

Probing the Influence of English Learning upon Chinese:

A Case Study of Passive Sentences with *Bei*

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摘要

在当今全球化时代，英语作为一个世界性语言，越来越受到国人的重视。几乎所有的中国学生均将英语视为第二语言。国人如此大规模地学习英语，受到英语的影响，我们的母语知识和使用不可避免地会发生一些变化。本文主要研究英语学习对学习者汉语的影响，具体说是对书面用语中汉语被字句使用习惯上的影响。

在五四运动以前，汉语被字句主要用于表示消极意义。而之后，由于国门打开，与西方国家的接触加深，以及改革开放以后大规模学习英语，使得汉语被字句也越来越多地用来表示中性意义，甚至是积极的意义。其使用频率也较过去提高了。

宏观上，本文采用定量分析方法，通过研究五四以来书面作品中被字句使用数量以及使用语境上的变化，来证明英语确实对汉语被字句产生了影响。微观上，本文采用定量和定性的分析方法，通过测试和访谈的形式，调查分析了南京大学外国语学院英语系和其他系共 79 名学生使用的汉语被字句受到影响的不同程度。

结果表明：对整个社会来说，人们越来越热衷学习英语，甚至花在英语上的时间远超学习母语的时间，汉语中被字句使用频率增大，其语义色彩也不再仅限于表示消极意义。人们使用的被字句越来越多地用于表示中性的甚至是积极的意义。另外，一般情况下，在英语上投入的时间和精力越多，受试者汉语被动句使用受到的影响越大，其更加倾向于使用被动句，除非受试者本身已经意识到汉英被动句使用习惯上的不同。

本文通过研究英语学习对学习者汉语被字句使用习惯上的影响，分析引起这些改变的原因，由此推出影响造成的改变是在继续发展，还是正在逐渐消失；是与汉语的传统并存，还是已经或者可能取而代之。

关键词：汉语被字句；英语被动句；使用频率；语言接触

ABSTRACT

English, as the international language, is arousing more and more attention from the Chinese people. Nearly all Chinese choose English as their second language. Consequently, Chinese is undergoing several changes under the influence of English. This thesis studies the influence of English upon Chinese, especially on Chinese passive sentences with the character “*Bei*”(被) in written form. With more and more contact with English after the May Fourth Movement, more Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* are used to describe neutral or even positive meanings. In addition, Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* are used more frequently than before.

This research is a survey study. In the macro sense, some Chinese written works were investigated to see the general changes while in the micro sense, students from the English Department of School of Foreign Studies and non-English Departments, Nanjing University were investigated and interviewed for their opinions on this topic.

The results of this research indicate that the more efforts people poured into English, the greater their Chinese are influenced by English in terms of passive sentences with *Bei*. In modern society, people tend to spend more time and energy in learning English. As a result, in contemporary Chinese written works, passive sentences with *Bei* are used more frequently. Besides, more and more Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* are used to describe positive or neutral meanings. The research also discovered that the more energy and time people spent on English, the more their Chinese was influenced by English, unless they were aware of the differences between Chinese and English.

By researching on the influence of English upon Chinese passive sentences with *Bei*, this thesis tries to find out whether these influences are still developing or disappearing, and are they being added to or taking the place of traditional Chinese.

Key Word: passive sentences with *Bei*; frequency; language contact

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INTRODUCTION

This study was undertaken to survey on the influences of English learning upon Chinese, specifically speaking, on Chinese passive sentences with *Bei*. Furthermore, it attempted to exemplify how the use of Chinese passive sentences was influenced as well as the reasons underlying this phenomenon. The research questions to be addressed gradually in the study are as follows:

1. Is the use of Chinese passive sentences undergoing changes because of the fever in learning English?
2. How is the use of Chinese passive sentences influenced by learners' knowledge of English?
3. What causes these changes in Chinese *Bei* passive sentences, especially the frequency and the context of these passive sentences?

In China, more and more people are learning English. During the past 100 years, Chinese has undergone tremendous changes: from classical style to Vernacular Chinese, and from old Vernacular Chinese to modern Chinese.

Much has been done on the influence of English upon Chinese from various perspectives like pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. However, in terms of grammar, there is a lack of quantitative analysis on how grammar changes in such aspects like parenthesis, attributive clauses and passives. My thesis will focus on the changes in Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* by adopting quantitative analysis.

Chinese passive sentences used to be employed to describe unpleasant or unsatisfactory situations in ancient times. Neutral or positive meanings then were seldom conveyed in *Bei* passive sentences. Based on the research conducted by He Yang (see Table 1) (He, 2008), we can easily find that from the western Han Dynasty to the May Fourth Movement, passives sentences with *Bei* were mainly used to describe negative meanings. In English, however, passive sentences can be used under all circumstances, whether they are positive, negative, or neutral.

Table 1 Semantic colors of *Bei* passive sentences in Chinese literary works in the Ming

and Qing Dynasties

| Linguistic Materials | Time of Materials | Negative Sense | Neutral Sense | Positive Sense | Total |
|--|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|-------|
| <i>Journey to the West</i> | 16 th century | 586 / 95.4% | 19 / 3.1% | 9 / 1.5% | 614 |
| <i>The Scholars</i> | 18 th century | 98 / 98.0% | 2 / 2.0% | 0 / 0.0% | 100 |
| <i>The Dream of Red Mansions</i> | 18 th century | 209 / 88.2% | 24 / 10.1% | 4 / 1.7% | 237 |
| <i>The Story of Child Heroes</i> | 19 th century | 156 / 89.1% | 16 / 9.1% | 3 / 1.7% | 175 |
| <i>Strange Events of the Last Twenty Years</i> | 1902 | 301 / 91.2% | 20 / 6.1% | 9 / 2.7% | 330 |
| Total | | 1350 / 92.7% | 81 / 5.6% | 25 / 1.7% | 1456 |

However, since then, passives sentences with *Bei* have been used more frequently to express neutral or positive meanings. (see Table 2) (He, 2008)

