

4. THE DIFFERENT FORMS FOR THE OUTER OBJECT

So far, I have only dealt with the outer object marked by gěi which is only one of the different forms the outer object can take. In the present chapter, I will introduce the whole array of forms in which the outer object can appear. Starting from these data, I will then discuss the possible links between the outer object and its form as well as the predictability of the form for a given VOP. I will also deal with the problem of which underlying representation is to be postulated for the VOPs and I will give evidence in favour of the representation proposed in the preceding chapter (cf. 3.1.), namely $[\bar{v}[\bar{v}$ verb inner object] outer object].

4.1. Marking with bǎ

That the coverb or preposition bǎ can appear in the structure $[_S NP [\bar{v}[_{pp} \underline{bǎ} NP] [\bar{v} V NP]]]$, i.e. that it can mark the outer object of a VOP, is in fact nothing new, for this structure is the same as that in the "retained object construction": besides the object preposed to the verb and marked by bǎ, there is another object following the verb, "the retained object":¹

¹ In the "normal" case of the bǎ-construction, there is no object following the verb, the object being preposed to the verb and marked by bǎ:

- (i) 他打死了張三
 Ta dasi -le Zhangsan
 3SG beat:to:death-PERF Zhangsan
- (ii) 他把張三打死了
 Ta ba Zhangsan dasi -le
 3SG BA Zhangsan beat:to:death-PERF
- He has beaten Zhangsan to death.

- (1) 他把橘子剝了皮
Ta ba juzi bo -le pi
3SG BA orange remove-PERF skin

He has peeled an orange.

The retained object construction is said to be possible only if a special kind of relation holds between the postverbal NP and the NP marked by bǎ, e.g. a part - whole relation as illustrated in (1). (For a discussion of the other relations to be observed in the retained object construction, cf. Thompson 1973). But as demonstrated in sentences (2) - (10), the retained object construction is in fact only a special case of the VOPs; for the outer object can be marked by bǎ though none of the relations said to be necessary for that construction holds between the inner and the outer object:

- (2) 上級把他罷職了
Shangji ba ta ba zhi le
boss BA 3SG stop work PART

The boss has fired him.

- (3) 把這份禮物打一個包
Ba zhei-fen liwu da yi-ge bao
BA this-CL present tie:up 1 -CL parcel

Please wrap up this present.

- (4) 你把號碼倒個過兒就對了
Ni ba haoma dao ge guor jiu dui le
2SG BA number invert CL time then correct PART

If you invert the numbers, it will be correct.

- (5) 他還沒有把文件歸檔
Ta hai mei ba wenjian gui dang
3SG still NEG BA document return file

He has not filed the documents yet.

- (6) 你應該把這個菜回鍋
Ni yinggai ba zhei-ge cai hui guo
2SG must BA this-CL meal return pot

You have to cook this meal again.

- (7) 校長把他降級了
Xiaozhang ba ta jiang ji le
headmaster BA 3SG fall rank PART

The headmaster has sent him to a lower grade.

- (8) 他把這件事情揭蓋子
Ta ba zhei-jian shiqing jie gaizi
3SG BA this-CL matter take:off lid

He has revealed this affair.

- (9) 把你需要的書開一個單子
Ba ni xuyao de shu kai yi-ge danzi
BA 2SG need SUB book open 1 -CL list

Make a list of the books you need.

- (10) 你先把這篇文章起一個稿
Ni xian ba zhei-pian wenzhang qi yi-ge gao
2SG first BA this-CL article work:out 1 -CL draft

Make a draft of this article first.

4.2. Marking with gěi

Another preposition or coverb which can mark the outer object of a VOP is gěi. The cases where it is beyond doubt that gěi really functions as the marker of the outer object are those VOPs which allow their outer object to be marked either by gěi or by bǎ:

- (11) 他給/把門安上鎖
Ta gei/ba men an -shang suo
3SG GEI/BA door install-DIR lock

He has fitted a lock on the door.

- (12) 他給/把這個商品標上價
Ta gei/ba zhei-ge shangpin biao-shang jia
3SG GEI/BA this-CL merchandise mark-DIR price

He has marked the price of this item.

- (13) 你應該給/把乾電池沖點兒電
Ni yinggai gei/ba gandianchi chong dianr dian
2SG must GEI/BA battery fill a:little electricity

You have to load the battery.

- (14) 上級給／把他調職
Shangji gei/ba ta diao zhi
boss GEI/BA 3SG move work
The boss has transferred him to another post.
- (15) 你應該給／把這些材料分分類
Ni yinggai gei/ba zheixie cailiao fen fen lei
2SG must GEI/BA these data divide divide category
You have to classify these data.
- (16) 他給／把門塗塗漆
Ta gei/ba men tu tu qi
3SG GEI/BA door spread:on spread:on paint
He has given the door a coat of paint.

Though there are only a few examples of this type they are important in so far as the alternation of gěi with bǎ shows clearly that gěi here really functions as the marker of the outer object. A possible confusion between this gěi and the gěi indicating the benefactive (cf. (17)) is excluded here because bǎ can never indicate the benefactive:

- (17) 我給他買了一本書
Wo gei ta mai -le shu
1SG GEI 3SG sell-PERF book
I have sold a book for him.²

Thus, the VOPs in the following examples can be divided into two groups. In the first group ((18) - (24)), there is no doubt about the interpretation of the gěi-phrase as the outer object, i.e. as being affected by the action expressed in the VOP. In the second group ((25) - (31)), however, it is not possible to

² Like for him in English, gěi tā can in fact have two interpretations here: (i) 'for his sake' or (ii) 'on his behalf'. But since I want to concentrate on the difference between the gěi marking the outer object of a VOP and the gěi indicating the benefactive, I will put aside these further differences of interpretation within the benefactive reading of gěi tā.

clearly distinguish between the interpretation 'patient' and the interpretation 'benefactive' for the gěi-phrase. In fact, in most cases - especially when the inner object denotes a body part - we obtain a kind of mixed interpretation, i.e. the person profiting from the action is at the same time affected by it:

Group I

- (18) 他們給樹苗編號兒
Tamen gei shumiao bian haor
3PL GEI sapling arrange number
They have numbered the saplings.
- (19) 他在給車胎打氣
Ta zai gei chetai da qi
3SG DUR GEI tyre beat air
He is inflating the tyre.
- (20) 他給朋友打氣
Ta gei pengyou da qi
3SG GEI friend beat air
He cheers up his friends.
- (21) 護士給病人打針
Hushi gei bingren da zhen
nurse GEI patient beat needle
The nurse gives the patient an injection.
- (22) 她給她愛人戴綠帽子
Ta gei ta airen dai lü maozi
3SG GEI 3SG husband wear green hat
She has made her husband a cuckold.
- (23) 醫生給病人開刀
Yisheng gei bingren kai dao
doctor GEI patient open knife
The doctor operates on the patient.
- (24) 朋友給他扣了帽子
Pengyou gei ta kou -le maozi
friend GEI 3SG put:on-PERF hat
His friends have denounced him.

