Chapter 5 The *Ba* Construction

The basic facts about *ba* are deceptively simple:

(1)  a. Lisi sha-le na-ge huaidan.
    
    Lisi kill-LE that-CL scoundrel
    
    ‘Lisi killed that scoundrel.’

b. Lisi ba na-ge huaidan sha-le.
    
    Lisi BA that-CL scoundrel kill-LE
    
    ‘Lisi killed that scoundrel.’

(2)  a. Linyi qi-lei-le ma.
    
    Linyi ride-tired-LE horse
    
    i. ‘Linyi rode a horse and made it tired.’
    
    ii. ‘Linyi became tired from riding a horse.’

b. Linyi ba ma qi-lei-le.
    
    Linyi BA horse ride-tired-LE
    
    Same as (2ai).
The object of *ba* is typically, though not always, the object of a verb. In some intuitive sense this object is “disposed” or “affected” in the event described.¹ For instance, the NP *ma* ‘horse’ after *ba* in (2b) must be made tired from the event of horse-riding, effectively excluding the second reading found with (2a).


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¹ The term *disposal* was used in L. Wang (1954), Chao (1968) to describe the characteristic interpretation of the post-*ba* NP that something is done to the entity it denotes. In modern syntax and syntactico-semantics, such an NP is more commonly said to be *affected*.

² Sybesma (1999) is an extensive revision of Sybesma (1992) and includes many of his other works. We will mainly quote from Sybesma (1999). See Sybesma (1999: 220-221) for other related references.
Despite all of this attention, there has not been a clear consensus on how best to characterize the properties of the ba construction. The limited space here unfortunately prevents us from doing justice to the vastness of the relevant literature. We shall therefore focus only on works in the generative literature. Through the following discussion, we hope to clarify what issues have found resolution and what other problems remain, perhaps simply beyond the scope of grammatical studies. We will consider certain important grammatical properties of the ba construction and show how their characterization has remained murky to the present day.

For reasons that will become clear shortly, we start with a comparison of the ba construction with the passive bei construction.

5.1. Ba and bei constructions

The ba and bei constructions have often been brought together because they are generally regarded as two closely related patterns serving special functions. The bei construction has been said to carry a “perjorative” meaning (see L. Wang 1954, Chao 1968: 703 about Chinese passives “usually of unfavourable meanings”) describing an unfortunate event,\(^3\) although contemporary Chinese does not require such a pragmatic constraint in all cases.\(^4\)

\(^3\) See Chao (1968: 703) about Chinese passives “usually of unfavorable meanings.” L. Li (1980), H. Wang (1984), among others, noted that the unfortunate event does not have to be from the perspective of the subject. It can be in regard to the speaker or other elements in the sentence or discourse.

\(^4\) However, according to a recent corpus study by Xiao, McEnery and Qian (2006), passives are no longer restricted to verbs with an inflictive meaning in Chinese. Their study of LCMC corpus includes 31 verbs with a negative meaning (e.g. bang ‘truss up’, jie ‘rob’, pian ‘cheat’ and sha ‘kill’), six verbs with a
The *ba* construction expresses an object being affected, dealt with, or disposed of, although these terms are very difficult to define clearly and accurately to allow all acceptable sentences and rule out the unacceptable ones.\(^5\) These two constructions are variations of the canonical SVO order: in the *bei* construction, what would ordinarily be the object becomes the subject of the sentence; in the *ba* construction, it surfaces as the object of *ba*. That is, the subject of *bei* generally corresponds to the object of *ba*.\(^6\) In addition, the presence of *ba* and *bei* provides an extra position for an argument: the subject of *bei* and the object of *ba* can generally accommodate an argument that is one too many to occupy an argument position in a canonical sentence. The corresponding patterns are illustrated in (3), whose verb cannot be followed by two objects, and (4),

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positive meaning (e.g. *pingwei* ‘choose…as’, *yuwei* ‘honour…as’, *tisheng* ‘promote’ and *feng* ‘confer (a title)’), and 24 verbs that are neutral (e.g. *chengwei* ‘call’, *renming* ‘appoint’ and *anpai* ‘arrange’). Many other works noted the possibility of non-negative meaning in passives, such as Liang (1958), Shao and Zhao (2005). Zhang (2001) uses the notion of direct and indirect causer/affectee (shi-yin-zhe/shou-dong-zhe) to distinguish the *ba* and *bei* constructions.

Nonetheless, the loosening of the restriction is only obvious in the cases when an inner object is passivized. The structures provided in the previous chapter for the three types of *bei* constructions only allow the cases with an inner object not to involve an affected object. The other two types: an outer object and an outermost object, are assigned an “affected” theta-role.

\(^5\) See Sybesma (1999, 132) for a brief summary of the terms used to describe the *ba* construction. The important ones are: the “disposal construction” (L. Wang 1954, Chao 1968, Li and Thompson 1981, Tiere 1986), the “accusative construction (Teng 1975), “a highly transitive construction.” where “transitivity” is defined as “the carrying over of an activity from an agent to a patient” (M. Q. Wang 1987: 72).

\(^6\) The discourse functions of topic or focus have been attached to the subject of *bei* and the object of *ba*. Tsao (1977) argues that the object of *ba* is a secondary topic. Shao and Zhao (2005) use the notion of focus or highlighting to express these objects.
whose semantic object appears as the possessor of the object of the complex verb *mian-zhi* ‘relieve (someone of his) job’:

(3) a. *wo zhuang-man-le kache daocao.

    I load-full-LE truck hay

b. kache bei wo zhuang-man-le daocao.

    truck BEI me load-full-LE hay

    ‘I loaded the truck with hay.’

c. wo ba kache zhuang-man-le daocao.

    I BA truck load-full-LE hay

    ‘I loaded the truck with hay.’

(4) a. wo mian-le Lisi de zhi.

    I relieve-LE Lisi DE job

    ‘I fired Lisi.’

b. Lisi bei wo mian-le zhi.

    Lisi BEI me relieve-LE job

    ‘Lisi was fired by me.’

c. wo ba Lisi mian-le zhi.

    I BA Lisi relieve-LE job

    ‘I fired Lisi.’
Both \textit{bei} and \textit{ba} constructions are limited by a number of factors. For instance, verb types affect acceptability. The following examples are some instances that are not acceptable in the \textit{ba} and \textit{bei} patterns.

(5) a. *Lisi bei wo renshi-le hen jiu le.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Lisi & \textsc{bei}  \\
me  & \textsc{know-le}  \\
very long & \textsc{le} \\
\end{tabular}

‘Lisi has been known for a very long time by me.’

b. *wo ba Lisi renshi-le hen jiu le.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
I & \textsc{ba}  \\
Lisi & \textsc{know-le}  \\
very long & \textsc{le} \\
\end{tabular}

‘I have known Lisi for a very long time.’

(6) a. *zhe-ge wenti bei ta xihuan-le.\footnote{This cannot be ruled out by the requirement of “pejorative” meaning because the fact of his liking the question might be unfortunate to the speaker, similar to \textit{zhe-ge wenti bei ta jie chulai le} ‘the problem was solved by him’ --- his solving the problem was regarded as unfortunate by the speaker. The semantic/pragmatic constraint on the use of the \textit{bei} construction is as difficult to characterize as the \textit{ba} construction. See sections 5.5-5.6.}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
this-cl & \textsc{question}  \\
him & \textsc{like-le} \\
\end{tabular}

‘This question has been liked by him.’

b. *wo ba zhe-ge wenti xihuan-le.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
I & \textsc{ba}  \\
this-cl & \textsc{question}  \\
like & \textsc{le} \\
\end{tabular}

‘I liked this question.’
Moreover, both constructions generally are not possible with verbs in the bare form. They require complex verb phrases. The following examples briefly illustrate this restriction:

8 There are many classifications made regarding the types of possible complex verb phrases. For instance, Lü (1955, 1980) classified 13 patterns for the ba construction, which has been the foundation of many subsequent works, such as Sybesma (1999:135-139), who combined them into 10 classes, and Liu (1997: 68-71), who listed nine patterns (see section 5.6 and A. Li 2005 for a review).

For the short passive cases with bei immediately followed by a V, the verb can be a bare one (see L. Yang 2006), such as

(i) a. ta bu xihuan bei ma.
   he not like BEI scold
   'He does not like being scolded'.

b. ta xianxie bei da.
   he almost BEI hit
   'He was almost hit.'

In these instances, the bare verb and bei form a phonological unit. For the ba construction, a bare verb is also possible when it has more than one syllable:
(8) a. *Lisi bei women ma.
   Lisi BEI us scold
   ‘Lisi was scolded by us.’
b. *women ba Lisi ma.
   we BA Lisi scold
   ‘We scolded Lisi.’

(9) a. Lisi bei women ma-le.
   Lisi BEI us scold-LE
   ‘Lisi was scolded by us.’
b. women ba Lisi ma-le.
   we BA Lisi scold-LE
   ‘We persuaded Lisi.’

(10) a. Lisi bei women ma(-le) yi-dun.
    Lisi BEI us scold-LE one-while
    ‘Lisi was given a scolding by us.’
b. women ba Lisi ma(-le) yi-dun.

(ii) ni bu yinggai ba tamen daibu, you mashang shifang
    you not should BA they arrest again immediately release
    ‘You should not arrest them and release (them) immediately.’

See Feng (1995) for the effect of prosody on the bei construction.
‘We gave Lisi a scolding.’

(11) a. Lisi bei women ma de hen lihai.
   Lisi bei us scold de very serious
   ‘Lisi was scolded seriously by us.’

b. women ba Lisi ma de hen lihai.
   we BA Lisi scold de very serious
   ‘We scolded Lisi seriously.’

Despite the many similarities, the *ba* and *bei* constructions differ in some important ways. Mainly, they differ in the following three respects.

First, the *ba* construction accepts fewer types of verbs than the *bei* construction. The following are examples with perception verbs.

(12) a. ta bei women kandao/tingjian-le.
    he bei us see/hear-LE
    ‘He was seen/heard by us.’

b. *women ba ta kandao/tingjian-le.
   we BA him see/hear-LE.
   ‘We saw/heard him.’

(13) a. ta-de mimi bei women faxian-le.
   his secret bei us discover-LE
‘His secrets were discovered by us.’

b. *women ba ta-de mimi faxian-le.

we BA his secret discover-LE

It has been pointed out that it is not simply the verb types that affect the acceptability of *ba and bei constructions (see W.-X. Zhang 2001, among others). It is the notion of whether something (entity or event) is affected. Thus, even though the following *ba and bei sentences are not quite acceptable, the bei construction can be made acceptable by changing the subject to an NP that can be affected by the event, as in (15).

(14) a. *wo ba lan-tian kanjian-le.

I BA blue-sky see-LE

b. *lan-tian bei wo kanjian-le.

blue-sky BEI I see-LE

(15) ta bei wo kanjian-le.

he BEI I see-LE

‘He was seen by me.’

The restrictions on the use of the *ba construction have largely been attributed to a requirement on the NP following ba --- referred to as the post-ba NP --- being an affectee. Only those that have been afflicted upon, or ‘dealt with’ are acceptable as post-ba NPs (recall the terms of “disposal,” “executive,” “strong transitivity” listed in note 5).
Indeed, Zhang (2001) notes that the two main differences between *ba* and *bei* constructions are (i) direct or indirect influence and (ii) direct or indirect cause. We briefly describe the first difference: *ba* sentences require the post-*ba* NP to be directly affected by an action. In contrast, *bei* sentences may just express an indirect effect of an action. What is affected need not be expressed as an argument in the sentence. The following pairs of sentences provide further illustrations (see note 4) (Zhang’s examples (13) and (16)):

(16) a. *wo ba na-ge  xiaoxi zhidao-le.
    I BA that-CL news know-LE

    b. na-ge  xiaoxi bei wo zhidao-le.