Table 2 Semantic colors of Chinese passive sentences after the May Fourth Movement

| Linguistic Materials | Time of Materials | Negative Sense | Neutral Sense | Positive Sense | Total |
|--|-------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|-------|
| Modern Literature Works | 1923-1936 | 129 / 61.7% | 63 / 30.1% | 17 / 8.1% | 209 |
| Contemporary Literature Works | 1956-1995 | 218 / 60.2% | 109 / 30.1% | 35 / 9.7% | 362 |
| Scholarly Writings | 1994-1996 | 168 / 43.0% | 197 / 50.4% | 26 / 6.7% | 391 |
| Total | | 515 / 53.5% | 369 / 38.4% | 78 / 8.1% | 962 |
| Corpus of Spoken Beijing Native Language | 1989 | 46 / 92.0% | 4 / 8.0% | 0 / 0.0% | 50 |

Although much has been done by other researchers on the influence of English upon Chinese in the domain of passive sentences, few concrete experiments are conducted among individuals. Many essays on such a topic focused on the macroscopic

perspective, and the data mainly came from the linguistic corpus.

In my graduation thesis, I tried to discover the changes in Chinese passive sentences in detail, to detect how English influenced Chinese in terms of passive sentences: in which aspect, written or Oral Chinese, to explain why such changes are related to the fever in studying English, and to predict possible changes in Chinese in the near future, based on the research findings, I came up with the way where English influences Chinese in terms of passive sentences.

The thesis begins with a brief introduction to the topic and a literature review of the previous studies on the Chinese Europeanization, especially on passive sentences. The second part, namely the Methodology part, describes the methodology involved in this study, which includes the research questions and the research design. The following part analyzes the results of the study and tries to reveal the possible reasons for the findings. The thesis ends with the conclusion part, including a summary of the major findings and limitations of this study, as well as a rough prediction of the future development of Chinese passive sentences.

PART ONE LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Overview

The spread and education of English in the international context is a controversial issue in China today. There have been numerous literatures on the discussion of the Europeanization of Chinese, especially of the influence of English upon Chinese. Over the years, there have been a wide range of opinions on this issue.

Some people approve of the learning of English, maintaining that because of the increased globalization in the modern world, English as the international language should be learned by all Chinese citizens. Some even support the Europeanization of Chinese. For instance, one of the greatest Chinese writers Lu Xun was in favor of the Europeanized Chinese essays, saying that Europeanized Chinese sentences could not

only introduce innovated articles and ideas, but also absorb new and diverse expressions into traditional Chinese language, making the essays more interesting, more logic, and more precise (Guo, 2007).

However, some people oppose the fever in European languages, arguing that the fever in learning English, especially since the reform and Opening Up, has exposed negative influences on Chinese. For instance, after noticing the Europeanization of Chinese in terms of vocabulary, punctuation, complex sentences and so on, Hsu stressed that English had polluted Chinese and people should start purifying the Chinese language (Hsu, 1994). Liang Shiqiu took a clear-cut stand against Europeanization and claimed that the Europeanization of Chinese was closely related to hard translation (Guo, 2007).

Most of the researches on the influence of English on Chinese were based on the writers' experience or intuition, so these findings were to some degree subjective. Wang Li was the first linguist who started doing research on the Europeanization of Chinese systematically and quantitatively. In the *Chinese Grammatical Theory*, he considered that the Europeanization of Chinese was actually the gradual evolution of the Chinese language. Any transform in grammar was a process from quantitative change to qualitative evolution (Wang 1984). Quantitative change in *Bei* passive sentences, in other words, is the change in frequency in applying new rules to a certain situation, and is actually the significant process in which old rules are gradually taken place by new rules. Europeanized Chinese is the consequence of qualitative evolution.

In terms of Chinese passive sentences with *Bei*, some people claimed that these changes were intra-induced, while some believed that they were mainly aroused by the frequent contact with English. He Yang explained as follows, these changes obtained their root causes from the intra linguistic relationship, and English served to turn the possibility of evolution into reality, or the probability into necessity (He, 2008).

English has exerted grammatical influences on Chinese lexically and syntactically. Lexically, for instance, more and more words are borrowed from English into Chinese. Some came from transliteration, like “sofa (沙发)” and “clone(克隆)”; Some were in English forms, such as CEO and MBA. Syntactically, take passive

sentences as an example, they were used more frequently and the usage context was altering.

The understanding of Chinese Europeanization consists of a broad sense and a narrow one. In the broad sense, Chinese Europeanization contains phenomena like the growing of Chinese sentences or grammatical structures which have existed before, but are used more frequently or the context of usage are altering by the influence of European languages (Wang, 1985). In the narrow sense, Europeanization is restricted to Europeanized Chinese sentences that do not exist in Chinese originally, but come into being by imitating European languages (Ye & Xu 1997). Most of the linguists take the former definition.

Many linguists agree that there are two types of language evolution, namely the evolution motivated by internal and external factors. Since it is impossible to observe directly the process of language evolution from triggering to formulation, we can only decide which factor motivates the evolution by analyzing circumstantial evidences. We need to establish proper standards and methods in order to determine reliably and effectively which factor contributes to a certain language evolution.

Wang Li adopted the method of comparison to survey on the influence of English upon Chinese. He compared Vernacular Chinese with both Chinese classical literatures, such as *A Dream of Red Mansion*, and English. If a structure in Vernacular Chinese was more similar to English than traditional Chinese, he could conclude that this particular Chinese structure was Europeanized. When employing comparison and arriving at the conclusion, Wang was supposed to prove that the natural development of traditional Chinese were not able to produce the change by itself, and that the linguistic transformation appeared after the May Fourth Movement. I took similar method when conducting the thesis.

1.2 Features of Chinese Europeanization in previous studies

Starting from the May Fourth Movement, the Europeanization of Chinese once aroused wide public concern in the intellectual domain. Great writers like Hu Shi, Lu Xun, Mao Dun and Zhu Ziqing expressed their opinions on this issue from the early 20th century to the 1930s'. However, they, most of the case, only expressed general comments on or their own attitudes towards the Europeanization of Chinese, or their suggestions on how to properly improve Chinese by absorbing beneficial elements from Western languages, instead of carrying out objective and systematic linguistic researches.