Group II:

- (25) 媽媽去給他報名
Mama gei ta bao ming
mother GEI 3SG report name
His mother went to register for him.
- (26) 他可給我出氣了
Ta ke gei wo chu qi le
3SG really GEI 1SG come:out air PART
He has really given vent to my anger.
- (27) 我們給他打了掩護
Women gei ta da -le yanhu
1PL GEI 3SG make-PERF cover
We have provided cover for him.
- (28) 我給他們講了和
Wo gei tamen jiang-le he
1SG GEI 3SG talk -PERF peace
I have reconciled them.
- (29) 觀眾不停地給演員喝采
Guanzhong buting -de gei yanyuan he cai
audience incessant-SUB GEI actor shout applause
The audience kept on applauding the actors.
- (30) 他給我梳頭
Ta gei wo shu tou
3SG GEI 1SG comb head
She combs my hair.
- (31) 他給我鑲牙
Ta gei wo xiang ya
3SG GEI 1SG insert tooth
He has put in a (new) tooth.

One would like to use passivisation as a criterion to distinguish between the gěi-phrase indicating the benefactive and therefore excluding passivisation, and the gěi-phrase denoting the outer object, i.e. a patient, which in principle can be passivised. Unfortunately, however, passivisation cannot serve as a systematic test here, because for a NP in Chinese to play

the role of patient is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for passivisation.³ Thus, even among those VOPs whose outer object (marked by gěi) clearly plays the role of patient, only a few admit passivisation; additionally, it is impossible to make any predictions on the acceptability or unacceptability of the passive construction for a given VOP. For example, the outer object of dǎ zhēn 'to give an injection', dài lǜ màozi 'to make a cuckold' and kòu màozi 'to denounce' can each be passivised; whereas the VOPs biàn hào 'to number' and dǎ qì 'to inflate; to cheer up' do not allow passivisation of their outer object:

- (32) 病人被護士打了一針
Bingren bei hushi da -le yi-zhen
patient PASS nurse beat-PERF 1 -needle
The patient has been given an injection by the nurse.
- (33) 他被戴了綠帽子
Ta bei dai -le lü maozi
3SG PASS wear-PERF green hat
He has been made a cuckold.
- (34) 病人被醫生開刀
Bingren bei yisheng kai dao
patient PASS doctor open knife
The patient has been operated on by the doctor.
- (35) 他被朋友扣了帽子
Ta bei pengyou kou -le maozi
3SG PASS friend put:on-PERF hat
He has been denounced by his friends.

³ The degree of "Transitivity" (in the sense of Hopper/Thompson 1980) must also be taken into account for the passive. The notion of "Transitivity" will be discussed in more detail in section 4.3. below.

- (36) *樹苗被編號兒了
 Shumiao bei bian haor le
 sapling PASS arrange number PART
 (The saplings have been numbered.)⁴

- (37) *他的朋友被他打氣了
 Ta -de pengyou bei ta da qi le
 3SG-SUB friend PASS 3SG beat air PART
 (His friends have been cheered up by him.)

This indeterminacy as to the function of the gěi-phrase (patient or benefactive) implies that it cannot be decided with certainty whether a given verb phrase 'V N' is an instance of a transitive VOP or whether it is a verb phrase like zuò fàn 'to prepare a meal' which optionally allows a benefactive. The unacceptability of verb copying which had served to identify the VOPs (cf. above, 3.2.4.) is of no use here because verb copying is in any case not appropriate for indicating the benefactive:

- (38a) *我賣一本書賣了他
 Wo mai yi-ben shu mai -le ta
 1SG sell 1 -CL book sell-PERF 3SG

⁴ There can be no doubt about the role of patient of shùmiáo 'sapling' in (18) Tāmen gěi shùmiáo biān hào 'They have numbered the saplings', because only animate nouns can possibly play the role of benefactive. Consequently, the unacceptability of (36) cannot be explained by the impossibility to passivise a benefactive NP. However, as the following example (due to Fu Jingqi) shows, passivisation of the outer object of biān hào 'to number' does not seem to be excluded in general:

- (i) 犯人 被 騙 了 號 兒 以 後 ...
 Fanren bei bian -le haor yihou
 prisoner PASS arrange-PERF number after

After the prisoners had been numbered, ...

Perhaps the difference in acceptability between (36) and (i) has to do with the inanimate vs. animate nature of the outer object.

- (38b) 我給他賣了一本書
 Wo gei ta mai -le yi-ben shu
 1SG GEI 3SG sell-PERF 1 -CL book
 I have sold a book for him.

In fact, we can only be certain that a gěi-phrase represents the outer object of a VOP in the case of inanimate NPs, the role of benefactive being limited to animate NPs.

Since passivisation does not work as a test for all VOPs, and since, furthermore, semantic considerations of the type: Is the gěi-phrase affected by the action in the verb phrase or not, are too subjective to be a reliable criterion, I will not refer to these problematic cases of VOPs when trying to decide upon a particular analysis.⁵

Though among the VOPs whose outer object is marked by gěi there are a lot of unclear cases, gěi, nevertheless, is the most frequent marker for the outer object. Thus, even after the (about fifty) dubious cases have been excluded there still remain about a hundred VOPs marking their outer object with gěi (compared to a total of approximately 400 VOPs). Perhaps the comparison of gěi with bǎ can shed some light on the reason for this dominant role of gěi.