The second difference discussed by Zhang can be illustrated by the following pair of examples (adapted from his (19a-b)):

(i) a. wo chouyan, diyi kou      jiu    ba wo qiang de   lianlian          kesou.
    I smoke     first mouth then BA I choke DE continuously cough
    ‘I smoked; the first try immediately choked me and kept me coughing’

b.*wo chouyan, jiu   bei  diyi kou     qiang de    lianlian         kesou.
    I smoke     then BEI first mouth choke DE continuously cough
    ‘I smoked and was immediately choked by the first try, keeping me coughing’

According to Zhang, *diyi kou* is not a direct causer. A direct causer integrates with a result (*zhijie shiyin chengfen he jieguo rong wei yi-ti*). The readers are referred to Zhang’s article for more examples based on these notions.
that-CL news BEI I know-LE

‘The news became known to me.’

(17) a. *laoshi ba ta-de zhi-tiao kanjian-le.
    teacher BA his scrip see-LE
    b. ta-de zhi-tiao bei laoshi kanjian-le.
    his scrip BEI teacher see-LE

According to Zhang, the NP following *ba must be the one that is directly affected. Because what is seen or known cannot be affected, the *ba sentences above are not acceptable. However, the subject NP of bei need not be the one that is affected. What is affected is an indirect participant, such as ‘him’ in (17b) and someone that might be affected by the event of the news becoming known to me in (16b). Nonetheless, as will be shown later in this chapter, the notions of “affectee” or “affected” are very vague and difficult to characterize. Moreover, having an affectee does not guarantee the acceptability of a *ba sentence. Notably, the *ba counterpart to the third type of bei sentences discussed in the last chapter - the adversative passive – is generally much less acceptable:10

(18) a. Linyi you bei Wangwu jichu-le yi-zhi quanleida.
    Linyi again BEI Wangwu hit-LE one-CL home-run
    ‘Linyi again had Wangwu hit a home run [on him].’

10 Because of the influence of the ka construction in Taiwanese, Taiwan Mandarin speakers accept the third type more generously than the Northern Mandarin speakers.
b. ??Wangwu you ba Linyi jichu-le yi-zhi quanleida.

Wangwu again BA Linyi hit-LE one-CL home-run

‘Wangwu again hit a home run on Linyi.’

(19) a. wo bei ta zhemo yi zuo, (wo) jiu shenme dou kan-bu-jian le.

I BEI he thus one sit I then everything all can-not-see LE

‘As soon as I had him sitting this way [on me], I couldn’t see anything at all.’

(Said of a concert, when someone tall sits in front of me and blocks my view.)

b. ??ta ba wo zhemo yi zuo, (wo) jiu shenme dou kan-bu-jian le.

he BA I thus one sit I then everything all can-not-see LE

These examples indicate that the possibilities for the ba construction are more limited than for the bei construction. Nonetheless, there are other cases showing that the bei construction is more restricted. An instance showing such different restrictions is the loss of interpretive possibilities in the bei construction. The ba sentence below has several interpretations (Y. Li 1995, 1999); however, the bei construction loses the interpretation according to which the subject of bei is both an affectee and an agent.

(20) a. xiaohai ba mama zhui-le-le.

child BA mother chase-tired-LE

i. ‘The child chased the mother and the mother became tired.’

ii. ‘The child got the mother tired from chasing him.’

b. mama bei xiaohai zhui-le-le.
mother **bei** child  chase-tired-LE

i. ‘The child chased the mother and the mother became tired.’

ii.*‘The child got the mother tired from chasing him.’

In the following case, even though the *ba* sentence is ambiguous, the *bei* sentence must have the interpretation according to which the subject of *bei* is also the subject of the result complement.

(21) **wo** ba tamen da-de  shou dou zhong-le.

I  **ba** them hit-DE hand all  swollen-LE

i. ‘I hit them such that my hands got swollen.’

ii. ‘I hit them such that their hands got swollen.’

(22) tamen **bei** wo da-de shou dou zhong-le.

They **bei** I  hit-DE hand all  swollen LE

i. ‘They were hit by me such that their hands got swollen.’

ii. *‘They were hit by me such that my hands got swollen.’

When the subject of the *ba* sentence, not the post-*ba* NP, is the subject of the result complement, the *bei* counterpart is unacceptable.

(23) a. **wo** ba fan  chi-bao, jiu  lai.

I  **BA** meal eat-full  then come
‘I will come when I eat my fill (finish my meal).’

b. *fan bei wo chi-bao, (wo) jiu lai.
   meal BEI I eat-full (I) then come

These examples suggest that it is the subject of the bei sentence, not the NP following bei, that can be thematically related to the complement of the main verb (the result complement ‘tired’ in (20), ‘hands swollen’ in (21)-(22) and ‘full’ in (23)). In contrast, either the subject of the ba sentence or the NP following ba can be thematically related to the complement. The restriction on the bei construction might be related to the fact that an operator is involved in this construction and this operator must be controlled by the subject of bei (see the analysis of the bei construction in the previous chapter).¹¹ The contrast between ba and bei constructions in this respect suggests that the structure for the ba construction must be different from the one for the bei construction. Indeed, there is evidence that, in contrast to the bei construction, the ba construction does not exhibit the properties characteristic of operator movement. Unlike the bei construction, the ba construction neither occurs with suo, nor allows a resumptive pronoun in the typical object of verb position, when the post-ba NP is interpreted as the object of the verb.¹² These facts are illustrated below.

¹¹ This might be related to Visser’s Generalization, i.e., subject control verbs generally do not passivize (see, for instance, Bresnan 1982, Sag and Pollard 1991 for extensive discussions).

¹² The long-distance dependency relation demonstrated in section 4.1.3.1 of the previous chapter seems to be somewhat likely with the ba construction:

(i) Zhangsan bei Lisi pai jingcha zhua-zou-le.
(24) tamen ba zhhexie shiqing (*suo) zuo-wan-le.
    they BA these thing SUO do-finish-LE.

Zhangsan BEI Lisi send police arrest-LE
‘Zhangsan was "sent-police-to-arrest" by Lisi.’

(ii) Zhangsan bei wo jiao Lisi qing Wangwu dai dao xuexiao.
    Zhangsan BEI I tell Lisi ask Wangwu bring to school
    ‘Zhangsan was “told-LS-to-ask-WW-to bring to school” by me.’

(iii) ?Zhangsan ba Lisi pai jingcha zhua-zou-le
    Zhangsan BA Lisi send police arrest-LE
    ‘Zhangsan sent police to arrest Lisi.’

(iv) ?wo ba Zhangsan jiao Lisi qing Wangwu dai dao xuexiao.
    I BA Zhangsan tell Lisi ask Wangwu bring to school
    ‘I told Lisi to ask Wangwu to bring Zhangsan to school.’

Further note that the use of a resumptive pronoun in such cases seems to make the ba sentences less acceptable:

(v) *wo ba Zhangsan jiao Lisi qing Wangwu dai ta dao Xuexiao.
    I BA Zhangsan ask Lisi invite Wangwu bring him to school
    ‘I asked Lisi to invite Wangwu to bring Zhangsan to school.’

Thus, the relative acceptability of (iii) and (iv) does not seem to argue for a long-distance dependency relation in the ba construction. An outer object can still be assigned by the complex VP. Addressing this issue clearly would require identifying and formulating more precisely the conditions governing the distribution of outer objects.
‘They finished doing these things.’

(25) Linyi ba ta (*suo) pian-de tuantuanzhuan.
     Linyi BA him SUO cheat-till run-around
     ‘Linyi pushed him around like a fool.’

The following examples show that the *ba* construction does not allow a resumptive pronoun coindexed with the NP following *ba*:

(26) Lisi ba Linyi da-le (*ta) yi-xia.
     Lisi BA Linyi hit-LE him once.
     ‘Lisi hit Linyi once.’

The facts above demonstrate that the *ba* and *bei* constructions differ in whether or not they involve an operator movement process. The latter is derived by an operator moved to the periphery of the clause embedded under the (modal) verb *bei*, predicated of the subject of *bei* (see the previous chapter). On the other hand, the *ba* construction does not seem to involve an operator.

Briefly summarizing, the facts above demonstrate that the *ba* and *bei* constructions, although quite similar in carrying special meanings and providing an additional argument position, are subject to some different constraints. The *ba* construction should not be derived in the same way as the *bei* construction. The *bei* construction is analyzed as a pattern containing the verb (or modal) *bei* assigning a thematic role to its subject and
taking an IP or VP as its complement. An operator is moved to the periphery of the complement and is controlled by the subject of bei. Ba might also take a VP as a complement. However, it does not seem to assign a theta-role to its subject or take an IP as its complement. Nor does it have the same operator movement as in the bei construction. These important characteristics of the ba construction (vs. the bei construction) will help characterize this structure. We turn to the analysis of ba by first considering some of its morpho-syntactic properties.

5.2. What is ba?13

Ba seems to have been analyzed in every possible way in the literature.

5.2.1. The categorial status of ba

Historically, ba was a lexical verb meaning 'take, hold, handle' (see Bennett 1981, H. Wang 1957, L. Wang 1954, for instance). It also occurred in the so-called serial verb construction [V1 + NP + V2 + XP],14 with ba as V1 [ba + NP + V + XP]. The pattern can mean 'to take NP and do [V XP] (to it)'. Such a historical origin remains detectable in

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13 This section and sections 5.5-5.6 are adapted from A. Li (2005).

14 A "serial verb construction" is not a unified structural notion. It refers to all constructions with the surface form of more than one verb phrase occurring consecutively. Structurally, the series of VPs can be analyzed as different types of coordination or subordination structures. See Li and Thompson 1981, chapter 2, among many others. Other more recent works include A. Li 2006.
many contemporary *ba* sentences.\textsuperscript{15} For instance, the following question and answer pairs in modern Chinese look like serial verb constructions:

(27) a. ni ba juzi zenmeyang-le?

you BA orange how-LE

'What did you do to the orange?'

b. wo ba juzi bo-le pi le.

I BA orange peel-LE skin LE

'I peeled the skin off the orange.'

(28) a. ni yao ba ta zenmeyang?

you want BA him how?

'What do you want to do to him?'

b. wo yao ba ta da-duan tui.

I want BA him hit-broken leg

'I want to break his leg.'

These sentences bear great similarity in form to the serial verb construction [Subject + V\textsubscript{1} + NP + V\textsubscript{2} + XP]. They are interpreted as 'Subject takes NP and does [V + XP] to it; what the subject does to NP is [V+XP]': (27b) means what I did to the orange was to peel its skin and (28b) means that what I want to do to him is to break (his) leg.

\textsuperscript{15} In modern Shanghai and Wuhan dialects, it is possible in some cases to use *ba* in the pattern [*ba* NP\textsubscript{1} V NP\textsubscript{2}] with NP\textsubscript{2} being a pronoun coreferential with NP\textsubscript{1} (Bingfu Lu, Yuzhi Shi personal communication).
However, *ba* in modern Chinese has lost standard verbal properties, according to most of the works on this construction (see Zou 1995 for an extensive review of relevant works). It has become "grammaticalized"\textsuperscript{16} and does not behave like a verb according to traditional verbhood tests: (i) it cannot take an aspect marker (29b); (ii) it cannot form an alternative V-not-V question (29c) (however, see note 18); and (iii) it cannot serve as a simple answer to a question (29d) (see, e.g., Chao 1968, Li and Thompson 1981).\textsuperscript{17}

\[(29)\]  
\[\begin{array}{cccc}
  a. & \text{ta} & \text{ba} & \text{ni} & \text{hai-le}. \\
  & \text{he} & \text{BA} & \text{you} & \text{hurt-LE} \\
\end{array}\]

'He hurt you.'

\[\begin{array}{cccc}
  b. & *\text{ta} & \text{ba-le} & \text{ni} & \text{hai(-le)}. \\
  & \text{he} & \text{BA-LE} & \text{you} & \text{hurt(-LE)} \\
\end{array}\]

\textsuperscript{16} Several West African languages, such as Twi and Fong, have similar constructions involving the grammaticalization of a morpheme like *ba*, see Zou (1995) for discussions on cross-linguistic comparisons of such structures and the grammaticalization process.