After the 1960s, despite the fact that there is a lot of literature review on Europeanization in domains of literature and translation, few of the essays talk about the details of Europeanization. There is little progress in the detailed, systematic research of Chinese Europeanization. Few writers bother to take into serious consideration whether these language changes are real and eternal, or whether these changes are attributed to the influence of European languages.

Generally speaking, a majority of the previous studies on the Europeanization of Chinese put a lot of efforts on combing and listing concrete phenomena, neglecting to summarize the features of Europeanization or the rules underlying the gradual changes in Chinese.

The linguistic research on the Europeanization of Chinese was started by Wang Li. He analyzed various kinds of Europeanization of Chinese in his book *The History of Chinese*, which involved the creation of polysyllabic words as well as the increase in using parenthesis and passive sentences. He also proposed his view on the means and limits of such influences. Wang Li's study opens the curtain of Europeanization of Chinese from linguistic perspectives and lays a solid foundation for research in this field (Wang, 1958).

As to the features of Chinese Europeanization, linguists came up with three major aspects. To begin with, translation is the major source of language transformation.

According to Wang Li, when talking of Chinese Europeanization, we cannot get rid of translation, and sometimes we nearly confuse one for the other. It is evident that the origin of Europeanization is located in translation since the easiest way of translating is to follow its original order. Wang added that those who had indissoluble bond with European languages, in general, preferred to treat European grammar as the yardstick of their articles (Wang 1984). Kubler held similar opinions to Wang, claiming that English education played a role in promoting Europeanization of Chinese (Kubler 1985). Thus, this thesis is indeed surveying on the influence of English study upon the learners' use of the Chinese language.

The second feature is that Europeanization of Chinese is by and large the influence of English on Chinese. Wang Li pointed out that the so-called Europeanization was mainly caused by English because many more people have a better understanding of English, instead of French or German. Kubler supported Wang with concrete details, presenting the results of other researchers that among the translated books in Chinese from 1910 to 1935, 17.9% of these books were translated from Indo-European language, 13% from Russian, 12% from German, while 62% from English. We can easily draw a conclusion that the influences of European languages on Chinese are mainly from English. As a result, my thesis focuses on the changes in Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* which are influenced by English.

The third feature of Europeanization is that the changes caused by English are limited to written Chinese. Everyday spoken language, according to Wang Li, was scarcely influenced by English. He found that the changes caused by English in oral Chinese were not obvious in many aspects (Wang 1958). In this thesis, the attention is put to the changes in written Chinese passive sentences with *Bei*.

Though the findings above do not cover concrete ways in which Chinese is influenced, they succeed in providing us with significant features of Chinese Europeanization, and have important valuation in helping us to select proper methods to study specific grammatical phenomenon. When doing research on the Europeanization of Chinese, I choose passive sentences with *Bei* in written works as my study object.

1.3 Language Contact Theory

To research on the influences of English on Chinese, it is necessary to study the language contact theory. Former researchers have found that contact between languages could bring changes to the original language. As Bernd and Tania wrote:

Language contact manifests itself in the transfer of linguistic material which can be any of the following kinds:

- a. Form, that is, sounds or combinations of sounds
- b. Meaning (including grammatical meanings or functions) or combinations of meanings
- c. Form-meaning units or combinations of form-meaning units
- d. Syntactic relations, that is, the order of meaningful elements
- e. Any combination of (a) through (d)

(Bernd Heine & Tania Kuteva, 2005)

The influence of English on Chinese passive sentences discussed in this essay belongs to group (c) (see 1.4.1 *Definition of Chinese passive sentences*).

In general, there are two types of language contacts, namely direct inter-lingual influence and indirect inter-lingual influence.

Based on the research findings of Kubler, direct inter-lingual influence will at the beginning bring in many language elements to the effected language like loan-words, thus causing bilingual phenomenon. He found that in previous studies researchers have already discovered that direct language contact had effect on the oral language. However, the phonetic system of Chinese was seldom influenced by English. Consequently, he drew a conclusion that written Chinese, or formal Chinese was influenced by English, instead of oral Chinese.

I surveyed, on the basis of Language Contact Theory, on how Chinese learners' writing of passive sentences with *Bei* is influenced by their English learning by testing their tendency in using Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* when doing English-Chinese translation, as well as their subjective feelings of the influence of English learning upon Chinese.

1.4 Specific subject of the thesis: Passive Sentences

1.4.1 Definition of Chinese passive sentences

Chinese passive sentences are divided into two categories, namely passive sentences with and without indicators like *Bei* (被), *Jiao* (叫), *Rang* (让), *Jiao* (教), *Gei* (给) and so on. In this thesis, my focus is on passive sentences with indicators.

Still, it is important to note that in most cases today we use *Bei* as the indicator in passive sentences, so the thesis will choose written Chinese passive sentences with the symbol *Bei* as the object of study.

1.4.2 Semantic colors of Chinese passive sentences with *Bei*

Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* can contain negative, positive, or neutral meanings. Negative meanings refer to unpleasant, unhappy, or unlucky senses; while positive refer to pleasant, happy or lucky senses. In the past, most Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* were employed to express negative meanings.

Chinese passive sentences with the character *Bei* germinated in late Warring States and were widely used in the Han dynasty, according to Wang Li (Wang 1980). He also discovered that in most cases passive sentences with *Bei* were used to express negative meanings. Few were used to express positive or neutral meanings. He explained that it was because *Bei* in ancient Chinese carried the meaning of “suffering”, “be subjected to”. For instance, in the sentence “信而见疑，忠而被谤，能无怨乎？”（《史记 屈原贾生列传》），*Bei* was used to describe disagreeable senses. He maintained that it was definitely correct to say Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* were generally used to describe unpleasant or unlucky things, based on the linguistic materials from Han Dynasty to Tang Dynasty.