4.3. bǎ vs. gěi

Let us again have a look at examples (11) - (16), (partially) repeated here in (39) - (42), where the outer object can be

⁵ Since in a topic-comment structure several relations can hold between the NP in topic position and the comment (sentence), the topicalisation of a NP does not necessarily allow one to conclude its role as the outer object of a VOP. Cf. below, 4.6 and 6.2.

marked by bǎ or by gěi. The choice between bǎ and gěi is, however, not as free as it seems at first sight; thus, for ān suǒ 'to fit a lock', biào jià 'to mark the price', fēn lèi 'to classify' and tú qī 'to give a coat of paint', the marking with bǎ is possible only when the verb is made more complex either by adding the directional -shàng ((39a), (40a)) or by reduplicating the verb ((41a), (42a)):

- (39a) 他把門安*(上)鎖
Ta ba men an *(-shang) suo
3SG BA door install -DIR lock
- (39b) 他給門安(上)鎖
Ta gei men an (-shang) suo
3SG GEI door install -DIR lock
He has fitted a lock on the door.⁶
- (40a) 他把這個商品標*(上)價
Ta ba zhei-ge shangpin biao *(-shang) jia
3SG BA this-CL merchandise mark -DIR price
- (40b) 他給這個商品標(上)價
Ta gei zhei-ge shangpin biao (-shang) jia
3SG GEI this-CL merchandise mark -DIR price
He has marked the price of this item.
- (41a) 你應該把這些材料分*(分)類
Ni yinggai ba zhexie cailiao fen *(fen) lei
2SG must BA these data divide divide category
- (41b) 你應該給這些材料分(分)類
Ni yinggai gei zhexie cailiao fen (fen) lei
2SG must GEI these data divide divide category
You have to classify these data.

6 The notation *(X) indicates that the element X must be present and that, consequently, the sentence is unacceptable without X. The notation (*X), however, means that the sentence is acceptable only when X is not present.

- (42a) 他把門塗*(塗)漆
Ta ba men tu *(tu) qi
3SG BA door spread:on spread:on paint
- (42b) 他給門塗(塗)漆
Ta gei men tu (tu) qi
3SG GEI door spread:on spread:on paint
He has given the door a coat of paint.

The greater complexity of the verb (phrase) as a condition for the bǎ-construction is well-known and generally interpreted as a means to heighten the effect which the action expressed by the VP has on the bǎ-object. However, no attention has been paid to the fact that gěi can also appear in such a construction and have the same function as bǎ, i.e. to indicate the impact of an action on the object. Thus, there is no fundamental difference between bǎ and gěi, but only a difference in terms of degrees, as the alternation between bǎ and gěi in examples (39) - (42) shows: the outer object marked by bǎ is understood to be more affected by the action than the outer object marked by gěi (which perhaps is the reason for the special conditions the verb has to satisfy in the bǎ-construction.)

The difference between bǎ and gěi resides in the different degree of "Transitivity", Transitivity being used here in the sense of Hopper/Thompson(1980): Transitivity is not reduced to the relation between the verb and its object, but it is regarded as a relationship which obtains throughout the clause and which is graded.⁷ That in the bǎ-construction the relation between the VP and the bǎ object is characterized by a high degree of

7 "Transitivity involves a number of components only one of which is the presence of an object of the verb. These components are all concerned with the effectiveness with which an action takes

Transitivity is also a well-known fact, but it has not been taken into account here that gěi is a kind of "weak" variant (with respect to the degree of Transitivity) of bǎ.

This point of view, however, can perhaps explain why for tú yóu 'to spread on grease' = 'to grease' only gěi is allowed as marker of the outer object (cf. (43b)), whereas tú qī 'to spread on paint' = 'to give a coat of paint' allows bǎ as well as gěi (cf. (42)):

(43a) *他把機器部件塗(塗)油
Ta ba jiqibujian tu (tu) you
3SG BA machine:part spread:on spread:on grease

(43b) 他給機器部件塗(塗)油
Ta gei jiqibujian tu (tu) you
3SG GEI machine:part spread:on spread:on grease

He is greasing the machine parts.

The impossibility for most of the VOPs to substitute gěi for bǎ (for example in the case of bō pí 'to remove skin' = 'to peel' as well as in sentences (2) - (10)) would then be due to the high degree of Transitivity of the given action which cannot be adequately indicated by gěi. On the other hand, that gěi is not replacable by bǎ (cf. (43) and sentences (18) - (24)) would be accounted for by a degree of Transitivity which is not high

(footnote 7 continued)

place, e.g. the punctuality and telicity of the verb, the conscious activity of the agent, and the referentiality and degree of affectedness of the object. These components co-vary with one another in language after language, which suggests that Transitivity is a central property of language use." (Hopper/Thompson 1980: 251)
Like Hopper/Thompson(1980), I will write "Transitivity" with a capital letter T when referring to the phenomenon of transitivity as defined by them.

enough for the use of bǎ.⁸ One could speculate that it is the non-maximal degree of Transitivity associated with gěi which is the reason for its being the most frequent marker of the outer object. Contrary to bǎ which clearly indicates a maximally high degree of Transitivity, marking with gěi seems to be less "compromising", more vague as to the degree of Transitivity of the action in question, and therefore has a larger distribution. The somewhat imprecise information which the marking with gěi gives about the degree of affectedness of the object is completed by the individual meaning of each VOP.

Given the preceding discussion of bǎ and gěi we are now able to summarize in two points the main conclusions obtained from the existence of different forms for the outer object.

First, the fact that the outer object can be marked by different coverbs (bǎ, gěi, gēn) does not imply that the outer object plays different semantic roles. The role of the outer object is always the same, i.e. patient of the action expressed in the VOP. What can vary, however, is the extent of the impact of the action on the outer object, and it is these variations in the degree of Transitivity of the VOPs which give rise to the different forms.

Secondly, it is impossible to predict the form of the outer object, not to mention the eventuality of a choice between several forms; consequently, the forms of the outer object must

⁸ The only examples in my corpus for a free variation between bǎ and gěi are the VOPs chōng diàn 'to fill electricity' = 'to load (a battery)' and diào zhǐ 'to move work' = 'to transfer sb. (to another post)'; cf. above, (13) and (14).

be included in the lexical entry of each VOP. Probably, the form of the outer object is not predictable because it is impossible to determine the degree of Transitivity for a given VOP in isolation, i.e. without knowing its use in a sentence.

It is this unpredictability which constitutes the major "inelegance" of analyses based on the notion of Transitivity. Once the marking of the outer object is known, it can rather easily be accounted for in terms of Transitivity; the inverse procedure, however (to start from the notion of Transitivity in order to obtain the form of the outer object for a particular VOP), does not work at all.