\textsuperscript{17} There have also been proposals claiming that *ba* is a "coverb" (see, among others, L. Wang 1954, Lü, 1955, Li and Thompson 1974, 1981, chapter 9, 15). A coverb is a special category created in Chinese grammatical studies to represent the group of words which were verbs but have gradually lost their verbal properties. They are so labeled because they are no longer verbs and yet they have not become true prepositions, either: they don't fully behave like lexical verbs or typical prepositions. The morphemes that fill light verb positions (Huang 1997, T.-H. Lin 2001) have the same status.
c. (*\text{ta} \ \text{ba-mei/bu-ba} \ \text{ni} \ \text{hai(-le)}.^{18} \\
\text{he} \ \text{BA} \ -\text{not- BA} \ \text{you} \ \text{hurt-LE}

d. *(\text{mei/bu-})\text{ba} \\
(\text{not-}) \text{BA}

However, such morpho-syntactic tests are not quite satisfactory. There is a very small number of verbs in Chinese that simply do not behave like standard verbs according to these tests; nonetheless, they are clearly verbs. \textit{Shi} 'make, cause' is such an example. It behaves like \textit{ba} with respect to verbhood tests; nevertheless, no linguist has raised doubts as to the verbal status of \textit{shi}:

(30) \ a. \ \text{ta} \ \text{shi} \ \text{ni} \ \text{hen} \ \text{kuaile}. \\
\text{he} \ \text{make} \ \text{you} \ \text{very} \ \text{happy} \\
'He made you happy.'

\ b. \ *\text{ta} \ \text{shi-le} \ \text{ni} \ \text{hen} \ \text{kuaile}. \\
\text{he} \ \text{make-LE} \ \text{you} \ \text{very} \ \text{happy}

---

^{18} \text{There are speakers who find \textit{ba} in the V-not-V question form acceptable (see, for instance, M. Wu 1982). Using the V-not-V form as a test for verbhood does not seem to be deterministic, even though it has frequently been applied in the literature. For some speakers, a preposition, an adjective and an adverb such as \textit{jingchang} 'usually' etc. can also occur in the “V-not-V” form, which should be more correctly labeled as a general A-not-A question form, not just V-not-V.}
c. *ta shi-mei/bu-shi ni hen kuaile.
   he make-not- make you very happy

d. *(mei/bu-)shi.
   (not-) make

However, what is clear is that the NP following ba, the post-ba NP, can be the object of the following verb, as in (29a). When the post-ba NP is understood as the object of the following verb (V), the object position of the V must be empty. It cannot be occupied by a pronoun or a reflexive coreferential with the post-ba NP, as in (31a-c). These properties of ba and the post-ba NP do not hold for typical verbs and their objects.

(31) a. *ta ba Lisi hai-le ta_i.
   he BA Lisi hurt-LE him

   'He hurt Lisi.'

   b. *ta ba Lisi hai-le ziji/taziji.
   he BA Lisi hurt-LE self/himself

   'He hurt Lisi.'

(31b) should be contrasted with (31c), which allows shi 'make, cause' to precede a verb and a reflexive:
(31)  c.  ta  shi  Lisi,  hai-le  ziji/taziji.

        he    make   Lisi    hurt-LE    self/himself

'He made Lisi hurt himself.'

The contrast between (31a-b) and (31c) shows that ba in modern Chinese is different from lexical verbs.

5.2.2. The analysis of ba

Although ba has become "grammaticalized" and does not behave like a lexical verb, questions arise as to what it means to be grammaticalized. What morpho-syntactic properties does the "grammaticalized" ba have? There have been so many proposals that the logical possibilities seem to have been exhausted. 19

(32)  a. Ba as a lexical verb (Hashimoto 1971)


        c. Ba as a dummy Case assigner (Huang 1982b, Koopman 1984, Goodall 1987)

        d. Ba as a dummy filler, inserted to fill the head of a CAUSE phrase when verb raising does not take place (Sybesma 1999)

        e. Ba as the head of a base-generated functional category (Zou 1995)

19 All these possibilities allow ba to assign Case to the following NP and the ba construction carries a special meaning, which might be captured in different ways, as shown in this chapter. See Y. Li (1990, 1995, 1999) for ba as a Case assigner and the special meaning of the ba construction (causer role).
Recall that *ba* does not behave like a verb according to the verbhood tests or like the special set of verbs such as *shi*, as just described in the previous section, which makes the first option less attractive. (32b) on the one hand and (32d-e) on the other can be distinguished by one major difference: constituency. According to (32b), the post-*ba* NP alone (without *ba*) and the VP should not constitute a unit. In contrast, (32d-e) take *ba* as the head of a CAUSE Phrase or some other functional projection; the post-*ba* NP should form a constituent with the following VP, not with *ba*. As a dummy Case assigner (32c), *ba* may be subsumed under (32b) or (32d) with respect to constituency.

The fact is that the post-*ba* NP and the VP can form a constituent, as illustrated by the coordination test (see M. Wu 1982).\(^\text{20}\)

\[(33) \text{ta ba [men xi-hao], [chuanghu ca-ganjing]-le}\]

'He washed the door and wiped the windows clean.'

This suggests that (32d-e) are more adequate. However, there is a subset of *ba* sentences which indicates that *ba* can form a constituent with the post-*ba* NP, suggesting the inadequacy of solely relying on the analyses established on (32d-e).\(^\text{21}\). This subset of

\(^{20}\) It is acceptable if *ba* also occurs in the second conjunct, i.e., *ba*, the *ba*-NP and the following VP can form one constituent.

\(^{21}\) The preposing is not possible when it is a "causative" sentence (i.e., the type of sentence whose subject bears a causer theta-role). See section 5.4 for the analysis of two different *ba* structures.
sentences is the type that Sybesma (1999) refers to as "canonical ba sentences" (expressing that somebody (animate agent) does something to some entity, in contrast to his "causative ba sentences" whose subjects are generally inanimate causers). Let us use another simple example such as (34a): ba and the post-ba NP can be preposed as a unit to the sentence-initial position, as in (34b). That is, such "canonical ba sentences" not only allow the post-ba NP to form a constituent with the following VP but also allow ba and the post-ba NP to form a constituent.

(i) a. zhe-ping jiu ba ta zui-dao-le
   this-bottle wine BA him drunk-fall-LE
   'This bottle of wine made him very drunk.'

(b) *ba ta, zhe-ping jiu zui-dao-le
       BA him this-bottle wine drunk-fall-LE

22 L. Wang (1954) suggests the terms "disposal" and "causative", which are Sybesma's "canonical" and "causative" respectively.

23 It was observed by Zou (1995), for instance, that ba and the ba-NP cannot form a constituent and be preposed. However, we found that it is not that difficult to prepose the ba phrase in some instances, though this pattern occurs only in casual informal speech. It seems that preposing of the ba phrase is the best in the contexts where the interpretation of doing something to the ba-NP is clearest. A command sentence is a very good example. However, it does not have to be a command:

(i) ba na-dui wenzhang, wo zao jiu gai-hao-le.
       BA that-pile article I early then correct-finish-LE
       'I corrected that pile of articles long ago.'
Sentences like (34b) show that it is not always sufficient to just take *ba* as the head of a CAUSE phrase or the head of some other functional projection not forming a constituent with the following NP.

In sum, *ba* in modern Chinese does not behave like a lexical verb. The coordination test illustrated in (33) and (34c) shows that the structure \[ba \ NP \ VP\] can be analyzed as \[ba \ [NP \ VP]\]. In addition, when a *ba* sentence is of the "canonical" type meaning that somebody does something to some entity, the constituent structure seems to have the possibility of being analyzed as \[[ba \ NP] \ VP\], because *ba* and the post-*ba* NP can be preposed as a unit (34b). The former observation is in line with the approaches that treat *ba* as the head of a projection taking [NP VP] as its complement, such as (32d-e). The latter observation might go along with a verbal analysis in (32a) or a preposition analysis.
in (32b), with ba and the NP forming a unit modifying the following VP. We will first focus on the structures along the line of (32d-e) and return to the variation at the end of section 5.4.

The discussion above describes the categorial status of ba. Thematically, it can be shown that ba does not assign a theta-role to its subject, in contrast to bei. There is also no evidence that it assigns a theta-role to the NP following it. These properties are elaborated below.

**5.3. Ba not a theta-role assigner**

Note that ba must be immediately followed by an NP. This collocation requirement can be captured by Case assignment. If Case is assigned by ba to the NP following it, the necessity of this linear order emerges naturally from the fact that Case assignment follows an adjacency condition in Chinese (Stowell 1981, A. Li 1985, 1990). Accordingly, it is plausible to claim that ba is a Case-assigning head category. Does this head also assign a theta-role to the NP that receives Case from it, and does it assign a theta-role to the subject of the sentence?

**5.3.1. Ba and the subject**

The single reason for suspecting that ba assigns a theta-role to the subject is such examples as (35), showing the type of construction labeled as “causative” ba with an inanimate causer as subject:
(35) a. na san-da-wan jiu ba Lisi he-zui-le.
    that three-big-bowl wine BA Lisi drink-drunk-LE
    ‘Those three big bowls of wine got Lisi drunk.’

b. shi-shou xiaoqu ba Linyi chang-de kouganshezao.
    ten-CL ditty BA Linyi sing DE mouth.thirsty.tongue.dry.
    ‘Singing ten folk songs made Linyi dry in his mouth.’

c. Lisi-de xiaohua ba Linyi xiao de duzi teng.
    Lisi-DE joke BA Linyi laugh DE belly hurt
    ‘Lisi’s jokes made Linyi laugh so much that his belly hurt.’

d. Lisi tuntuntutu de yangzi ba Linyi ji-si-le.
    Lisi hesitant DE manner BA Linyi anxious-die-LE
    ‘Lisi’s hesitant way of talking made Linyi anxious to death.’

Common to all these examples is that the post-\textit{ba} NP is (or can be) the thematic subject of the first verb in the verb complex. For instance, \textit{Lisi he-zui-le} ‘Lisi drink-drunk-LE’ is a stand-alone clause in which \textit{Lisi} did the drinking and became drunk as a result. But if the first verb already assigns its subject theta-role to \textit{Lisi}, then the real subject of (35a), \textit{na san-da-wan jiu} ‘those three big bowls of wine,’ will have to receive its theta-role from somewhere else in order to satisfy the theta-criterion. It seems natural, then, that \textit{ba} is the source of the theta-role. In addition, the sentence has the clear interpretation that the wine made Lisi drunk. This would follow if \textit{ba} functions as a causative verb comparable to the causative use of \textit{make} in English. (36) below schematically illustrate this option:
where **MAKE** may be realized as *ba*. So at least in examples like (35a-d), it seems that *ba* needs to have the ability to assign a subject theta-role. This theta-role is not Agent because the *wine* in (35a) is not even animate. In the literature, it is typically labeled as Cause.

We believe this conclusion to be misleading. First of all, the data in (35a-d) really fall into two groups, (35a-b) on the one hand and (35c-d) on the other. We start with the first group.

In these first examples, the subject is thematically related to the verb *he* ‘drink’ in (35a) and *chang* ‘sing’ in (35b): they are the logical objects of these verbs. The relation can be illustrated by the non-*ba* counterpart:

(37) a. Lisi he na san-da-wan jiu he-zui-le.

Lisi drink that three-big-bowl wine drink-drunk

‘Lisi drank those three big bowls of wine and got drunk.’

b. Linyi chang shi-shou xiaoqu chang de kouganshezao.