However, some scholars doubted to whom were the semantic colors meant, to the subject of the sentence, or to the speaker who uttered the sentence. He Yang defined the

discipline of deciding whether the passive sentence contained negative, positive, or neutral meanings as the following:

- a. If the subjects or the potential objects of the predicates in the Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* are humans or groups of humans, then it is the subjects or the potential objects that carry the semantic colors. For instance, in the sentence “这些衙役百姓，一个个被他打得魂飞魄散。（《儒林外史》第八回），” the semantic color of the sentence is negative. In this example, the subjects or the potential objects are “这些衙役百姓” who are beaten severely.
- b. If the subjects or the potential objects of the predicates in the Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* are referring to things or matters which do not belong to anybody, then the speaker that carries the semantic colors. Take the sentence “这些黄鼠狼终于都被抓住了” as an example. The subjects or the potential objects are “这些黄鼠狼” which do not belong to anybody and are caught, so the semantic color of this sentence is to the speaker, which is positive.
- c. If the subjects or the potential objects of the predicates in the Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* are referring to things or matters which belong to somebody, then the owners that carry the semantic colors. For example, in the sentence “他的漫画书被老师收走了，” the subjects or the potential objects in the sentence are “他的漫画书” which obviously belong to “他” but are taken away by the teacher. Thus the semantic color of the sentence is negative.

1.4.3 Frequency of using Chinese passive sentences with Bei

Compared with English, Chinese tend to use less passive sentences. Wang Huan's study revealed that there were 135 passive sentences on the first 30 pages of Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice*, an average of 4.5 passive sentences per page. In William

Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*, there were 115 passive sentences on the first 40 pages, an average of about 2.9 passive sentences per page. However, in Lao She's *Camel Xiangzi*, there were altogether approximately 100 overt passive sentences with *Bei* throughout the whole book on more than 200 pages, with an average of 0.5 passive sentences with *Bei* per page (Wang Huan, 1983). Moreover, by comparing with other Chinese writers, he concluded that Lao She, who was more greatly influenced by English, tend to use more passive sentences than other contemporary Chinese writers such as Mao Dun and Zhu Ziqing. It is transparent that Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* are used far less frequently than English passive sentences.

He Yang summarized that under the following four circumstances Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* seldom occurred in the past, but now we could find passive sentences. (He, 2008)

- a. In the subject and predicate (S-P) structure "NP + VP", if NP, i.e., the subject, refers to things, and VP, the predicate verb, is used to describe human actions, then it is not necessary to use the marker *Bei* to express passive meanings. However, after the May Fourth Movement, *Bei* is used more frequently in such context. For example,

现在教育经费都被拉去充作军事费用用掉了。 (巴金《家》，1931)

Comparing with 教育经费都拉去充作军事费用了。
- b. In the situation of "NP1+ 是 + NP 2 + VP +的," like

妹子是被大哥吃了，母亲知道没有。 (鲁迅《狂人日记》，1918)

Comparing with 妹子是大哥吃的，母亲没有知道。
- c. In the structure of "VP 的 + NP", if NP is the potential object of VP, then it is better to avoid using *Bei*. For example,

我相信权利的平等会减弱被夸大了的自我克制这个目前认为的女性性格的理想。 (约翰·斯图尔特·穆勒 著 汪溪 译《妇女的屈从地位》，1995)

Comparing with ...会减弱夸大了的自我克制...
- d. In the structure of "(NP 1 + VP) 的 + NP 2", when NP 2 is the potential object of VP, then passive meanings can be conveyed without *Bei*.

贩卖鸦片的大首领，被政府通缉的阔老爷，白了胡子的老诗人，也都在那里消遣。（老舍《赵子曰》，1926）

Comparing with ...政府通缉的阔老爷...

PART TWO METHODOLOGY

The study employs three methods to detect the degrees of impact of English upon Chinese passive sentences with *Bei*, a test for students with different English and Chinese levels, interviewing typical students whose Chinese is more obviously influenced by English, and collecting statistics from current Chinese written works.

In this section, the methodology of the main study is introduced, which includes the research questions to be addressed in the study, the subjects participating, the instruments involved, and the procedures of data collection and data analysis.

2.1 Research Questions

This research is carried out to answer the following questions:

1. Does the widespread learning of English have an impact on Chinese passive sentences? Is it true that the more Chinese people are exposed to English, the more their Chinese is influenced by English? To be more precise, 1) is it true that the more efforts learners put into learning English, the more their habits in using Chinese passive sentences are influenced by English? 2) Do the learners differ in the influences as they differ in their English levels? If so, what is the relationship between the degrees of influences and the efforts or the English levels?
2. How is the use of Chinese passive sentences with the indicator *Bei* influenced by English? 1) Are they used more frequently? 2) Have the contexts in which they are used changed?

3. Is it the case that the changes in the frequency and the context of Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* are caused by English?

2.2 Subjects

As students from the English Department have much more contact with English, the subjects in this research are English majors in the School of Foreign Studies and students majoring in other subjects in Nanjing University. The total number is 79: 34 English majors, including 6 graduates and 28 undergraduates, and 45 students majoring in other subjects. Most of them, 68 out of 79, spent one to nine hours on English learning, and all of them have passed CET-4 or TEM-4.

2.3 Instruments

The instruments used in this study are-- a test and an interview.

2.3.1 Test

The test was designed for both English majors and students from other majors (for details, see Appendix 1). It is made up of two parts:

- 1) The first part is about the subjects' personal information, including gender, academic year, majors, years of learning English, hours spent on English each week, and the latest English test passed. The third to fifth blanks to fill is to judge the efforts they have put in learning English, and the last blank to fill is to serve as a criterion for judging their English proficiency.