In fact, we are confronted here with the same problem as in the analysis of the passive. Thus, it is a well-established fact that the verb phrase must show a certain degree of Transitivity for passivisation to be able to apply. But again it is impossible to determine the necessary degree of Transitivity in such a way as to make passivisation a predictable phenomenon.

4.4. Marking with gēn

The difficulty we observed in the case of VOPs marking their outer object with gěi (cf. 4.2.), i.e. to decide whether a given verb phrase represents a transitive VOP or not, is even more complex in the case of the preposition or coverb gēn. As a matter of fact there are only very few examples (cf. (44) - (49)) where the NP marked by gēn can plausibly be said to be affected by the action:

- (44) 別跟我們湊熱鬧
Bie gen wo cou renao
NEG GEN 1SG collect bustle
Don't bother us!⁹
- (45) 他在上課，你別跟他打岔
Ta zai shang ke , ni bie gen ta da cha
3SG DUR go class 2SG NEG GEN 3SG beat junction
He is teaching, don't interrupt him.
- (46) 別跟我打哈哈
Bie gen wo da haha
NEG GEN 1SG beat laughter
Don't make fun of me.
- (47) 他存心跟我搗蛋
Ta cunxin gen wo dao dan
3SG intentionally GEN 1SG pound egg
He intentionally gives me trouble.
- (48) 你對我這樣客氣，別跟我見外
Ni dui wo zheyang keqi, bie gen wo jian wai
2SG towards 1SG so polite NEG GEN 1SG see foreign
You are so polite to me; don't treat me as a stranger.
- (49) 我只是開玩笑，你可別跟我認真
Wo zhishi kai wanxiao, ni ke bie gen wo
1SG only open joke 2SG really NEG GEN 1SG
ren zhen
recognize true
I'm only joking; for heaven's sake, don't take me seriously.

In most of the other cases where a verb phrase co-occurs with a gēn-phrase, the NP marked by gēn cannot be considered as being affected, i.e. it cannot be understood as the patient of the

9 The coverb or preposition gēn can either function as a coordinating conjunction within the NP meaning 'and' or it can have the meaning '(together) with'. As it is very difficult to find an adequate translation when it marks the outer object of a VOP, I prefer to simply gloss it as: GEN.

action, but represents a kind of comitative. Since it is the meaning of the verb which demands this comitative gēn-phrase, I label it "lexical comitative" following Teng(1975: 11) here who calls the gēn in this quasi-obligatory gēn-phrase a "lexical phrasal conjunction". The lexical comitative is found in combination with the so-called "reciprocal" verbs like dǎ jiāodào 'to make relation' = 'to make contact with' (cf. (50)), dǎ jià 'to beat fight' = 'to fight' (cf. (51)), jiǎng jià 'to talk price' = 'to bargain', jié hūn 'to tie marriage' = 'to marry', tán tiān 'to talk sky' = 'to chat', tǎolùn 'to discuss' and chǎo 'to quarrel' (cf. (52)):

- (50) 我從來沒跟他打過交道
 Wo conglai mei gen ta da -guo jiaodao
 1SG ever NEG GEN 3SG make-EXP relation
 I have never had any contact with him.
- (51) 張三老跟人打架
 Zhangsan lao gen ren da jia
 Zhangsan always GEN people beat fight
 Zhangsan always fights with somebody.
- (52) 他天天跟我吵
 Ta tiantian gen wo chao
 3SG daily GEN 1SG quarrel
 Every day he quarrels with me.

As shown in examples (50) - (52), the reciprocal verbs comprise VOPs as well as simple verbs. The preverbal position of the gēn-phrase therefore has nothing to do with the presence of a postverbal object in the case of VOPs, but it is the only position acceptable for the gēn-phrase.

Thus, on the one hand, the lexical comitative is different from the gēn-phrase representing the outer object of a VOP, and on the other hand, from the "normal" comitative, the latter playing an additional role and therefore being optional (e.g. Wǒ

(gēn tā) qù mǎi cài '1SG (GEN 3SG) go buy vegetables' = 'I go shopping (with him).'). Though the lexical comitative and the gēn-phrase indicating the outer object both depend on the verb, they must nevertheless be distinguished: whereas the relation between the subject and the lexical comitative is potentially reversible (if e.g. X is in contact with Y, it follows that Y is in contact with X (cf. (50)), the situation is different for VOPs. Here, the action is clearly uni-directional and thus non-reversible, i.e. a patient (the gēn-phrase) is affected by the subject's action (cf. (44) - (49)).

Actually, there are only very few cases where the gēn-phrase can plausibly be said to represent the outer object of a VOP (i.e. the patient). It is mainly for the sake of completeness that I have mentioned gēn in connection with the VOPs; furthermore, gēn will be referred to again in the ensuing discussion of the possessive object (cf. below, 4.5.).

4.5. The possessive object

When the outer object occupies the modifier position of the inner object and is marked by the subordination marker de, the outer object is said to take the form of the "possessive object":

- (53) 張三出你的洋相
 Zhangsan chu ni -de yangxiang
 Zhangsan come:out 2SG-SUB foreign:face
 Zhangsan brings you into derision.
- (54) 他丟我的臉了
 Ta diu wo -de lian le
 3SG lose 1SG-SUB face PART
 He made me lose face.

- (55) 上級革了他的職了
Shangji ge -le ta -de zhi le
boss expel-PERF 3SG-SUB work PART
The boss has fired him.
- (56) 我們開他的玩笑
Women kai ta -de wanxiao
1PL open 3SG-SUB joke
We make fun of him.
- (57) 他揩我的油了
Ta kai wo -de you le
3SG wipe 1SG-SUB grease PART
He scrounged me.
- (58) 法院治了他的罪了
Fayuan zhi -le ta -de zui le
law:court punish-PERF 3SG-SUB guilt PART
The law court sentenced him.
- (59) 你別鑽他的空子
Ni bie zuan ta -de kongzi
2SG NEG bore 3SG-SUB opening
Don't trick him.