Linyi sing ten-CL ditty sing DE mouth.thirsty.tongue.dry.

‘Linyi sang ten folk songs and got dry in his mouth.’

In these cases, every NP has its own theta-role from the lexical verb. The comparison between (35a-b) and (37a-b) would allow us to claim that the subjects of the *ba* sentences
in (35a-b) each receive their thematic role from the lexical verb. Indeed, if we replace the subject in (35a-b) with an NP that cannot be thematically related to the verb, the sentence becomes unacceptable: 24

(38) *yumen de xinqing ba Lisi he-zui-le.

depressed DE mood BA Lisi drink-drunk-LE

Intended reading: ‘The depressed feeling made Lisi drunk from drinking.’

Not surprisingly, the non-\textit{ba} counterpart of (38) is not acceptable:

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{24} What is important to our discussion is that a \textit{ba} sentence always has a non-\textit{ba} counterpart. Therefore, \textit{ba} does not assign a thematic role. Note that a wide range of thematic-relations is possible. The following sentence illustrates a case of benefactive thete-role to the subject in \textit{ba} and non-\textit{ba} form (see Lin 2001 for the range of possible theta-roles in subject and object positions; also see Shen 2004 for sentences like those below):

(i) zhe-chang pailian ba women chang-lei-le.

\textit{this-CL} rehearsal BA \textit{us} sing-tired-LE

‘This rehearsal made us tired from singing.’

(ii) zhe-chang pailian chang-lei-le women.

\textit{this-CL} rehearsal sing-tired-LE \textit{us}

‘This rehearsal made us tired from singing.’

cf. (iii) women gei zhe-chang pailian chang (ge)

we for this-CL rehearsal song

‘We sing a song for this rehearsal.’
(39) *yumen de xinqing he-zui-le Lisi.
    depressed DE mood  drink-drunk-LE Lisi
    Intended reading: ‘The depressed feeling made Lisi drunk from drinking.’

The similarity between these *ba and non-*ba sentences points to the lack of thematic contribution by *ba. Further note that replacing *ba with a causative verb *shi ‘make’ renders (38) acceptable:

(40) yumen de xinqing shi Lisi he-zui-le.
    depressed DE mood  make Lisi  drink-drunk-LE
    ‘The depressed feeling made Lisi drunk from drinking.’

The sets of examples in (35a-b) and (38) only differ in the choice of words for the subject NP, but they contrast sharply in acceptability. Replacing *ba with a true causative verb *shi ‘make’ turns the sentences from unacceptable to acceptable. The contrasts among these three sets of sentences indicate that the subject of the *ba sentence must be thematically related to the theta-assigning verbs in the sentence. *Ba itself does not assign a theta-role, unlike the causative verb *shi ‘make’. The contrast between *ba and *shi in assigning a theta-role to the subject can be further supported by the contrast between the following examples:

(41) a. Linyi chi-bao-le.
Linyi eat-full-LE

‘Linyi was full from eating.’

b. *Lisi ba Linyi chi-bao-le.

Lisi BA Linyi eat-full-LE

Intended reading: ‘Lisi made Linyi full from eating.’

c. Lisi shi Linyi chi-bao-le.

Lisi make Linyi eat-full-LE

‘Lisi made Linyi full from eating.’

(42) a. jinyu you de kanbujian-le.

goldfish swim DE out.of.sight-LE

‘The goldfish swam out of sight.’

b. *haizi ba jinyu you de kanbujian-le.

child BA gold-fish swim DE out.of.sight-LE

Intended reading: ‘The child made/let the goldfish swim out of sight.’

c. haizi shi jinyu you de kanbujian-le.

child make gold-fish swim DE out.of.sight-LE

‘The child made/let the goldfish swim out of sight.’

The (b) and (c) sentences above contrast in acceptability. Moreover, shi and ba contrast sharply in the following cases where there is a pronoun in the object position.

(43) a. Zhangsan shi wo dashang ta.
Zhangsan make me hurt him
‘Zhangsan made me hurt him.’
b.*Zhangsan, ba wo dashang ta.
Zhangsan make me hurt him
‘Zhangsan made me hurt him.’

The object in (43b) must be related to the post-\textit{ba} NP and cannot be an overt pronoun. However, the object in (43a) need not be related to the NP following \textit{shi} and can be a pronoun. The fact that the pronoun can be coindexed with the subject of \textit{shi} indicates that the sentence is a bi-clausal structure.\textsuperscript{25}

The facts observed above are expected if the causative verb \textit{shi} ‘make’ assigns a theta-role to its subject, in contrast to \textit{ba}. The subject NPs in (42b) and (43b) are not assigned a theta-role from anywhere, a violation of the theta-criterion. Therefore, \textit{ba} does not assign a theta-role to the subject of the \textit{ba} sentence.

Next, we turn to the cases in (35c-d). It is notable that the verbs \textit{xiao} in (35c) and \textit{ji} in (35d) can be alternatively transitive and intransitive:

(44) a. zuixiao-ren de shi Lisi jingran mei dai xinyong ka.
most laugh-person DE be Lisi even not bring credit card
‘What made people laugh most was that Lisi didn’t even bring his credit card.’
b. zhei shi zhen ji-ren!

\textsuperscript{25} Recall that the main distinction between \textit{shi} and \textit{ba} is that \textit{shi} is a lexical verb that can have an external argument (subject) and a clausal complement. \textit{Ba} is part of a verb complex and is not a lexical verb itself.
In each of these examples, xiao and ji are causativized (without overt morphology) and take the object ren ‘person’, as reflected through the English translations. The transitive usage is further illustrated by the following examples:

(45) a. ni ji shenme?26

you anxious what

‘What are you anxious about?’

b. ni xiao shenme?

you laugh what

‘What are you laughing about?’

Because xiao and ji can be transitive, (35c-d) fall into the most typical pattern of the ba-construction, like those in (35a-b), or sentences with transitive verbs such as da ‘hit’ or ma ‘scold’ as in wo ba ta da/ma le ‘I ba him hit/scolded = I hit/scolded him’. In addition, (31c-d) have well-formed non-ba counterparts:

(46) a. Lisi-de xiaohua xiao de Linyi duzi teng.

Lisi-DE joke laugh de Linyi belly hurt

26 Each of these sentences also has a reading according to which ‘what’ is interpreted like ‘why’: ‘why are you anxious’ and ‘why are you laughing’.
‘Lisi’s jokes made Linyi laugh so much that his belly hurt.’

b. Lisi tuntuntutu de yangzi ji-si-le Linyi.
Lisi hesitant DE manner anxious-die-LE Linyi

‘Lisi’s hesitant way of talking made Linyi anxious to death.’

Were the subject of the *ba* sentence in (35c-d) dependent on *ba* for thematic assignment, the acceptability of (46a-b) would not be expected.

### 5.3.2. *Ba* and the post-*ba* NP

The discussion above demonstrates the fact that a *ba* sentence always has an acceptable non-*ba* counterpart. This suggests that none of the arguments in the relevant sentences depends on *ba* for thematic-assignment, including the post-*ba* NP. Recall that the *ba* construction is generally acceptable with the patterns corresponding to the *bei* structures with an inner object and with an outer object. An inner object receives a theta-role from the relevant verb. An outer object, generally related to the complement of the verb, has an “affected” theta-role, according to the analysis in the previous chapter.

If there is a reason to argue for the ability of *ba* to assign a theta-role to the post-*ba* NP, it is the widely-accepted observation that the *ba* construction carries a special meaning, as embodied in the terms of “disposal,” “executive,” “strong transitivity” (see notes (1) and (5). However, given the possibility of a complex predicate assigning an “affected” theta-role to an outer object, *ba* would not be needed to assign a theta-role to
the post-\textit{ba} NP. Recall that the \textit{ba} and \textit{bei} constructions differ in the types of verbs that can occur in these patterns. Some representative examples are repeated here:

(47) a. ta bei women kandao/tingjian-le.

\begin{verbatim}
he BEI us see/hear-LE
\end{verbatim}

‘He was seen/heard by us.’

b. *women ba ta kandao/tingjian-le.

\begin{verbatim}
we BA him see/hear-LE
\end{verbatim}

‘We saw/heard him.’

(48) a. ta-de mimi bei women faxian-le.

\begin{verbatim}
his secret BEI us discover-LE
\end{verbatim}

‘His secrets were discovered by us.’

b. *women ba ta-de mimi faxian-le.

\begin{verbatim}
we BA his secret discover-LE
\end{verbatim}

The two constructions accept different types of verbs. However, the effect of verbs on the acceptability of these constructions is only demonstrated in the cases where an inner object is relevant: when an inner object is passivized or serves as the post-\textit{ba} NP. When an outer object is available, the two constructions essentially carry the same meaning and have similar range of possibilities (except for the cases such as (20)-(22), which we return to shortly). It is possible to pursue the option that the observed difference between these two constructions can be traced to an “affectedness” requirement on the post-\textit{ba}
NP. While the *bei* construction allows an inner object to be passivized, the *ba*
construction requires the post-*ba* NP to have originated as an outer object and nothing
else. That is, the post-*ba* NP is always the outer object, which is assigned an “affected”
theta-role by the complex verb phrase following the post-*ba* NP. In the case of inner
objects, the post-*ba* NP still originates as an outer object but is related to an empty
argument in the inner object position. Regardless of whether this option should be
adopted, it remains that *ba* does not assign a theta-role to the post-*ba* NP.

Further support for the lack of theta-assigning capability of *ba* may be found in the
unacceptability of the sentences with an argument solely interpreted as “affected” such as
those corresponding to the third type of *bei* constructions discussed in chapter 4 (the
outermost object), repeated below:

(49) ??Wangwu you ba Linyi jichu-le yi-zhi quanleida.

Wangwu again BA Linyi hit-LE one-CL home-run

‘Wangwu again hit a home run on Linyi.’

(50) ??ta ba wo zhemo yi zuo, jiu shenme dou kan-bu-jian-le.

he BA I thus one sit then everything all can-not-see-LE

Were *ba* able to assign a theta-role to the post-*ba* NP, it is not clear how these sentences
could be ruled out. Take (49) for instance: *ba* is followed by a post-*ba* NP and a verb
phrase, like a typical *ba* sentence such as
(51) wo ba Linyi qiang-zou-le maozi

I  BA Linyi snatch-away-LE hat

‘I afflicted Linyi by snatching away (his) hat.’

That is, structurally, the post-\textit{ba} NP is followed by a VP in both (49) and (51). It is puzzling why one is acceptable and the other is not. However, if an outer object is always an argument in the complement clause of verb or related to the argument of the verb (by being a possessor of an object NP, for instance), the NP \textit{Linyi} in (49) is not an outer object; but the same NP in (51) is. The post-\textit{ba} NP in (49)-(50) does not qualify as an outer object, nor is it assigned a theta-role by \textit{ba}. These cases are not possible because the post-\textit{ba} NP does not have a theta-role.

In short, it is plausible to claim that \textit{ba} does not assign a theta-role to the post-\textit{ba} NP or the subject of the \textit{ba} sentence. The only contribution \textit{ba} makes seems to be assigning Case to the post-\textit{ba} NP. The following summarizes the properties of the \textit{ba} construction:

(52) a. a \textit{ba} sentence is possible only when there is an inner object or an outer object. The post-\textit{ba} NP is an inner or outer object—but not the outer\textit{most} object.

b. Although \textit{ba} assigns Case to the post-\textit{ba} NP and no element can intervene between them, they only form a syntactic unit in “canonical” \textit{ba} sentences, not in “causative” \textit{ba} sentences.

c. \textit{ba} does not assign any theta-roles: neither the subject of the sentence nor the post-\textit{ba} NP receives a theta-role from \textit{ba}. 

38
d. the *ba* construction does not involve operator movement.