- 2) The second part is designed in the form of English-Chinese translation. There are 9 items testing the subjects' tendency in using *Bei* to express passive meanings on the following aspects: A) using *Bei* in positive context as in item 3 and 9; B) using *Bei*

to express neutral meanings as in item 1, 2 and 8; C) using *Bei* to express negative meanings as in item 4, 5 and 6; B) the circumstances where they choose to use *Bei* unnecessarily, respectively ① “NP + VP” (sentence 2) ② “NP1+ 是 + NP 2 + VP + 的” (sentence 4) ③ “VP 的 + NP” (sentence 5) ④ “(NP 1 + VP) 的 + NP 2” (sentence 6).

All the 79 subjects took part in the test survey.

2.3.2 Interviews

Interviews were conducted after I analyzed the results of the test. The questions in the interviews are open-end questions, aiming at getting more detailed information on influence of English on their Chinese, and explaining the reasons for the test results. See appendix 2 for details. Six English majors, including two graduates and four undergraduates and four from other departments took part in the interviews

2.4 Data Collection & Data Analysis

2.4.1 Delivering the test

From March 29th to April 7th, I distributed the test in paper forms as well as electronic forms to 50 English majors and 50 students from other majors, and collected 79 effective tests.

On the evenings from March 29th to April 2nd, 2011, I distributed the test sheets to 18 English majors and 25 students from other majors at school, and sent the electronic test to 32 English majors and 25 students majoring in other subjects through E-mail or instant messenger. Since some students were busy doing their own business at that moment, I asked them to hand in the test after the Tomb-sweeping Day. By the end of April 7th, I had collected 43 test sheets and 40 electronic tests. Then I picked up 79 valid tests, using them as samples to carry out data analysis.

I did data analysis of the test by looking for the key Chinese character *Bei* and judging the contexts it appeared. First, I made one table for the translation part based on the different purposes of these items. Then, in the table, I recorded the frequency of using *Bei* in different categories, keeping English majors and non-English majors separated.

Next, after a rough scan, I found that generally those who tend to use more “*Bei*”s usually spent more hours on learning English, so I divided the subjects into three groups based on the hours they spent on English: 0 hour (4 subjects); 1-3 hours (38 subjects); 4-9 hours (30 subjects); 10-35 hours (7 subjects). I recorded the frequency of using *Bei* in each item for these three groups.

From these statistics I got an overall impression of the influences of English upon Chinese.

2.4.2 Doing interviews

After I analyzed the data collected from the test, on April 10th, 2011, I did face-to-face interviews with three English majors and one majoring in other subjects, using the form of informal talks. I recorded the interviews by myself. From April 10th to 12th, I did online interviews with another three English majors and three non-English major. During the online interviews, I adopted two methods. The first is to send two of the subjects my questions prepared beforehand through the E-mail. The second is to chat with four subjects through online messenger. (See Appendix 2)

I read all the information in the transcripts of the interviews and summarized students’ answers, in an attempt to figure out the reasons for the differences in using *Bei* in Chinese passive sentences and the unexpected findings of the test.

2.4.3 Analyzing Contemporary Chinese Works

I chose four kinds of research subjects, namely novels and academic thesis

translated from English to Chinese, as well as Chinese novels and Chinese academic essays. These works were written after the May Fourth Movement and were analyzed by comparing the frequency of passive sentences used, the context where passive sentences appeared, and the social background under which they were written.

From November, 2010 to April, 2011, I randomly picked up *Bei* passive sentences from these works and calculated the numbers of passive sentences expressing positive, neutral, negative meanings. Usually, I chose one or two chapters from each work since time was limited. It was almost impossible for me to collect data from the full text of these works. (see Appendix 3)

I also referred to previous researchers for their data collected in this field.

PART THREE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* were used essentially to express an adverse situation where unpleasant things happened. However, as has been observed by all Chinese grammarians, the percentage of Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* expressing positive or neutral meanings is on the increase. Besides, Chinese *Bei* passive sentences are used more frequently than before. What are the reasons underlying these changes? Is it because of the influence of English? Or these changes are inner-induced within the language itself? I tried to find out the valid reasons to explain such changes by means of tests, interviews, and Chinese written works.

3.1 Semantic colors of Chinese passive sentences with *Bei*

3.1.1 Alteration in semantic colors of Chinese passive sentences with *Bei*

We can find, from Table 1, that in the past before mass contact with English, ancient Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* were mainly used to depict undesirable meanings, and the percentage was 92.7%. However, from then on, the percentage of

Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* expressing negative meanings has been on the decrease while those expressing positive meanings increased. See Table 3.

Table 3 Percentages semantic colors of Chinese passive sentences

| Linguistic Materials | Time of Materials | Sum Up | Negative Sense | Neutral Sense | Positive Sense |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 明清小说 | | 1456 | 1350 / 92.7% | 81 / 5.6% | 25 / 1.7% |
| 老舍《老张的哲学》 | 1926 | 40 | 30 / 75% | 9 / 22.5% | 1 / 2.5% |
| 朱自清《你我》 | 1936 | 40 | 36 / 90% | 3 / 7.5% | 1 / 2.5% |
| 赵树理《三里湾》 | 1955 | 40 | 34 / 85% | 4 / 10% | 2 / 5% |
| 苏童《妻妾成群》 | 1989 | 40 | 27 / 67.6% | 13 / 32.5% | 0 / 0 |
| 余华《余华作品集》 | 1986-1994 | 40 | 34 / 85% | 5 / 12.5% | 1 / 2.5% |
| 张悦然《是你来检阅我的忧伤了吗》 | 2004 | 40 | 24 / 60% | 11 / 27.5% | 5 / 12.5% |
| 冯唐《万物生长》 | 2010 | 40 | 23 / 57.5% | 13 / 32.5 % | 4 / 10% |
| 学术著作 | 朱学勤《道德理想的覆灭：从卢梭到罗伯斯庇尔》 | 1994 | 17 / 42.5% | 20 / 50% | 3 / 7.5% |
| | 张冰《蒂尼亚诺夫的动态语言结构文学观——〈文学事实〉评述》 | 2008 | 15 / 37.5% | 23 / 57.5% | 2 / 5% |

I picked up 40 Passive Sentences with *Bei* from each of the works written after the May Fourth Movement. The data from Ming and Qing Dynasties were borrowed from He Yang's *Studies on Europeanization of Modern Chinese*. It is not difficult to find that in Europeanized Chinese, positive meanings can also be conveyed by the *Bei* construction.