One speaks of possessive object here because the outer object looks exactly like a modifier NP indicating possession, as for example wǒ-(de) in wǒ-de shū '1SG-SUB book' = 'my book'. That the term "possessive object" derives from this analogy with a possessive NP like wǒ-de 'my' can be seen very clearly in Lü Shuxiang's description of this phenomenon: "Sometimes, the genitive does not have its common meaning of possession at all, but it represents the person who is directly or indirectly acted upon, thus corresponding to an (accusative, dative, or ablative etc.) object." (Lü Shuxiang 1955: 186; my translation, W.P.). The same point of view is expressed by Chao:

The grammatical modifier of an object sometimes does not modify the object semantically, but represents something else. When an apparent possessive modifier ... represents the goal, I call it "possessive object". For example, in Bié kāi tā-de wánxiào 'Don't make his fun - don't make fun of him'

[cf. (56), W.P.], it is not his fun, but your own fun that you are told not to make of him, so that the real goal is the tā of tā-de.

(Chao 1968: 321)

Lü Shuxiang further stresses the fact that the possessive object plays the role of patient with respect to the VOP as a whole:

This kind of genitive [i.e. the possessive object, W.P.] most often occurs with verbs which have an idiomatic object; the two components play, in fact, the role of one simple verb. This kind of verb-object construction can on its part have a (logical) object (the person acted upon), but since there is already an object on the surface and since there is no appropriate preposition available, either, this logical object often takes on the form of a genitive. ... This phenomenon reminds one of the idiomatic expressions in English like take care of, get hold of etc. This kind of idiomatic expressions allows passivisation of the form it is well taken care of ...

(Lü Shuxiang 1955: 186 - 187; my translation, W.P.)

The syntactic proof for Lü Shuxiang's analysis is given by the possibility - at least in some cases - to passivise the possessive object (cf. (60) - (62)); a real modifier, however, can never be passivised (cf. (63b)):

- (60) 他被上級革了職
Ta bei shangji ge -le zhi
3SG PASS boss expel-PERF work
He was fired by his boss. (cf. (55))
- (61) 他被法院治了罪
Ta bei fayuan zhi -le zui
3SG PASS law:court punish-PERF guilt
He was sentenced by the law court. (cf. (58))
- (62) 他被人家開了個大玩笑
Ta bei renjia kai -le ge da wanxiao
3SG PASS people open-PERF CL big joke
He was terribly made fun of. (cf. (56))

- (63a) 他打破了我的杯子
Ta dapo -le wo -de beizi
3SG break-PERF 1SG-SUB cup
He broke my cup.
- (63b) *我被他打破了杯子
Wo bei ta dapo -le beizi
1SG PASS 3SG break-PERF cup
- (63c) 我的杯子被他打破了
Wo -de beizi bei ta dapo -le
1SG-SUB cup PASS 3SG break-PERF
My cup was broken by him.

Though passivisation of the outer object is not predictable for a given VOP, it nevertheless can serve as a criterion for distinguishing between the possessive object and a real modifier, for a true modifier NP can never be passivised, even if the verb shows the necessary high degree of Transitivity. (As illustrated in (63c), dǎpò 'to break' can appear in a passive sentence, provided the entire NP wǒ-de bēizi 'my cup' is the subject.) (Cf. chapter 6 for a comparison between the syntactic behaviour of a true modifier NP and that of the possessive object.)

Besides the VOPs given in examples (53) - (59) whose outer object can only take on the form of the possessive object, the following VOPs allow their outer object either to appear as the possessive object or to be marked by a coverb (also cf. Chao 1968: 321):

- (64a) 上級罷了他的職了
Shangji ba -le ta -de zhi le
boss stop-PERF 3SG-SUB work PART
- (64b) 上級把他罷了職了
Shangji ba ta ba -le zhi le
boss BA 3SG stop-PERF work PART
The boss has fired him.

- (65a) 我幫他的忙
Wo bang ta -de mang
1SG assist 3SG-SUB activity
- (65b) 我給他幫忙
Wo gei ta bang mang
1SG GEI 3SG assist activity
I have given him my assistance.
- (66a) 你別打他的岔
Ni bie da ta -de cha
2SG NEG beat 3SG-SUB junction
- (66b) 你別跟他打岔
Ni bie gen ta da cha
2SG NEG GEN 3SG beat junction
Don't interrupt him.
- (67a) 他揭了這件事的蓋子
Ta jie -le zhei-jian shi de gaizi
3SG take:off-PERF this-CL matter SUB lid
- (67b) 他把這件事揭了蓋子
Ta ba zhei-jian shi jie -le gaizi
3SG BA this-CL matter take:off-PERF lid
He has revealed this affair.
- (68a) 他拍張三的馬屁
Ta pai Zhangsan-de mapi
3SG pat Zhangsan-SUB horse:buttocks
- (68b) 他給張三拍馬屁
Ta gei Zhangsan pai mapi
3SG GEI Zhangsan pat horse:buttocks
He flatters Zhangsan.
- (69a) 我不捧他的場
Wo bu peng ta -de chang
1SG NEG hold 3SG-SUB stage
- (69b) 我不給他捧場
Wo bu gei ta peng chang
1SG NEG GEI 3SG hold stage
I don't boost him.

But there are also cases where only the possessive object indicates the outer object, whereas the coverb phrase plays a

different role (cf. Chao 1968: 322):

- (70a) 張三說你的壞話
Zhangsan shuo ni -de huaihua
Zhangsan talk 2SG-SUB vicious:talk
Zhangsan gossips about you.
- (70b) 張三跟你說壞話
Zhangsan gen ni shuo huaihua
Zhangsan GEN 2SG talk vicious:talk
Zhangsan gossips with you (about sb. else).
- (71a) 他告我的狀
Ta gao wo -de zhuang
3SG accuse 1SG-SUB plaint
He has told on me.
- (71b) 他跟我告狀
Ta gen wo gao zhuang
3SG GEN 1SG accuse plaint
He informed me (about sb. else).

But it is certainly no coincidence that the meaning of these VOPs implies a third person to whom the agent directs its action. Since the coverb phrase and the possessive object play different roles, they can co-occur in the same sentence:

- (72) 我跟張三說李四的壞話
Wo gen Zhangsan shuo Lisi-de huaihua
1SG GEN Zhangsan talk Lisi-SUB vicious:talk
I gossip with Zhangsan about Lisi.
- (73) 我跟你父母告你的狀
Wo gen ni fumu gao ni -de zhuang
1SG GEN 2SG parents accuse 2SG-SUB plaint
I inform your parents about you.