We began this chapter by comparing the *ba* construction with the *bei* construction. The two constructions share some properties but also differ in significant ways. We saw in the last chapter that *bei* is a verb (or modal) that has the capability to assign a theta-role to the subject. It also requires its complement to contain an operator. In contrast, *ba* does not assign a theta-role and does not exhibit the properties of operator movement. In addition, *ba* does not accept the third type of *bei* constructions involving the outermost object. The last property not only provided further support for *ba*’s inability to assign a theta-role but also requires us to disallow an IP with an outermost object as complement of *ba*; i.e., the structures of the *ba* construction should be defined restrictively. The following section will focus on the structures of the *ba* construction.

### 5.4. Structures

An adequate characterization of the structure for the *ba* construction must be able to accommodate the generalizations in (52) and capture the contrast between the *ba* and *bei* constructions.

### 5.4.1. A preliminary analysis

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27 However, *bei* is like *ba* in the behavior of verbhood: it does not pass the commonly used verbhood tests, such as A-not-A questions and short answers (see section 5.2.1 for the relevant tests on *ba*). In this respect, *bei* is identical to *ba*.
The word *ba* is not a phrase; therefore it is an $X^0$ category. The constituency tests provided in section 5.2.1 show that in most cases, *ba* and the post-*ba* NP do not form a constituent. Instead, the post-*ba* NP and the following verb phrase form a constituent. Because *ba* is neither a true verb nor a true P, but does assign Case, the only possibility left is to group *ba* with the light verbs (Huang 1997, Lin 2001).\(^{28}\) In regard to the post-*ba* NP, it is generally the “affected” outer object, the one assigned a theta-role by a complex predicate consisting of a verb and its complement. The comparison with the *bei* construction further indicates that the *ba* construction does not involve the movement of an operator, as no properties of operator movement are evident in this structure. Accordingly, a straightforward logical possibility of the structure of *ba* sentences is the one below:

(53) \[
\begin{array}{c}
baP \\
ba \\
NP \\
V' \\
V \\
XP \\
VP \\
ba \\
\end{array}
\]

\(^{28}\) There might be another possibility: some functional category to be defined (see chapter 1). Ignited by Pollock’s (1989) seminal work on projecting such functional categories as Tense and Agreement in a clausal structure, much recent literature quite generously postulates various functional categories and makes use of them in syntactic analyses (for recent representative works, see Cinque 1999, Rizzi 2002). Ultimately, what functional categories exist in UG and how they are integrated in syntactic structures is an empirical question.
In this structure, the NP in the Spec of VP is the post-\textit{ba} NP. It is the outer object assigned a theta-role by V'. If the post-\textit{ba} NP in some cases should originate as an inner object, it is then raised to the Spec of VP position (see the discussion in the previous section for the option of taking the post-\textit{ba} NP as the outer object in all cases).

The structure also captures the fact that \textit{ba} follows the aspectual morphemes \textit{you} and \textit{zai}, which are argued to head AspP below IP but above VP (cf. Section 3.3.1 in Chapter 3, especially the diagram in (52)).

\begin{itemize}
\item[(54)] a. Lisi mei-you ba laohu da-si.
\end{itemize}

Lisi not-have BA tiger beat-die

‘Lisi didn’t kill the tiger.’

b. *Lisi ba laohu mei-you da-si.

Lisi BA tiger not-have beat-die

\begin{itemize}
\item[(55)] a. Linyi zai ba yifu bao-cheng yi-ge da bao.
\end{itemize}

Linyi at BA clothes wrap-into one-CL big bundle

‘Linyi was wrapping the clothes into a big bundle.’

b. ??Linyi ba yifu zai bao-cheng yi-ge da bao.

Linyi BA clothes at wrap-into one-CL big bundle

The structure in (53) resembles very much the vP structure discussed extensively in Chomsky (1995) or the VP-shell structure proposed by Larson (1988) for double object structures, if \textit{ba} is the head of a higher VP or vP (see Section 3.3.1 in Chapter 3). Indeed,
if the label \textit{baP} is replaced by \textit{vP} or \textit{VP}, the structure is a regular verb phrase like Chomsky's \textit{vP} structure or Larson's \textit{VP} shell structure. Let us consider the adoption of Chomsky's \textit{vP} structure in the representations and keep in mind that, if Larson's \textit{VP} shell structures are used, all \textit{vPs} will be replaced by \textit{VPs} and \textit{v's} by \textit{V's}, to which we return shortly.

\[(56)\]
\[
\begin{array}{c}
vP \\
v \\
NP \quad \text{VP} \\
\quad \text{V'} \\
\quad V \quad \text{XP}
\end{array}
\]

If \textit{ba} appears in the \textit{v} position, the verb is in the \textit{V} position and a \textit{ba} sentence is derived like the one below.

\[(57)\] wo \textit{ba} beizi na gei-ta.

\text{I BA \quad cup \quad take \quad to-him}

'I gave the cup to him.'

Alternatively, \textit{ba} need not appear in the \textit{v} position. In that case, the verb moves up to the \textit{v} position, deriving a non-\textit{ba} sentence (see Sybesma 1999, chapter 6):

\[(58)\] wo na beizi gei-ta.
I take cup to-him

'I gave the cup to him.'

In other words, *ba* may be taken as the spell-out of a small *v*. When *v* is spelled out as *ba*, V-to-v-raising does not apply, deriving [*ba NP V XP*]. When *ba* does not occur, V-to-v-raising takes place, deriving [*V NP XP*] (see Huang 1993, Tang 1998 for V-to-v raising in Chinese).

**5.4.2. Revision**

The structure in (53) seems to capture the properties in (52). We saw how *ba* sentences and their non-*ba* counterparts are derived. *Ba* heads a projection and nothing can intervene between *ba* and the post-*ba* NP since *ba* assigns Case to the post-*ba* NP and Case assignment obeys an adjacency condition (Stowell 1981). *Ba* is part of a verb complex and does not assign theta-roles independently. This structure also accommodates the contrast between the *ba* and *bei* sentences with regard to the role played by operator movement: no operator exists in the structure.

However, (53) is not quite adequate. It is especially problematic with respect to the placement of adverbials. Take a manner adverb for illustration. In a *ba* sentence, a manner adverb can occur before or after *ba*:

(59) a. wo xiaoxin-de ba beizi na-gei-ta.

    I carefully BA cup take-to-him
'I gave the cup to him carefully.'

b. wo ba beizi xiaoxin-de na-gei-ta.
   I BA cup carefully take-to-him
   'I gave the cup to him carefully.'

Because of the acceptability of (59a-b), a manner adverb should be able to adjoin to either V' or some node higher than the baP in (53). Such adverb placement possibilities would predict that the non-ba counterpart, after V raises to v, should be acceptable. Such a minimal pair is shown in (60a-b). However, (60b) is not acceptable.29

(60) a. wo xiaoxin-de na beizi gei-ta.
   I carefully take cup to-him
   'I gave the cup to him carefully.'

   b. *wo na beizi xiaoxin-de gei-ta.

29 One may argue that the distribution of adverbs can be captured by an analysis that assumes adverbs must be licensed by a lexically-filled head. When ba occurs, an adverb can be licensed by the main verb occurring in the lower V position or by ba in the higher v position. When V-to-v-raising takes place, the lower V is an empty category and cannot license an adverb within the lower VP. Such an approach would require cross-linguistic parameterization, because V-raising does not always prevent an adverb from occurring in the lower position, as shown in the study of French by Pollock (1989). Moreover, if the analysis by Huang (1993), Soh (1998) and S.-W. Tang (1998) concerning V-raising is correct, an empty verb in Chinese can license a duration/frequency phrase.
I take cup carefully to-him

'I gave the cup to him carefully.'

The contrast between (59b) and (60b) casts doubt on the adequacy of a structure like (53), with \( v \) spelled out as \( ba \) or as the landing site of \( V \)-to-\( v \) raising.

The distribution of adverbs illustrated in (59) and (60) indicates that \( ba \) must be higher than the landing site of the raised main verb; i.e., higher than the \( vP \) in (53), as in the one below:

\[
(61)
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
ba \\
vP \\
v \\
VP \\
NP \\
V' \\
V \\
XP
\end{array}
\]

In such a structure, an adverb is adjoined to \( vP \) (or an intermediate projection \( v' \), or some other node higher than \( vP \)). For a non-\( ba \) sentence, an adverb appears to the left of the main verb after the main verb is raised from \( V \) to \( v \). In a \( ba \) sentence, an adverb may appear to the right of \( ba \) (as well as to the left if the adverb is adjoined to a node higher than the \( ba \) projection).

The structure in (61) solves the problem with adverb placement noted in (59)-(60). However, it raises the question of where the post-\( ba \) NP is positioned. It certainly cannot be the NP immediately dominated by the VP in (61). The post-\( ba \) NP and \( ba \) can never be separated by any element. The structure in (61) would wrongly allow
the main verb to occur between \textit{ba} and the post-	extit{ba} NP. An NP position must exist adjacent to \textit{ba}. One possibility is to identify the post-	extit{ba} NP as the Specifier of $vP$:

\begin{equation}
(62) \left[ ba \ [vP \ NP \ [v' \ v \ [vP \ V \ XP ]]] \right]
\end{equation}

This structure captures most of the properties presented so far. However, there still remains one important problem: \textit{ba} seems to be able to form a unit with the post-	extit{ba} NP in canonical \textit{ba} sentences, although not in causative \textit{ba} sentences (see section 5.2.2). It is plausible to suggest that \textit{ba} in canonical \textit{ba} structures retains the verbal property with the meaning of “handle, deal with”. The verbal property allows the relevant \textit{ba} sentences to be analyzed as $[[vP \ ba \ NP] \ [VP]]$, with the $[vP \ ba \ NP]$ functioning like a VP modifying the following VP, much like the expressions \textit{yong dao}, \textit{mai hua} in the following examples:

\begin{enumerate}
\item (63) a. \textit{ta yong dao sha-le henduo ji}.
\quad \text{he use knife kill-LE many chicken}
\quad ‘He used a knife and killed lots of chicken (He killed lots of chicken with a knife).’

\item b. \textit{wo yao mai hua song gei ta}.
\quad \text{I want buy flower give to him}
\quad ‘I will buy flowers to give to him.’
\end{enumerate}

The expressions \textit{yong dao}, \textit{mai hua} behave as a unit and can be preposed:
The ambiguity of structures for canonical *ba* sentences, not for causative sentences, also provides an answer to a range of facts regarding the interpretation of an empty pronoun in the result complement clause. For instance, a sentence like (65) is ambiguous with regard to the interpretation for the possessor of the subject in the result complement clause (my hands or their hands, see the discussion regarding the sentence (21) in section 5.1):

(65) wo ba tamen da de   shou dou zhong-le.

        I    BA  them  hit DE  hand all  swollen-LE

i. ‘I hit them such that my hands got swollen.’

ii. ‘I hit them such that their hands got swollen.’

The two possible interpretations follow from the ambiguous structures. There is an empty pronoun in the complement result clause (the owner of the hands). The empty pronoun is identified with the closest c-commanding NP (see the discussion on Generalized Control in the next chapter). Because *ba* may or may not form a unit with the post-*ba* NP, the empty pronoun may or may not search past the post-*ba* NP for a c-commanding NP as its...
antecedent. This predicts that, if the *ba* NP can be preposed, the ambiguity found in (65) will no longer exist. This is true, as illustrated by the following example.

(66) *ba tamen, wo da de shou dou zhong-le.*

\begin{itemize}
  \item BA them I hit DE hand all swollen-LE
  \item i. ‘I hit them such that my hands got swollen.’
  \item ii. *‘I hit them such that their hands got swollen.’
\end{itemize}

Moreover, causative *ba* sentences do not have the verbal interpretation ‘handle, deal with,’ because they do not have the alternative structure. Accordingly, causative *ba* sentences do not allow preposing of *ba* and the post-*ba* NP, nor do they allow the interpretation according to which an empty pronoun in the result complement clause is coindexed with the subject of *ba*. These predictions are borne out, as illustrated here in (67) and (68) respectively.

