}Matrix Subj_i[_{v2'}BEI [_{v1P} Op_i [_{v1'} Agent [_{VP} V *t*_{Op_i}] le]]] BEI passives

Evidence for the structure of WS passives: 1. functional projections above *vP* are not allowed between WEI and SUO: *first*, imperative negator *wu* 'do not', which is associated to CP layer, precedes WEI, as in (3a). *second*, modal *jiang* 'will', which heads a TP (Aldridge 2011), precedes WEI, as in (3b). *third*, subject-oriented quantifier *jie* 'all', which is argued to be located outside *vP* (Aldridge 2011), precedes WEI, as in (3c). *fourth*, temporal adverb *jin* 'now', which is a TP adjunct, are not allowed between WEI and SUO, as in (3d). 2. SUO precedes *vP*-internal functional projections. I show that the SUO in WS passives and the SUO in existential relative constructions (ER) (4) are syntactically parallel. As (5) shows, this type of SUO in precedes the high applicative head *yi*.

- (3) a. 無為吏所獲。 (Sanguo Zhi, 1)
wu wei li suo huo.
do.not WEI officer SUO catch
'Do not be caught by officers.'
b. 今不早圖，將為所制。 (Sanguo Zhi, 6)
jin bu zao tu, jiang wei suo zhi.
now Neg early consider will WEI SUO control
'If we do not consider it earlier now, we would be controlled by it.'
c. 道逢匈奴騎多，皆為所殺。 (Houhanshu, liezhuan 9)
dao feng xiongnu qi duo jie wei suo mo
road encounter Hun cavalry many all WEI SUO kill
'(they) encountered many Hun cavalries on their road, all of (them) were slaughtered.'
d. 今為賊所圍。 (Sanguozhi, Wu 4)
jin wei zei suo wei
now WEI rebel SUO surround
'Now (we) are surrounded by rebels.'
(4) 大夫有所往。 (Liji, yuzao)
daifu you suo wang
grand master have SUO go
'The grand masters has someplace to go.'
(5) 夫天生蒸民，有所以取之。 (Xunzi, rongru)
fu tian sheng zhengmin, you suo yi qu zhi.

PAR heaven give.birth people have SUO Appl. take them.

'As the heaven gives birth to people, it has its ways to control them.'

Evidence for the structure of BEI passives: 1. the embedded clause in BEI passives is non-finite and thus lacks CP layer. Lin (2011) argues that MC root modals (such as *neng* 'be able to') take nonfinite TPs as their complements. He observes that in root modal sentences, the sentential final perfective particle *le* is only allowed to take a wide scope, as in (6). This is not surprising since the embedded nonfinite T is not able to provide the reference time to license the perfect aspect. Consequently, the *le* can only be licensed by the matrix finite T. Mandarin long passives demonstrate the same property with respect to the scope of *le* (7). This indicates that the clause embedded under *bei* is nonfinite. 2. functional projections above vP are not allowed between BEI and the embedded agent. Therefore, only vP is embedded under BEI. *First*, modal auxiliaries *neng* and *yinggai* are never allowed to be embedded under *bei*. In addition, the negator *mei/bu* may not appear under *bei* either. What these elements share in common is that they are higher than vP (Paul and Whitman 2008). *Second*, temporal adverbs (such as *jintian* 'today'), which adjoin to TPs, are not allowed to be embedded under *bei*, as in (8).

(6) Zhangsan neng qu Taipei le. (Lin 2011: 53)

Zhangsan be-able-to go Taipei PERF

le > *neng*: Zhangsan [[neng qu Taipei] le] 'It has become the case that Zhangsan is able to go to Taipei.'

neng > *le*: Zhangsan [neng [qu Taipei le]] *'Zhangsan is able to have gone to Taipei.'

(7) Zhangsan bei Lisi da le.

Zhangsan BEI Lisi beat PERF

le > *bei*: Zhangsan [[bei Lisi da] le] 'Zhangsan has suffered from the fact that Lisi beat him.'

bei > *le*: Zhangsan [bei [Lisi da le]] *'Zhangsan is suffering from the fact that Lisi has beaten him.'

(8) *Zhangsan bei Lisi jintian da le.

Zhangsan BEI Lisi today beat PERF

'Zhangsan was beaten by Lisi today.'

Diachronic analysis: I propose that the diachronic change involves two steps: 1. the loss of SUO; 2. the lexical replacement of WEI by BEI. *First*, in Classical Chinese, SUO co-occurs with a gap in the internal argument position. Beside WS passives and ER constructions, SUO was also used in object relative clauses (OR), as shown in (9a). Aldridge (2011) proposes that in ORs, the SUO heads a nominalized TP and values the subject with genitive case, as in (9b). She noted that SUO was obligatory for ORs until the 1st century CE. She argued that the loss of SUO was related to the loss of the nominal layer, which was triggered by the loss of morphological distinction between cases in Early Middle Chinese. I propose that the loss of SUO in ORs triggered the loss of SUO's relation with the internal argument gap, which led to the loss of SUO in WS passives. Since the SUO in WS passives was not related to genitive case licensing, it was not initially affected by the loss of case distinction in the 1st century CE. Therefore, WS passives declined much later than ORs. *Second*, the loss of SUO triggered structural ambiguity in WS passives, which led to the lexical replacement. Since WEI was also a copula verb at that time, the 'WEI + Agent + verb' form could be analyzed as a copula construction. Therefore, BEI, which was already a passive marker at that period, was used to disambiguate the construction.

(9) a. 人 之 所 畏 (Laozi 20) b. [TP Sub]_[Gen] [T SUO]_i [vP Op]_i [v' t_{Subj}. [v [VP t_{Op}]]]]

ren zhi suo wei

person GEN SUO fear

'what people fear'

Reference

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