After the presentation of the data concerning the possessive object, let us now see what can be said about the possessive object in terms of the notion of Transitivity, paying special attention to those cases where the outer object can either appear as the possessive object or be marked by a coverb.

That the outer object of both bà zhí 'to stop work' = 'to fire' and jiē gài 'to take:off lid' = 'to reveal' can be passivised (cf. (74) and (75)) is not very surprising because besides taking on the form of the possessive object, the outer object can also be marked by bǎ which implies a degree of Transitivity (in principle) high enough for passivisation. (An outer object marked by gěi, though, can also be passivised, cf. (32) - (35).)

- (74) 他被上級罷了職了
Ta bei shangji ba -le zhi le (cf. (64))
3SG PASS boss stop-PERF work PART
He has been fired by his boss.
- (75) 這件事被他揭蓋子了
Zhei-jian shi bei ta jie gaizi le (cf. (67))
this-CL matter PASS 3SG take:off lid PART
This affair has been revealed by him.

It is much more difficult to determine the degree of affectedness of the outer object when it exclusively appears as the possessive object and cannot be alternatively marked with a coverb. Thus, gē zhí 'to expel work' = 'to fire' (cf. (55)), kāi wánxiào 'to open joke' = 'to make fun of sb.' (cf. (56)), zhì zuì 'to punish guilt' = 'to sentence/condemn' (cf. (58)) and zuān kòngzi 'to bore opening' = 'to trick, to deceive' (cf. (59)) all allow their outer object to be passivised, in contrast to the remaining VOPs in the group of examples (53) - (59). From the VOPs where the possessive object and the coverb phrase play different roles (cf. (70) and (71)), only the VOP gào zhuàng 'to tell on sb., to sue sb.' allows passivisation (Wǒ bèi wǒ dìdi gào-le zhuàng '1SG PASS 1SG brother accuse-PERF plaint' = 'I was given away by my brother').

If it is difficult to set up a direct correlation between the possessive object and a certain degree of Transitivity, the

degree of Transitivity associated with the form of the possessive object can perhaps be determined indirectly by means of a correlation between the possessive object and a particular coverb. But as shown in examples (64) - (69), this procedure fails as well because the possessive object can alternate with the coverbs bǎ ((64), (67)), gěi ((65), (68), (69)) and gēn (66), respectively.

This lack of consistency displayed by the forms available for the outer object becomes especially obvious in the case of the VOPs with zhí 'work' as inner object which all have the meaning 'to fire': bà zhí 'to stop work', chè zhí 'to remove work', gé zhí 'to expel work', jiě zhí 'to separate work', miǎn zhí 'to exempt work' and tíng zhí 'to stop work'.¹⁰ Though they all allow passivisation of their outer objects and can therefore be supposed to have more or less the same degree of Transitivity, they nevertheless differ in the form of their outer objects. Whereas they all accept the form of the possessive object, only the outer objects of bà zhí, chè zhí, jiě zhí and miǎn zhí, but not that of gé zhí and tíng zhí can be marked by bǎ. Marking with gēi, on the other hand, seems possible in all cases, though only in a very colloquial style.

That even in the case of VOPs with the same inner object and the same meaning, the form of the outer object varies and is not predictable, either, considerably weakens the explanatory value of the concept of Transitivity.

¹⁰ I have not included diào zhí 'to move work = 'to transfer sb. to another post' here because it belongs to the written language (as was pointed out to me by Fu Jingqi).

4.6. The underlying representation for the VOPs

If one gives up trying to account for the distribution of the different forms the outer object can take and instead concentrates on the given forms themselves, one observes that all the VOPs with zhí 'work' as the inner object allow the possessive object. This seems to suggest the underlying representation $[\bar{v}^V [_{NP} \text{ outer } 0. \text{ inner } 0.]]$ for the VOPs (which is different from the one postulated so far, i.e. $[\bar{v}[\bar{v} V \text{ inner } 0.] \text{ outer } 0.]$ (cf. above, 3.2.4.)).

In this representation, the outer object is part of a NP whose head is the inner object which seems to do more justice to the apparently very tight relationship between the inner object and the form of the outer object (as observed in the case of the VOPs 'V zhí 'to fire'). Accordingly, the inner object, being the head of the NP, should play an important role in determining the form of the outer object (as is suggested by the VOPs 'V zhí'). In order to obtain an acceptable surface structure from this underlying representation, either the subordinator -de must be introduced between the outer object and the inner object, or the outer object must be marked by a coverb and appear in the preverbal position.

The underlying representation where the outer object occupies the modifier position of the inner object had first been proposed for the retained object construction (cf. (Cheung 1973: 377 - 380) because of pairs like (76a) and (76b):

(76a) 他把橘子剥了皮
Ta ba juzi bo -le pi
3SG BA orange remove-PERF skin

He has peeled the orange.

- (76b) 他剥了橘子皮
 Ta bo -le juzi -de pi
 3SG remove-PERF orange-SUB skin

He has peeled the orange.

The alternation between a (preverbal) coverb phrase and a NP in a modifier position in the case of a possessive relation was seen as a further argument for the underlying representation in question:

- (77a) 他給孩子換衣服
 Ta gei haizi huan yifu
 3SG GEI child change clothes

- (77b) 他換孩子的衣服
 Ta huan haizi-de yifu
 3SG change child-SUB clothes

He changes the child's clothes.

In my opinion, however, the fact that a part-whole relation or a possessive relation must hold between the two NPs for the alternation to be possible seems too special a condition to be counted as an argument in favour of [_V V [_{NP} inner O. outer O.]] as the underlying representation for the VOPs. Besides, there are cases where no alternation is observed though the supposedly necessary relation (in this case a part-whole relation) exists:

- (78a) 我給他梳頭
 Wo gei ta shu tou
 1SG GEI 3SG comb head

I comb her hair.

- (78b) *我梳他的頭
 Wo shu ta -de tou
 1SG comb 3SG-SUB head

- (79a) 我給他擦背
 Wo gei ta ca bei
 1SG GEI 3SG rub back

I rub her back.