(67) *ba wo zhe-ben shu kan de yanjing dou lei-le.*

\begin{itemize}
  \item BA I this-CL book read DE eye all tired-LE
\end{itemize}

(68) a. zhe-ben shu ba wo kan de yanjing dou lei-le.

\begin{itemize}
  \item this-CL book BA I read DE eye all tired-LE
  \item ‘I read the book such that my eyes got tired.’
\end{itemize}

b. *zhe-ben shu ba wo kan de fengmian dou huai-le.*

\begin{itemize}
  \item this-CL book BA I read DE cover all ruined-LE
\end{itemize}
‘I read the book such that the cover of the book got ruined.’

Further note that, even though *bei* is also a verb, the expression *bei* + NP cannot be preposed as a constituent:

(69) a. wo bei ta pian-le.
    BEI him cheat-LE
    ‘I was cheated by him.’

b. *bei ta wo pian-le.
    BEI him I cheat-LE

The difference between *bei* as a verb in passives and *ba* as a verb in canonical *ba* sentences lies in the structure: *bei* is the main verb of a passive structure subcategorized for a clausal complement. In contrast, *ba* is a verb taking an NP as its object and forming a VP with the object to modify the following VP.

To complete the discussion on the structure for *ba* sentences, we would like to bring forth a related issue: where should a subject be in a structure like (61)? Recall from Chapter 3 that a subject is placed in the Spec of vP position. When a *ba* phrase appears in the sentence, where is the subject? The distribution of the distributive or totalizing marker (Lee 1986) *dou* ‘all’ seems to suggest that the subject should not be lower than the *ba* phrase in the structure. *Dou* generally occurs with an associated plural NP to its left and the two must be close to one another (we refer to the relation between *dou* and the associated NP a licensing relation). For instance, when the associated NP is in the
subject position of a sentence, *dou* can be separated from it by an adverbial generally regarded as modifying an element larger than a VP (such as a reason/time/location adverbial modifying a Tense Phrase or Aspect Phrase), but not a manner adverbial, which generally is an adverbial modifying a VP.

(70) a. tamen yinwei shengbing dou bu lai-le.
    they because sick all not come-LE
   ‘They all won’t come because they are sick.’

b. tamen zai xuexiao dou hen renzhen.
    they at school all very diligent
   ‘They are all very diligent at school.’

c. tamen na yi-tian dou shengbing-le.
    they that one-day all sick-LE
   ‘They all got sick that day.’

(71) a. *tamen hen jin de dou bao-zhe qiu.
    they very firm de all hold-ZHE ball

b. tamen dou hen jin de bao-zhe qiu.
    they all very firm de hold-ZHE ball
   ‘They were all holding balls firmly.’

In sentences with negation, *dou* can appear after the negation and be associated with the subject on the left of the negation:
(72) a. tamen bu dou xihuan zhe-ge gushi.
   they not all like this-CL story
   ‘They do not all like the story.’

b. tamen mei dou zuo-wan gongke.
   they not all do-finish homework
   ‘They didn’t all finish the homework.’

The locality condition observed by *dou* and its associated NP can be captured in terms of a domain condition on *dou* licensing. Suppose every adverbial should be licensed by a head (Travis 1988). *Dou* can be licensed by a V head or an I head. Taking the Tense Phrase and Aspect Phrase among the phrases within the I domain (assuming a split Inflection projection), *dou* in (70) is licensed by an I and can be associated with an NP within the I domain, which may be the subject. In contrast, *dou* in (71) occurs after the manner adverb and is not licensed in the I domain. It does not license the subject NP in the I domain. Another important property of the licensing of an NP by *dou* is the directionality requirement. Generally, the NP associated with *dou* occurs to its left (see for instance, Aoun and Li 1993a, Cheng 1995, S. Huang 1996, Lee 1986, X. Li 1997, Lin 1998, Liu 1997, Wu 1999), as illustrated by the following contrast:

(73) a. naxie shu, ta dou xihuan.
   those book he all like
   ‘Those books, he likes all.’
b.*ta dou xihuan naxie shu.

he all like those book

‘He likes all those books.’

Pertinent to our discussion, *dou and the associated NP cannot be separated by a *ba phrase.

(74) a. tamen dou ba Linyin da-le yixia

they all BA Linyi hit-LE once

‘They all hit Linyi once.’

b. *tamen ba Linyin dou da-le yixia

they BA Linyin all hit-LE once

Further note that the trace of the associated NP should be able to satisfy the domain requirement (see A. Li 1992a; also see Cheng 1995 using the notion of resumptive pronouns). The following examples demonstrate the licensing of traces derived by topicalization and subject-raising (*dou and the associated NPs are bold-faced)

(75) a.*tamen shuo Linyin *dou lai-le.

they say Linyi all come-LE.

b. tamen *dou shuo Linyin lai-le.

they all say Linyi come-LE.

‘They all said Linyi came.’
c. *tamen*, Linyi shuo *e*; **dou** lai-le.

they Linyi say all come-LE

‘They, Linyi said e; all came.’

(76) *tamen* bu keneng *e*; **dou** zuo na-jian shi.

they not likely all do that-CL matter

‘They are not all likely to do that work.’

The facts above suggest that a subject should not originate from a position lower than **ba** or inside the projection of verb phrases that contain the **ba** phrase and manner adverbials.

So, what of the internal subject? An answer is to generate the internal subject outside the licensing domain of **dou**, to the left of **ba**. A straightforward option is to situate the internal subject in the Spec of the **ba** phrase:

(77) \[**ba**P Subject \[**ba**: **ba** \[**v**P [**v** NP [**v** \[**vP** V XP ]]]]]

**Dou** following the post-**ba** NP must be within **vP**. The impossibility of such a **dou** associated with the subject in the Spec of **ba** phrase may be captured if **ba** and **v** constitute different domains in regard to **dou** licensing or a minimality condition is relevant to the licensing. The minimality condition can be phrased as the following: **dou** must be associated with the closest NP. Such a restriction on **dou** licensing can be demonstrated by the following instance:

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30 Note that the following sentence is possible with **dou** associated with the topic NP:
Zhangsan and Lisi, I like these two people both.’

This sentence can be ruled out if the topicalized phrase is not within the licensing domain of *dou* or if the subject *wo* is the closer NP to be licensed by *dou*.

The adoption of the structure in (78), where *ba* is lower than the internal subject, might also help us understand the lack of a post-*ba* NP as the outermost object. Recall the comparison between *ba* and *bei* constructions. Even though the subject of *bei* often corresponds to the object of *ba*, a significant systematic difference between the two lies in the fact that the subject of *bei* can be interpreted as an affected object of an IP but not the object of *ba*. The structures in (77a-b) indicate that *ba* is too low in the clausal structure to take an IP as its complement. Accordingly, a post-*ba* NP cannot be assigned an affected theta-role by an IP.

The account presented above is adequate for the varieties of acceptable and unacceptable *ba* sentences in Mandarin Chinese. It may very well be the analysis that

(i) Zhangsan he Lisi, wo dou xihuan.

Zhangsan and Lisi I all very like

‘Zhangsan and Lisi, I like them both’

In this case, *Zhangsan he Lisi* is moved from the object through a position close to *dou* and licensed accordingly.
should be adopted considering the similarities between \textit{ba} and \textit{bei} constructions. Nonetheless, there is an alternative if we compare the \textit{ba} construction with its counterpart in Taiwanese. The comparison would indicate that there is an alternative to capturing the lack of the \textit{ba} counterpart of the adversative passive, which would also suggest the possibility of an accompanying change of the analysis of the adversative passive. For simplicity, we will refer to the \textit{ba} counterpart of the adversative passive as the adversative \textit{ba} in the following sections.

The \textit{ba} construction can be productively compared with the \textit{ka} construction in Taiwanese. \textit{Ka} is quite similar to \textit{ba} in interpretation and syntactic behavior. In particular, the two constructions behave exactly alike with respect to the placement of adverbials in relation to \textit{ba/ka} and the distribution of \textit{dou/long} ‘all’. Thus, all the \textit{ba} sentences discussed in this section can be translated into \textit{ka} sentences without change of acceptability. However, the two do differ in an important respect. \textit{Ka} does allow the counterpart to the adversative passive. Thus, the \textit{ka} sentences corresponding to the unacceptable \textit{ba} sentences in (18b) and (19b) are both acceptable. Quite generally, as long as there is an “affected” interpretation, a \textit{ka} sentence is acceptable, regardless of whether the post-\textit{ka} NP is related to the verb of the sentence at all. The following sentence is an instance with a clear intransitive stative verb (adjective) ‘small’.

\begin{align*}
(79) \quad & \text{li-e syaNim na ka gua se-ka bolang thiaN-u, gua} \\
& \text{you voice if K\text{\textasciitilde} me small-extent nobody hear-have I} \\
& \text{tio ka li si thaolo.} \\
& \text{will K\text{\textasciitilde} you fire job}
\end{align*}
'If your voice is so small that nobody can hear you (at my cost), I will fire you.'

Because the *ka* construction generally is like the *ba* construction except for the possibility of an adversative *ka* contrasting with the impossibility of an adversative *ba*, we cannot claim that the lack of adversative *ba* follows from the structural position of *ba*, as just indicated. After all, a *ka* sentence with an outer object or an inner object still behaves like a *ba* sentence. That is, both *ka* and *ba* take a verb phrase as their complements. It is not clear why *ka* can also take an IP as its complement (adversative *ka*) but *ba* cannot.

We can assume that these are the idiosyncratic subcategorization properties of *ka/ba* and do not need to pursue further. Alternatively, we may explore the option that the basic difference between *ka* and *ba* lies in their ability (or inability) to assign theta-roles to the NP following them. We elaborate on this option below.

Note that there is an important difference in the *ba/ka/bei* cases between inner objects and outer objects on the one hand, and outermost objects on the other. An inner object and an outer object are thematically related to the sentence directly without *ba/ka/bei*: an inner object is assigned a theta-role by the verb and an outer object is associated with an NP in the complement of the verb (possessor or an argument in the complement clause). Structures involving these types of objects can all have well-formed non-*ba/ka/bei* counterparts. On the other hand, the presence of an outermost object is closely related to the presence of *ka/bei*. This can be illustrated by the possibility of an inner object or an outer object, but not an outermost object, being a topic.

(80) a. juzi, wo xihuan e_i --- inner object
orange, I like
‘Oranges, I like.’

b. juzi, wo bo-le e; pi le. --- outer object
orange, I peel-LE skin LE
‘An orange, I peeled (the skin).’

Linyi Wangwu hit-LE one-CL home-run
intended to mean ‘Linyi, Wangwu hit a home run [on himi].’

Raising structures do not allow an outermost object, either:

(81) *Linyi keneng Wangwu jichu-le yi-zhi quanleida.
Linyi likely Wangwu hit-LE one-CL home-run
intended to mean ‘Linyi is likely to have Wangwu hit a home run [on himi].’

A possible reason for the unacceptability of (80c) and (81) is that the additional NP is not assigned a theta-role directly or indirectly (by association with a theta-bearing element).