In Table 3, in the fields of literature works, 92.7% of ancient Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* were used in undesirable context, while 5.6% in neutral context and 1.7% in positive context. After 1919 in which year the May Fourth Movement

happened, only 74.3% (208 / 280) of all the passive sentences were used to convey negative meanings, decreasing 18.4% than those written before May Fourth Movement. On the other hand, those conveyed neutral meanings occupied 20.7% (58 / 280), increasing 15.1%, while positive 5% (14 / 280), increasing 3.3%.

Before the May Fourth Movement, Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* expressing non-negative meanings occupied 7.3%. Since the May Fourth Movement, they have increased to 25.7%.

In addition, in modern academic works, passive sentences conveying negative meanings only occupied altogether 40% (32 / 80), and those expressing non-negative meanings occupied 60% (48 / 80), much larger than literature works.

From Table 3, we can also find that from 1919 to the end of 20th century, negative meanings in literature works occupied 80.5% (161 / 200) and non-negative meanings occupied 19.5% (39/200) with neutral ones 17% (34/200) and positive 2.5% (5/200). From the send to the 20th century to present, passive sentences with *Bei* expressing negative meanings in literature works were 58.75% (47/80) and neutral meanings 30% (24/80), positive meanings 11.25% (9/80). Passive sentences with *Bei* in literature works in the 21st century are changing greater than those in the period from 1919 to the end of the 20th century.

3.1.2 Possible reasons for changes in the aspect of semantic colors.

Despite of the fact that all Chinese grammarians agree that more and more Chinese passive sentences are used to express non-negative meanings, they hold diver opinions towards. Wang Li believed that the changes were caused due to the influence of European languages, especially English. He explained that in English passive sentences could be used to convey both positive and negative meanings. With more contact with English after the May Fourth Movement, Chinese people tend to use passive sentences with *Bei* in the situation where English passive sentences could be used. (Wang 1985) Zhao Yuanren agreed with him by adding that when translating

English passive sentences, people were always mechanically translating “by” into *Bei* (被), regardless of the semantic meaning which *Bei* was used to convey. (Zhao 1996)
The results of translation part in the test supported Zhao directly. See Table 4.

Table 4 Results of English-Chinese translation test

| Meaning | No. | Times of using <i>Bei</i> | Percentage of using <i>Bei</i> | Total |
|----------|-----|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|
| Positive | 3 | 66 | 83.5% | 84.8% |
| | 7 | 61 | 77.2% | |
| | 9 | 74 | 93.7% | |
| Neutral | 1 | 37 | 46.8% | 35.4% |
| | 2 | 21 | 26.6% | |
| | 8 | 26 | 32.9% | |
| Negative | 4 | 75 | 94.9% | 69.6% |
| | 5 | 78 | 98.7% | |
| | 6 | 12 | 15.2% | |

From the table above, we can find that in English passive sentences expressing positive meanings, 84.8% of the translated Chinese passive sentences use the character *Bei*, while 69.6% of the translated Chinese passive sentences conveying negative meanings use *Bei*.

As Li and Thomson had pointed, the increase of *Bei* in non-negative Chinese passive sentences was obviously caused by the contact with European languages, especially English. (Li and Thomson, 1981) When translating these passive English sentences, few of the tested took into consideration of the context where the passive sentences appeared, for the fact that people did not need to judge the semantic colors of passive sentences when using “by” to express passive meanings in English.

Still, there are some grammarians arguing that these changes were triggered by the internal factors of the language itself. Xiang Xi maintained that the changes in the semantic colors of Chinese passive sentences using *Bei* were aroused by the changes in the meaning of the character *Bei*. In ancient Chinese *Bei* carried the meaning of “be

subjected to, suffering.” Nevertheless, in modern Chinese, *Bei* no longer carried undesirable meanings. (Xiang 1993)

I do not agree with him. In Table 2, 92% of the “*Bei*”s in passive sentences of Beijing spoken language expressed negative meanings. We can conclude that the use of Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* in spoken language do not change as much as written Chinese in terms of semantic colors. The phenomenon that then changes mainly occurred in written materials can prove Zhao Yuanren’s opinion that translation, indirect language contact, is the major source for the changes.

Also, from Table 3, we can find that academic works got greater influence than literary works. It is probably because of the reason that Chinese people utilized more reference from academic findings than from literature.

When doing translation, translators are willing to be loyal to the source text. As a result, it is possible that *Bei* will be used to express non-negative meanings in Chinese passive sentences, as has been shown by Table 4.

For instance, in the English-Chinese translation part of the test, 83.5% of the tested translated sentence three “other works of art that have been worshiped for generations have eventually gone out of fashion” with *Bei*. The passive sentence actually is transmitting positive meanings. However, 66 out of 79 tested students used *Bei* in the translated sentence, instead of “备受推崇的艺术作品” or “为世人推崇的艺术作品.”

To sum up, the changes in the semantic colors of written Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* is caused by the influence of English, especially by the translation of English into Chinese.

3.2 Frequency of using Chinese passive sentences with *Bei*

3.2.1 Alteration in the frequency of Chinese passive sentences with *Bei*

As I have stated before, Chinese passive sentences tend to use less indicators *Bei*

in passive sentences than English passive sentences with “by.” However, Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* are used more and more frequently in the modern society.