- (79b) *我擦他的背
 Wo ca ta -de bei
 1SG rub 3SG-SUB back

Furthermore, the alternation depends not only on the kind of relation between the two NPs, but also on the type of verb. If for example huàn 'to change' in huàn yīfu 'to change clothes' (cf. (77)) is replaced by chuān 'to wear, to put on', the resulting sentence with háizi 'child' as part of the coverb phrase (cf. 80a)) has a meaning completely different from the sentence where háizi is in the modifier position of yīfu 'clothes' (cf. (80b)); accordingly, the former sentence cannot be considered as a variant derived from the latter:

- (80a) 他給孩子穿衣服
 Ta gei haizi chuan yifu
 3SG GEI child wear clothes

He dresses the child.

- (80b) 他穿孩子的衣服
 Ta chuan haizi-de yifu
 3SG wear child-SUB clothes

He wears the child's clothes.

All these data demonstrate that there is no systematic alternation between the structure with the NP in a coverb phrase and the structure with the same NP in a modifier position. Consequently, there is no relation of derivation between these two structures; this hypothesis is probably due to the confusion between the identity of meaning and the identity of structure.

There are also considerations of a more general nature which speak in favour of the underlying representation [_V[_V V inner O.] outer O.] and against [_V V [_{NP} outer O. inner O.]].

First of all, the movement of the outer object out of the modifier position into the preverbal position (the coverb phrase) is a movement prohibited by Ross' "Left Branch Condition" (LBC).

This constraint is formulated as follows:

No NP which is the leftmost constituent of a larger NP can be moved out of this NP.

(Ross 1967: 4.181)

Thus, the derivation of e.g. Tā bǎ júzi bō-le pí (cf. (81a)) from Tā bō-le júzi-de pí (cf. (81b)) violates the LBC because in such a derivation júzi 'orange' being the leftmost constituent of júzi-de pí moves out of its original position (cf. Huang 1982': footnote 21):

(81a) 他把橘子剥了皮
Ta ba juzi bo -le pi
3SG BA orange remove-PERF skin

(81b) 他剥了橘子的皮
Ta bo -le juzi -de pi
3SG remove-PERF orange-SUB skin

He has peeled the orange.

Before pursuing this line of reasoning, I will first show that the LBC is also valid in Chinese.

At first sight, nothing speaks against the hypothesis that (82a) results from the movement of júzi 'orange' out of the modifier position of the NP into the topic position. Under this assumption, the part-whole relation between pí 'skin' and júzi 'orange' would be accounted for as well (cf. (82b)):

(82a) 橘子，他剥了皮
Juzi, ta bo -le pi
orange 3SG remove-PERF skin

The orange, he has peeled it.

(82b)

Juzi, ta bo -le [NP pi]
↑

But if (82b) represents the correct analysis for (82a), then how can the ungrammaticality of (83) and (84) which seem to have the

same structure as (82a) be explained ?

(83) *張三，我看見了爸爸
Zhangsan, wo kanjian-le baba
Zhangsan 1SG see -PERF father

(84) *張三，我看見了狗
Zhangsan, wo kanjian-le gou
Zhangsan 1SG see -PERF dog

Let us try to account for the three sentences (82a), (83) and (84) assuming that the LBC is valid in Chinese.

In this case, the ungrammaticality of (83) and (84) is expected because they both violate the LBC. The only link possible between the topic and the comment is that provided by a possessive relation between Zhāngsān and the NPs bàba 'father' and gǒu 'dog', respectively. Consequently, Zhāngsān must have moved to the topic position from its position within the NP [Zhāngsān-de bàba] and [Zhāngsān-de gǒu], respectively, thus violating the LBC and giving rise to ungrammatical sentences.

We still have to explain why (82a) is not unacceptable though it looks like (83) and (84). This entails having to inquire again about its underlying representation because the one proposed in (82b), violating the LBC, cannot be correct. According to Huang(1982': footnote 21), júzi 'orange' in (82a) is not the (topicalised) modifier of pí 'skin' (the assumption of which would imply a movement violating the LBC), but it represents the outer object of the VOP bō pí 'to peel' and accordingly can be topicalised. The part-whole relation observed between pí and júzi is not obtained from the syntactic configuration, but results from a pragmatic deduction: if the act of removing the skin is meant to affect a certain orange, the skin to be removed must evidently be the skin of the orange in question, and not that of a different one.

Thus, (82a) is acceptable because the noun in the topic position, júzi 'orange' is the outer object of the VOP bō pí 'to peel' contained in the comment sentence. Such an interpretation is impossible for (83) and (84), for it is not clear how Zhangsan could be affected by my having seen his father or his dog. This is clearly not to say that every noun in the topic position must be interpreted as an outer object. There is also the case of the base-generated topic which gives rise to the same structure as that in (82a), but where the link between the topic and the comment is established by the situational context, and not by a syntactic relationship:

- (85) 這個車禍，幸虧沒有人死了
 Zhei-ge chehuo, xingkuai mei you ren si -le
 this-CL accident fortunately NEG have people die-PERF

As for this accident, fortunately nobody died.

(83) and (84) are unacceptable because there is no link between the topic and the comment. First, the situational context does not give any clue as to the possible relation between the topic and the comment which excludes the analysis of (83) and (84) as structures with a base-generated topic. Secondly, a link between the topic and the comment via a possessive relation between the topic, Zhāngsān, on the one hand, and bàba 'father' gǒu 'dog', on the other hand, is excluded by the LBC. Thirdly, the last possibility of establishing a link between the topic and the comment, (i.e. to consider the noun in the topic position as the outer object of the verb phrase in the comment sentence) is not feasible, either, because it is semantically implausible.

To summarize, the relation between the topic and the comment can be of a syntactic, semantic or pragmatic nature, but it can also involve more than only one of these three components:

- (86) 張三，爸爸很有錢
 Zhangsan, baba hen youqian
 Zhangsan father very rich

As for Zhangsan, his father is very rich.

The acceptability of (86) seems to contradict our claim that the LBC is valid in Chinese, but Huang(1982: 516, footnote 4) shows that it can be accounted for by the special status of bàba. Being an expression of inalienable possession, bàba 'father' implies a possessor for which - by pragmatic deduction - the nearest NP in the topic position, Zhāngsān, is chosen. That (86) really involves a pragmatic procedure which interprets the nearest NP as possessor (and not a structural relation) is shown by the unacceptability of (83), repeated here as (87):

- (87) *張三，我看見爸爸了
 Zhangsan, wo kanjian baba le
 Zhangsan 1SG see father PART

Under the pragmatic procedure, the nearest NP, wǒ 'I', is understood to be the possessor implied by bàba; consequently, bàba is interpreted as wǒ bàba 'my father'. (87) is unacceptable because wǒ kànjiàn bàba le (which is perfectly acceptable as an independent sentence) does not say anything about Zhangsan and therefore is inappropriate as a comment on Zhangsan.