In other words, the adversative *ba is not possible in Mandarin because the post-*ba NP, which should have originated as the outermost object, is not directly or indirectly assigned a theta-role. This means *ba does not assign a theta-role to post-*ba NP, either (as we suggested in section 5.3). In contrast, *ka in Taiwanese assigns a theta-role to the NP. Therefore, the adversative *ka is possible. *Ka in this sense is analyzed like a head subcategorized for two complements: one is the post-*ka NP and the other is the verb
phrase that follows the NP. The thematic relation is between *ka* and the post-*ka* NP, not an outermost object assigned a theta-role by an IP. This view of the contrast between *ka* and *ba* adversative constructions in terms of their theta-assigning capabilities suggests a similar option for analyzing the adversative passive. It might not be an outermost object that is assigned a theta-role from an IP. Instead, it might be that *bei* is subcategorized for an IP and also has an external argument. The external argument, the subject NP, receives a theta-role from *bei*, whose complement is an IP. The adversative passive would not need to contain an operator. The sentence of the form [NP *bei* IP] would simply mean the NP suffers from the event expressed by IP.

In brief, the *ba* construction in Mandarin can be viewed as a more grammaticalized and emptier version of the *ka* construction in Taiwanese. The two minimally differ in their theta-assigning capabilities, which accommodate the contrast between the possibility of an adversative *ka* in Taiwanese and the impossibility of an adversative *ba* in Mandarin. Moreover, in the same way the *ba* and *ka* constructions contrast with each other, the different theta-assigning capabilities might also be responsible for the systematic contrast between the *bei* construction and the *ba* construction in regard to the (un)acceptability of the cases involving an outermost object.

The *ba* construction has also been compared with the *bei* construction in other respects. Aside from the fact that different types of verbs may affect the *bei* and *ba* constructions differently due to the special interpretations generally denoted by these constructions, the *bei* construction loses some interpretations possible with the *ba* construction, such as those in (20)-(23). In these specific instances, both the subject of *ba* and the post-*ba* NP can be thematically related to the result complement; however, only
the subject of the *bei* sentence can be so related. We traced these differences to the identification of the operator involved in *bei* constructions and the ambiguous structures possible in canonical *ba* sentences (vs. causative *ba* sentences). We should note that, even though the judgments regarding the effects of different verbs in *ba* and *bei* sentences may be uncertain and the choice of arguments easily influences the acceptabilities (see the discussions regarding (12)-(17)), the cases that have been reduced to structural factors, such as the contrast in the interpretive possibilities of *ba* and *bei* sentences and the lack of the *ba* sentences with an outermost object, are clearer-cut. The uncertain part generally has much to do with how the relevant sentences are interpreted or the context in which they are used. We next turn to this very issue.

5.5. “Affected”

In the attempt to distinguish acceptable and unacceptable *ba* sentences, we have relied heavily on the notion of an "affected" theta-role, assigned to an outer object by a complex verb phrase. We even suggested that the *ba* sentences with the post-*ba* NP originating in the inner object position might be reduced to those having an outer object with an "affected" interpretation. However, we did not attempt to define what "affected" is. Nor were we able to firmly establish the range of acceptable and unacceptable *ba* sentences. Our failure to clarify these issues is due to the limitations of what grammar can accommodate adequately. There are many uncertainties about the use of the *ba* construction and speakers' judgments also vary with context. Accordingly, we would like to suggest that, grammatically, the analysis of *ba* sentences is as presented in the previous
section. However, the notion of "affectedness" will be left to such additional factors as discourse and pragmatics (including speakers' intention).

A great majority of the literature on the *ba* construction has focused on the usage of *ba* sentences by expounding on such notions as “affectedness/disposal,” which state that the post-*ba* NP is the NP that is disposed of, dealt with, or manipulated in some way. These notions are responsible for the requirements on the types of arguments and predicates in this pattern. Such an approach seems to capture the basic intuition about this construction and the canonical interpretation of a *ba* sentence. In the clearest cases like *wo ba cai chao de hen lan*. 'I stir-fried the vegetable very mushy', we know that the vegetable is affected by the cooking, the result being that it is mushy. In cases like the unacceptable *wo ba Li xing le*. 'I take the surname Li (my surname is Li)', our intuition tells us that this is an impossible use because, in the common world, a surname cannot be affected or manipulated by someone's having that surname. However, when we go beyond the clear cases, the picture becomes fuzzy. It is not always easy to determine when a post-*ba* NP is indeed affected. Li and Thompson (1981: 469) note some very interesting examples. A few are adapted below.

(82) ta ba ni xiang de fan dou bu-ken chi.
    he BA you miss DE food even not-willing eat

    'He misses you so much that he won't even eat his meals.'

(83) ta ba xiao-mao ai de yao si.
    he BA small cat love DE want die
'He loves the kitten so much that he wants to die.'

(84) wo ba ta hen de xin dou tong-si-le.

I BA him hate DE heart all pain-dead-LE

‘I hate him so much that (my) heart aches extremely.’

It is not clear how missing/loving/hating someone would affect the person being missed/loved/hated. Take (82) for instance. It is the subject, not the post-ba NP that cannot eat because of the missing of the post-ba NP. Moreover, the post-ba NP might not even know that he was being missed. For instance, (84) can be very naturally followed by a sentence like the one below.

(85) keshi ta bu zhidao.

but he not know

‘But he does not know (it).’

Liu (1997) notes that an example like (86) questions the adequacy of an account for the well-formedness of ba sentences based on the notion of affectedness:

(86) ta ba yi-ge da-hao jihui cuo-guo-le.

he BA one-CL big-good opportunity wrong-GUO-LE

‘He let a great opportunity pass.’
Nonetheless, Li and Thompson (1981) try to relate such cases to the notion of affectedness. They note that the use of the postverbal expression in (82)-(83) greatly exaggerates the degree of his missing/loving you/the cat. It is as if one cannot help thinking that you or the cat is affected in some way when he misses you to such an extent that he can’t even eat or he loves the cat to such a degree that he wants to die. The added expression yao si ‘(he) wants to die’ in (83) hypothetically creates an image that such intense love must have some effect on the small cat. Accordingly, the “affected” interpretation is implied by the verb and the other elements in the verb phrase. Li and Thompson suggest that the notion of “affectedness” should be relaxed to include non-physical or imaginary situations. Such a modification adds a great deal of uncertainty to any account based on the notion of “affectedness.” It becomes more difficult to see “affectedness” as an “explanation” for the (un)acceptabilities of ba sentences. For instance, what is the difference between hating someone for life (87a) and fearing someone for life (87b) that makes one better than the other as a ba sentence? What is the difference between missing someone extremely and resembling someone extremely that makes one acceptable as a ba sentence and the other unacceptable as a ba sentence? Under both situations, the ba NP, the one that is missed or taken after, does not need to be aware that he/she is missed/taken after.

(87) a. wo hui ba ta hen yi-beizi.
    I will BA him hate one-life
    'I will hate him for life.'

b. ??wo hui ba ta pa yi-beizi.
(88) a. xiaohai ba ta xiang-de yao si.
    child BA him miss-DE want die
    'The child misses him extremely.'

b. *xiaohai ba ta xiang-de yao si.
    child BA him resemble-DE Want die
    'The child resembles him extremely.'

cf. c. xiaohai xiang ta xiang-de yao si.
    child resemble him resemble-DE want die
    'The child resembles him extremely.'

Of course, one can always create an "explanation" to accommodate the difference. For instance, if I am in fear of him (87b), he is probably the one that is more in control. He might not be the affected one even in the non-physical, imaginary sense. However, such an "explanation" will always be fuzzy, uncertain, unpredictable and even circulatory in many cases. Nevertheless, this does highlight the fuzziness and uncertainty of some uses of this construction. It is not surprising that speakers often disagree on their judgments of atypical *ba sentences. The same speaker may also make different judgments according to different contexts. The difficulty in clearly defining the conditions when a *ba sentence is acceptable leads some linguists to claim that the acceptability of *ba sentences need not be viewed as absolute; there are just relatively better or worse *ba sentences. This conception
can be best summarized by Li and Thompson's (1981: 487) conditions on the use of the *ba* construction as a continuum:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(89)</th>
<th><em>ba</em></th>
<th><em>ba</em></th>
<th><em>ba</em></th>
<th><em>ba</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>impossible</td>
<td>likely</td>
<td>obligatory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>indefinite or nonreferential object</td>
<td>definite and highly prominent object</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no disposal</td>
<td>strong disposal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A definite and highly prominent object is an object that is "more obvious in the speech context and more immediate to our discussion" (p.484). The table in (89) takes into account the role of the post-*ba* NP (definiteness, prominence) and the disposal meaning of the *ba* sentence. Li and Thompson further provide support for their continuum in (89) on the basis of statistics: the more elements that are added to elaborate the nature of disposal, the more likely are the sentences to appear in the *ba* form. For instance, in their corpus study that produced 83 *ba* sentences, none of them contained verbs that were reduplicated or only followed by *zhe* (which have little "disposal" meaning added, according to them).31 Only 6 or 7 percent out of the 83 *ba* sentences ended with just *V-*

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31 This does not mean that there are no acceptable *ba* sentences with *V-zhe*. It is generally the progressive *zhe* that is not compatible with the *ba* sentence, as in (i). A "resultative" *zhe* is possible in a *ba* sentence, as in (ii):

(i) ta zheng xie-zhe  xin.  
he right  write-ZHE letter

*ta zheng ba xin   xie-zhe
he right  BA letter write-ZHE
They also suggest that the continuum may capture the fact that speakers tend to disagree on the acceptability of certain ba sentences, especially those that are less clear on their disposal nature, i.e., those in the middle of the continuum.

Regardless of whether a table like (89) adequately describes the contexts in which ba sentences are acceptable, central to the account is still some notion of “affectedness” which remains undefined. Not surprisingly, this reliance on the vague notion of “affectedness” has been challenged. Attempts have been made to characterize the ba construction in different terms with the hope of more accurately describing the properties on the ba construction. Indeed, there have been proposals claiming that the notion of “affectedness/disposal” is not necessary. Under such proposals, the ba construction is not unique and can be subsumed under other regular structures. The constraints on the ba construction can be derived from some better-defined structural or semantic characterizations. These alternative proposals offer insight into this construction from different perspectives and contribute to our understanding of the complex properties of this pattern. Unfortunately, it is the complexity of this pattern, reflected by the continuum in (89), that makes precise structural accounts for this pattern fall short empirically. Above all, there exist many minimal pairs with identical grammatical structures that exhibit different degrees of acceptability as a ba sentence because of different contextual information involved. It is difficult to make such contextual information precise in

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'He is writing letters.'

(ii) ta na-zhe shu. ta ba shu na-zhe
he hold-ZHE book he BA book hold-ZHE

'He is holding the book.'
grammatical terms. We will review some of these alternatives and demonstrate the difficulty in clearly defining the range of (un)acceptable ba sentences in the suggested structural terms.

5.6. Alternatives

Briefly, we will discuss two important analyses in the recent literature and show that the empirical concerns would make it difficult to adopt these analyses the way they are. The analyses in question are Liu's (1997) aspectual approach and Sybesma's (1992, 1999) event-structural approach.

Liu argues that a ba construction is essentially a construction expressing a bounded event and constraints on the ba construction are due to the aspectual properties of this pattern. She suggests that the predicate of a ba sentence must denote a bounded event or situation - "bounded situations" are as defined below:32

(90) Bounded situations do not have internal stages that are static or stages that can be viewed as such.

32 This definition was based on the notion of boundedness by Dahl (1981), repeated below.

(i) A class of situations or a characterization of a situation (e.g., a sentence) is bounded if and only if it is an essential condition on the members of the class or an essential part of the characterization that a certain limit or end-state is attained.
The constraints on possible types of NPs and VPs in a *ba* sentence are manifestations of obligatorily expressing a bounded event/situation. Using the term "event" to refer to denotations of predicates, presented in perfective or imperfective aspect and "situation" to refer to denotations of uninflected predicates, Liu argues that the notion of boundedness can be expressed in two ways: it can be bounded on the basis of the situation denoted by the uninflected predicate (situation type or situational aspect, see Vendler 1967, Dowty 1979, Tai 1984, Teng 1986, Chen 1988, Smith 1991, Yong 1993), or it can be bounded when a situation of an appropriate type is presented in a certain aspect (viewpoint aspect). If the terminal point or resultative state is included in the meaning of the uninflected predicate, then the situation alone will guarantee boundedness. If, however, the terminal point or resultative state is included only when the situation is presented in an appropriate aspect, then a bounded event depends on both the situation and the aspect in which it is presented.