Table 5 Frequency of Chinese passive sentences with *Bei*

| Linguistic Materials | Chinese Characters | <i>Bei</i> Passive Sentences | Number of <i>Bei</i> Passive Sentences / 10,000 Characters |
|--|--------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Chinese Modern Literature Works from 1919 to Present | 20,000 | 19 | 9.5 |
| Modern Academic Works | 20,000 | 29 | 14.5 |
| Subtotal | 40,000 | 48 | 12 |
| Translated Modern Literature Works | 10,000 | 12 | 12 |
| Translated Modern Academic Works | 10,000 | 26 | 26 |
| Subtotal | 20,000 | 38 | 19 |
| Total | 60,000 | 86 | 14.3 |
| Literature Works in the Ming and Qing Dynasties | 2970,000 | 1384 | 4.7 |

I also referred to He Yang for the Ming and Qing Dynasties Part (He 2008). See Table 1.

By analyzing statistics in Table 5, we can find that Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* are used more frequently after the May Fourth Movement than before when 4.7 passive sentences employed *Bei* in 10,000 characters. After the May Fourth Movement, things changed significantly. On the average, in every 10,000 characters, there were 14.3 passive sentences with *Bei*. The number of Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* has tripled since the May Fourth Movement.

From this table, we can see that generally Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* are used more frequently translated works than in authentic Chinese works.

Another phenomenon is that in Chinese academic works, passive sentences with *Bei* are employed more frequently than in literary works.

3.2.2 Possible reasons for the changes in the frequency of Chinese passive sentences with *Bei*

Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* are used more frequently after the May Fourth Movement than before. What are the reasons underlying this phenomenon?

I summarized two major reasons. The first one is related to the change in the semantic meanings conveyed by Chinese passive sentences with *Bei*. Since there are more *Bei* passive sentences expressing non-negative meanings, the total number of Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* will surely increase.

Secondly, in Chinese there are many cases where passive meanings can be conveyed without passive indicators like *Bei* nowadays tend to use *Bei* to express the passive meanings. English passive sentences with the indicator of “be + -ed” are used more frequently than Chinese passive sentences with *Bei*. For instance, in the translation test item 8 “Since Bair’s time, a few scientists wondered if feedback could be used for a more serious purpose,” 32.9% of the tested used *Bei* to express passive meanings, such as “被用于” “被用作” and so on. Actually, it is better to eliminate the *Bei* here. We can translate into “可用于/用作其它目的.”

Specifically speaking, according to He Yang (see Literature Review part), there are four cases where in the past, *Bei* should be eliminated, but now *Bei* is used more and more frequently. See Table 6

Table 6 Percentage of *Bei* in the structures where *Bei* could be omitted

| Sentence Structure | NP + VP | NP1+是 + NP 2 + VP +的 | VP 的 + NP | (NP 1 + VP) 的 + NP 2 |
|--|---------|-------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Item No. | 2 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Percentage of <i>Bei</i> Passive Sentences | 26.6% | 94.9% | 98.7% | 15.2% |

Item 2. I thought that the letter had been posted, but a week later he came to me, apologetically, to say that he'd found it still in this pocket.

26.6% of the students tested translated into structures like “信已经被寄出去了” or “信已经被投递出去了.” We can simply say “信已经寄出去了.”

Item 4. The child was indeed killed by his real mother.

94.9% of the tested translated into sentences similar to “小孩实际上是被他亲身母亲杀害的.” We can simply say “小孩实际上是他亲身母亲杀害的.”

Item 5. The barriers which had once been leveled (夷平, 拆毁) were raised again by the northern conquests.

98.7% of the tested translated into phrases similar to “曾经被夷平的障碍.” We can simply say “曾经夷平的障碍.”

Item 6. Late on Sunday, the government announced that another one of the country's most wanted bandits (强盗) had been captured at lunchtime in the Mexico City .

15.2% of the tested translated into phrases similar to “被政府通缉的强盗.” We can simply say “政府通缉的强盗.”

Not only in translated Chinese passive sentences will people tend to use indicators like *Bei*, but also in modern Chinese literature work greater writers sometimes use *Bei* to express passive meanings, and in fact, these “*Bei*”s can be omitted. Below are some examples.

Structure NP + VP:

庙宇里的神像全被捣毁了。(冯德英《苦菜花》，1958)

Structure NP1+是 + NP 2 + VP +的:

“黑的他”是被你们必死的，白的他是被你们逼走的。(冰心《疯人笔记》，1922)

Structure VP 的 + NP

我相信权利的平等会减弱被夸大的自我克制这个目前认为的女性性格的理想。(约翰穆勒《妇女的屈从低位》译文，1995)

Structure (NP 1 + VP) 的 + NP 2

一个被大家看不上的学生当然不能列在前几名的。(老舍《牛天赐传》，1934)

The above examples show that after the May Fourth Movement, people tend to express passive meaning by using indicator *Bei* more frequently than before.

In addition, by interviewing the tested students and referring to their answers to the interview, I draw a conclusion that basically students who spend more time in learning English are more influenced by the learning of English. That is to say, in the case of passive sentences with *Bei*, they tend to use the marker *Bei* more frequently to express passive meanings, unless they have already been aware of the differences between Chinese and English passive sentences, or they have studied techniques of English-Chinese translation before.

For instance, two students from other majors spent more than 20 hours in learning English every to get well-prepared for the Postgraduate Qualifying Examination. The marker *Bei* was employed at least 7 times in the test in nine sentences. Their Chinese was severely influenced by the study of English. However, the other three students, two from the English Department and one from the Chinese Department, who also spent more than 20 hours in learning English every week use only two or three *Bei* to express passive meanings in the English-Chinese translation test. They explained that it was probably because they had a better knowledge of English-Chinese translation or of Chinese grammar.

As a result, we could conclude that the learners' Chinese is imperceptibly influenced by the learning of English

PART FOUR CONCLUSION

4.1 Major findings

This research examines how Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* changed under the influence of English. Analyzing the data from the angle of semantic colors of Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* and the frequency of using *Bei* in passive sentences, the study yields two major findings:

(1) By researching on the percentages of Chinese passive sentences expressing negative, neutral, and positive meanings, it was found that 92.7% of ancient Chinese

passive sentences with *Bei* were used in undesirable context, while 5.6% in neutral context and 1.7% in positive context. By comparison, after the May Fourth Movement, only 74.3% (208 / 280) of all the passive sentences were used to convey negative meanings, decreasing 18.4% than those written before May Fourth Movement. On the other hand, those conveyed neutral meanings occupied 20.7% (58 / 280), increasing by 15.1%, while positive 5% (14 / 280), increasing by 3.3%.