Sybesma (1992, 1999) incorporates the interpretation of and the semantic (pragmatic) constraints on the *ba* construction into the syntactic structure, representing the best syntactic structural effort to account for the properties of the *ba* construction. According to him, *ba*-sentences are always CAUS-sentences in some abstract sense. The VP (comprising the V after the *ba* NP and the embedded XP) does not have an external argument. The subject of the sentence (NP1 in Error! Reference source not found.) below) bears the role of the causer; in other words, it bears a semantic relation to the head CAUS (not to the VP).

(91)  

```
     CAUS
   /     \    
NP1    CAUS
   \    /    
    \  /     
     \/
```
In this structure, NP1 is the subject of the sentence. NP2 and NP3 are related by NP-movement, with NP3 being the trace of NP2. The head of the CAUSP (for CAUS Phrase) is either phonologically filled by way of insertion of *ba* or by movement of the head of VP (Sybesma 1999, p. 170). The latter derives a non-*ba* sentence with an accomplishment VP. The former derives a *ba* sentence. Because *ba* is only a phonological filler, interpretations are the same for structures derived by verb-raising or *ba*-insertion. That is, a *ba* sentence does not carry a special meaning. It is just like a non-*ba* sentence with an accomplishment predicate. Both express a result or an endpoint: the VPs embedded under CAUS must be unaccusatives, which are "characterized by the fact that they involve an end point" (p. 178). The *ba* NP is the subject of the underlying result small clause (the end point) and is the theme that undergoes a change of state or location.

This structure, according to Sybesma, can be paraphrased as "the subject causes the *ba*-NP to undergo the event denoted by the VP." Revised slightly to be distinct from the lexical causative cases, such as those with causative verbs *shi* 'make' or *rang* 'let', the structure is interpreted as "the subject of the sentence (the causer) brings about a new state of affairs which results from the event denoted by V" (p.178). Importantly, the *ba*-NP is not independently mentioned and is only semantically dependent on the embedded predicate. It is part of the resulting state. This is a departure from the "affected/disposal"
tradition: a *ba*-sentence is no longer viewed as primarily aimed at disposing of the *ba*-NP. The paraphrase applies to all causatives and accomplishments (or simply, all are accomplishments). That is, the structure in (91) is the structure for both *ba* and accomplishment sentences, and the *ba* construction is simply a subcase of this accomplishment structure. When verb-raising takes place, it is an accomplishment sentence; when *ba* is inserted, it is a *ba*-sentence.

This structure derives the constraints on the *ba* construction, according to Sybesma. The "affectedness" of the post-*ba*-NP follows from the fact that the structure expresses a bounded event. "An event is bounded if it contains an object which is affected and quantificationally closed." (p.173). The relevant factor for the "affectedness" of the post-*ba* NP is the "change of state" (p.175).

Sybesma's contribution is to approach the *ba* construction with its specific interpretation and constraints from an event structural perspective. The *ba* construction is simply realization of a CAUS head in the CAUSP of an event structure. The event structure has a CAUS head subcategorized for a VP that is an unaccusative (without a subject, necessarily involving an end point). When the unaccusative verb is not raised to the CAUS head, it is spelled out as *ba*. The *ba*-construction is not unique at all. It is just a variation of a construction with an accomplishment verb phrase and the verb-raising process is replaced by *ba*-insertion. The constraints on possible types of NPs and VPs in a *ba* sentence follow from the event structure (bounded event, cf. Liu's analysis in the previous section).

The brief descriptions of Liu's and Sybesma's analyses show that the two share the notion of "boundedness." Unfortunately, as we have seen time and time again, the
contexts allowing the use of the *ba* construction are too complicated to fall neatly within a precise syntactic or semantic notion. First of all, "boundedness" does not rule out all the unacceptable *ba* sentences and does not allow all the acceptable ones. There are unbounded cases that allow the use of the *ba* structure:

Consider Liu’s example (59a) (p.70-71):

\[(92) \text{ta zhengzai ba dongxi wang wuli ban.} \]

he in-progress BA things towards room-in move

'He is in the process of moving things into the room.'

Although Liu translated the predicate as 'moving things into the room,' a more appropriate translation would be 'moving things towards the room.' Wang 'towards' simply expresses direction, rather than reaching a destination like 'into.' Such a predicate is not compatible with the time expression 'in X-amount of time' (test in Liu 1997 for a bounded situation):

\[(93) \text{*ta zai yige-zhongtou-nei ba dongxi wang wuli ban.} \]

he at one-hour-in BA things towards room-in move

'He moved things towards the room in an hour.'

That is, the adverbial phrase does not make the predicate express a bounded situation, yet the predicate is acceptable in the *ba* form. Other examples are available. For instance,

\[33\] For more examples and relevant discussions, see A. Li (2006).
(94) below shows the predicate 'carefully interrogate them' expresses an unbounded event; it is also possible in the *ba form, as in (95):

(94) *ta zai yige-zhongtou-nei zixide shenwen tamen
    he at one-hour-in carefully interrogate them

   'He interrogated them carefully in an hour.'

(95) ni bu ba tamen zixide shenwen, zen hui cha-chu wenti?
you not BA them carefully interrogate how will find-out question

   'If you don't interrogate them carefully, how can you find problems?'

On the other hand, a bounded event is not always possible in the *ba form, illustrated below.

(96) *ta ba zhexie wenzhang dou kan de hen shengqi.
    he BA these article all read DE very angry

   'He got angry from reading all these articles.'

(97) *wo ba zhe-ping-jiu he-zui-le
    I BA this-CL-wine drunk-drunk-LE

   'I have drunk the wine drunk.'

(98) a. *tufei ba ta baifang-le fuqin.
bandit  BA  him  visit-LE  father

'The bandit visited his father.'

b. *women  ba  ta  tanlun-le  xiaohai.
we  BA  him  discuss-LE  child

'We discussed his child.'

(99)  *wo  ba  ta  renshi  san-nian  le.
I  BA  him  know  three-year  LE

'I have known him for three years.'

(100) a. *ta  ba  na-difang  likai-le.
he  BA  that-place  leave-LE

'He left that place.'

b. *ta  ba  qiu-sai  canjia-le
he  BA  ball-game  participate-LE

He participated in the ball game.'

c. *ta  ba  na-ge  canting  baifang-le.
he  BA  that-CL  restaurant  visit-LE

'He visited that restaurant.'
d. *ta ba wode mingling fucong-le.
   he BA my order obey-LE

   'He obeyed my order.'

One cannot attribute the unacceptability of these sentences to the lack of a result true of the post-
*ba NP. As illustrated by the examples reproduced here, the subject of the result need not be the post-
*ba NP. It can refer to the matrix subject.

(82) ta ba ni xiang de fan dou bu-ken chi.
   he BA him miss DE food even not-willing eat

   'He misses you so much that he won't even eat his meals.'

(83) Lisi ba xiao-mao ai de yao si.
   Lisi BA small cat love DE want die

   'He loves the kitten so much that he wants to die.'

(101) ta ba wo hen de ya yang-yang de.
   he BA I like DE tooth itchy-itchy SFP

   'He hated me so much that his teeth became itchy.'

In (102) the subject of the result clause is co-referential with the matrix subject. The result expression *dong* in (102) should take the matrix subject as its subject, rather than...
the *ba* NP; the *ba* NP is the object of the result expression: *ta dong-le wenzhang le* 'He understood the article'. The result expression *tou* 'thorough' in (102) Error! Reference source not found.c) is more like a degree modifier of the verb, the hatred being thorough, rather than being a predicate of the *ba* NP. Similarly, the "result" expression *hen zixi* 'very careful' in (102) Error! Reference source not found.d) modifies the verb, rather than functioning as the predicate of the *ba* NP. If *hen zixi* can have a subject at all, it is the action, not the *ba* NP, that functions as the subject: *ta de kaolu hen zixi* 'his thinking is careful' cf. *zhe shi hen zixi* 'this thing is careful'.

(102)a. wo ba ta ma de wo-ziji dou shou-bu-liao!
    he BA him scold DE myself all put-not-up
    'I scolded him so much that I could not stand it myself.'

b. xian rang ta ba wenzhang nian-dong yihou zai
    first let him BA article read-understand after then
    wen ta wenti ba!
    ask him question SFP
    'Let him first understand the article and then ask him questions.'

c. ta yiding hui ba ni hen-tou de.
    he definitely will BA you hate-thorough SFP
    'He will definitely hate you thoroughly.'
d. wo ba zhe-shi kaolu de hen zixi.

I BA this matter think DE very carefully

'I thought about the matter carefully.'

5.7. Summary

The *ba* construction is one of the most studied topics in the grammatical study of Chinese. However, its complex properties elude a clear analysis. Structurally, it is clear what the constituents are, what positions they occupy and how the constituents are related to each other. We argued that a structure like (77), repeated here, appropriately represents a *ba* sentence.

(77) \[baP Subject \[ba \ [vP NP [v' v [VP V XP ]]]]]

Adverbials can be adjoined to *baP* or *VP* (or *ba’* and *v’* if intermediate projections allow adjunctions). The comparison with the *bei* construction helped characterize the morpho-syntactic properties of *ba*. *Ba* assigns Case, but not a theta-role. However, the difficult issue in characterizing the *ba* construction has been its usage: We have demonstrated repeatedly that identical structures can produce acceptable and unacceptable *ba* sentences. The traditional wisdom of “affectedness/disposal” seems to capture the function of the *ba* construction intuitively. However, only the core cases submit easily to the characterization. Our account did not address this difficult issue. We simply referred to an “affected” theta-role, following the analysis for the passives. As a conclusion, we
would like to discuss briefly the role of the “affected” theta-role in the direction of a
c(ause)-role in the style of Y. Li (1990, 1995, 1999).

Leaving aside the exact definition of affectedness or disposal, the following
generalization is largely true, despite the fact that the causer and disposal readings are
normally not part of the thematic structure of the main verb in a \( ba \) sentence:

\[
(103) \text{ Though } \text{ba} \text{ has no theta-role for the subject or the object after it, the subject of a } \text{ba} \text{ sentence is associated with a causer reading and the post-} \text{ba} \text{ NP is associated with a disposal reading.}
\]

Moreover, to the extent that the arguments in a clause have the causer and disposed
readings, the subject is always the causer and the object the disposed. Recall in Chapter 2
the discussion on thematic hierarchy. It is plausible that there is a causal hierarchy:

\[
(104) \text{a. Causal hierarchy: } \{ \text{Causer} \{ \text{Disposed} \} \}
\]

\[
\text{b. Condition on causal alignment:} \\
\text{The causal hierarchy must be aligned with the syntactic hierarchy.}
\]

Causer and Disposed in (104a) can be regarded as semantic additions to arguments in a
structural environment such as the \( ba \)-construction and are not part of the theta-grid of
verbs. This separate layer of interpretive structure helps define the additional
interpretations imposed on the \( ba \) construction despite our claim that \( ba \) does not play a
role thematically. It is the role of a causer-disposed interpretive hierarchy like (104)
independent of the thematic properties of the verb that coerces the interpretation of the subject of a ba sentence to be a causer and the post-ba NP to be the one that is disposed. Because conformity to (104) may require coercion, different degrees of deviations from the norm create different degrees of acceptability. In other words, two options can be entertained to encode the “affected” interpretation of ba sentences: one is to resort to the assignment of an affected theta-role by a complex verb phrase and the other is to separate theta-roles from the “c(ause)-roles” (104) imposed on constructions. We leave the choice between these two for further research.