(2) Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* are used more and more frequently in the modern society. Also, in Chinese academic works, passive sentences with *Bei* are employed more frequently than in literature work. The reasons underlying this phenomenon are as follows: firstly, since there are more *Bei* passive sentences expressing non-negative meanings, the total number of Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* will surely increase. Secondly, in Chinese there are many cases where passive meanings could be conveyed without passive indicators like *Bei* in the past tend to use *Bei* to express the passive meanings in modern society.

4.2 Implications of the findings

The research is quite explorative in its attempt to discover the influence of English upon Chinese in the aspect of marked passive sentences.

We can further draw a conclusion that generally the more people spent energy and time on English, the more their Chinese were influenced by English. From the interview and test, I found that generally people we spent three to nine hours on English tend to use *Bei* to express passive meanings, except those who were aware of the differences between Chinese and English passive sentences.

Learners' Chinese is be imperceptibly influenced by the learning of English. It is possible that as more and more people are learning English, Chinese passive sentences with *Bei* will undergo bigger changes in the future.

4.3 Limitations and recommendations for future research

Apparently, there are limitations in this paper. First, as a case study, it only covers one aspect of all the Chinese Europeanization phenomena. Second, the subjects tested are all from Nanjing University, not very typical or inclusive, which might affect the representativeness of the results. If time permits, a large scale of research and a more scientific way of delivering the test can be tried. Besides, the choosing of Chinese written works is not that scientific. If condition permits, I will turn to some famous Chinese corpus.

For the future study, I would like to suggest that the researching methods of this study can be used for studying other aspects of Chinese Europeanization phenomena.

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河北教育出版社

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Test

翻译测试

2011.03

本测试所获结果严格保密，答案无好坏之分，不会对您的成绩产生任何影响，仅作为研究之用，请认真填写。谢谢合作！

性别 _____ 年级 _____ 院系 _____ 学习英语 _____ 年
平均每周 _____ 小时学习英语 已经过了 (CET-4, CET-6, TEM-4, TEM-8)

1. Many laws are able to remain laws only by being seldom or never carried into effect.

2. I thought that the letter had been posted, but a week later he came to me, apologetically, to say that he'd found it still in this pocket.

3. Other works of art that have been worshiped for generations have eventually gone out of fashion.

4. The child was indeed killed by his real mother.

5. The barriers which had once been leveled (夷平, 拆毁) were raised again by the northern conquests.

6. Late on Sunday, the government announced that another one of the country's most wanted bandits (强盗) had been captured at lunchtime in the Mexico City .

7. He has been designated (委任) Chairman by Presidents Regan, Bush, and Clinton.

8. Since Bair's time, a few scientists wondered if feedback could be used for a more serious purpose.

9. Only a few drugs have been approved for use as AIDS treatments.

再次感谢您的合作！

Appendix 2: Interview Guides

The major questions in the interviews are as follows:

1. 你喜欢英语吗？一般每周会花多少时间学习英语？基本上每天都会学吗？
2. 你的英语水平在同学当中怎样？最擅长哪个部分？口语、听力、翻译、写作，还是阅读？
3. 你在英语写作时，会直接使用英语思维来写，还是写在脑海里出现中文、再翻译成英文呢？
4. 你学过英语翻译吗，尤其是英译中？包括看书或者听课。如果学过，你在翻译时会有意识地使用翻译技巧，使得译文更地道吗？
5. 你认为自己的中文受到英语的影响了吗？如果有，具体有哪些表现？你觉得是正式的书面用语受的影响较大还是非正式口头用语受的影响更大呢？你觉得有哪些原因造成这些影响呢？如果没有，你觉得自己是刻意避免受到影响，还是其它什么原因？
6. 你知道英语跟汉语对于被动句在使用上有哪些不同吗？你是如何发现这些不同的？
7. 根据调查，汉语被动句使用情况跟五四运动以前相比，使用频率加大了；另外，以前被动句多用于表示消极意义，现在表达中性或者积极意义的情况越来越多。你认为有哪些因素造成这种变化？你的汉语被动句的使用有没有发生这些变化呢？你是大概什么时候意识到这种变化的？
8. 你支持现今社会的学英语热潮吗？为什么？

Appendix 3 Chinese Works investigated

Written works in Chinese are as follows

1. Literature Works

1.1 Literature Works in the Ming and Ting Dynasties

《西游记》、《儒林外史》、《红楼梦》、《儿女英雄传》、《二十年目睹之怪现状》

1.2 Chinese Modern Literature Works from 1919 to Present

老舍《老张的哲学》（1926），朱自清《你我》（1936），赵树理《三里湾》（1955），苏童《妻妾成群》（1989），余华《余华作品集》（1986-1994），张悦然《是你来检阅我的忧伤了吗》（2004），冯唐《万物生长》（2010）

1.3 Translated Modern Literature Works:

狄更斯《双城记》（高奋等译，1995），马克·吐温《汤姆·索亚历险记》（曹晓红等译，1996），J. K. 罗琳《哈利·波特与死亡圣器》（马爱农、马爱新译，2007）

2. Academic Works

2.1 Modern Academic Works

朱学勤《道德理想国的覆灭：从卢梭到罗伯斯庇尔》（1994），彭越、陈立新《西方哲学初步》（1996），潘文锋《基于内容的垃圾邮件过滤研究》（硕士毕业论文 2004），张冰《蒂尼亚诺夫的动态语言结构文学观——〈文学事实〉评述》2008

2.2 Translated Modern Academic Works:

马尔库塞《单向度的人：发达工业社会意识形态研究》（张峰等译，1988），穆勒《妇女的屈从低位》（汪溪译，1995），汉娜·阿伦特《极权主义的起源》（林骧华，2008）