The situation is clearer when the subject in the comment sentence is not an expression of inalienable possession and where, accordingly, the NP in the comment sentence cannot be related to the NP in the topic position by a pragmatic deduction (cf. Huang 1982:516, footnote 4):

- (88) *張三，狗死了
 Zhangsan, gou si -le
 Zhangsan dog die-PERF

(88) is unacceptable for the same reason as (84): a possessive relation between Zhāngsān and gǒu which would provide the

necessary link between the topic and the comment is excluded by the LBC.

The difference between the structure with a base-generated topic and the structure where the outer object of a VOP is topicalised is, admittedly, not always very clear-cut. Sentence (82a) (Júzi, ta bō-le pí 'The orange, he has peeled it'), for example, could also be regarded as involving a base-generated topic; in that case, the general knowledge that oranges have to be peeled would provide the link between the topic and the comment. It is the existence of a corresponding sentence with bǎ which makes us analyse the topic noun in (82a) as the outer object of the VOP in the comment sentence (cf. (81a): Tā bǎ júzi bō-le pí 'He has peeled the orange').

What has been demonstrated clearly, however, is that a noun in the topic position cannot have moved there from the modifier position of a NP in the comment. The impossibility of such a derivation (regardless of the kind of relation holding between the two NPs in question) clearly argues against [\bar{v} V [_{NP} outer O. inner O.]] as the underlying representation for VOPs.

Besides the LBC, the impossibility of passivising a (real) modifier NP (cf. (63b)) constitutes additional evidence against the underlying representation in question and contrasts with the passivisability of the outer object. This latter argument is particularly strong because passivisation of the outer object also applies in those cases where the possessive relation or the part-whole relation between the inner object and the outer object seems so obvious as to speak in favour of the underlying representation [\bar{v} V [_{NP} outer O. inner O.]]:

(89) 橘子被剥了皮
 Juzi bei bo -le pi (cf. (81))
 orange PASS remove-PERF skin

The orange has been peeled.

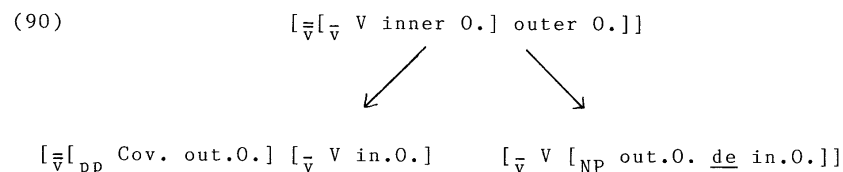
Even if the generalization that a modifier NP cannot be passivised were slightly modified so as to allow for passivisation of the possessive object, the passivisability of the outer object still remains a problem for the underlying representation under discussion, only removed to another level; for now there would exist two classes of modifier NPs (one allowing passivisation and the other excluding it) which would have to be distinguished in order to prevent ungrammatical sentences.

The third argument against [\bar{v} V [_{NP} outer O. inner O.]] as the underlying representation for the VOPs is closely linked to the passivisability of the outer object just discussed. Though an underlying representation should, as much as possible, reflect the semantic relations involved, [\bar{v} V [_{NP} outer O. inner O.]] does not take into account the passivisability of the outer object at all. On the contrary, it implies that it is the inner object, being the head noun of the NP, which is affected by the verb. In fact, however, it is the outer object which is the patient with respect to the VOP as a whole (Huang, p.c.).¹¹

The analysis I propose is as follows. The "real" possessive object with VOPs where no part-whole relation or possessive

¹¹ With [\bar{v} V [_{NP} outer O. inner O.]] as the underlying representation it would probably also be difficult to account for the alternation between bǎ and gēi as markers of the outer object. As we have shown above (cf. 4.3.), the choice of bǎ or gēi depends on the degree of Transitivity of the verb phrase in question. In the underlying representation under discussion, however, the outer object only entertains a relation with the inner object, but not with the verb, and it is therefore totally unexpected that a modification of the verb phrase can have an influence on the form of the outer object.

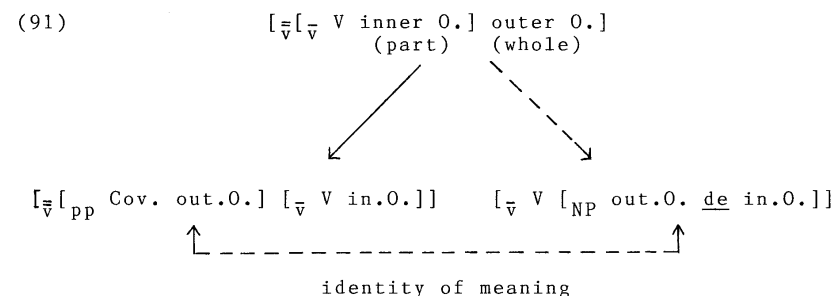
relation exists between the inner object and the outer object is the result of a reanalysis¹² operating on the underlying representation [\bar{v} [\bar{v} V inner O.] outer O.]. Accordingly, the underlying representation is the same for the VOPs whose outer object appears as the possessive object and the VOPs whose outer object is marked by a coverb (which makes plausible the availability of both forms for the outer object of some VOPs). We thus obtain the following relations between the underlying representation and the two surface structures where the outer object appears as the possessive object or is marked by a coverb, respectively:



The situation is more complicated for VOPs like bō pí 'to remove skin' = 'to peel' where a special relation (a part-whole relation) exists between the inner object and the outer object. The structure where the outer object is marked by a coverb, bǎ júzi bō pí (cf. (81a)) is clearly derived from the underlying representation [\bar{v} [\bar{v} bō pí] júzi] (cf. (90)). Bō júzi-de pí (cf. (81b)), however, allows for two analyses: either júzi-de pí represents the possessive object and accordingly, bō júzi-de pí is a variant of bǎ júzi bō pí, or júzi-de pí is a "normal" NP with júzi as a real modifier and does not result from a reanalysis (as does the possessive object). In this latter case, it is the (quasi-) identity of meaning between the two sentences (resulting from the part-whole relation between pí 'skin' and júzi

¹² The reason why I speak of "reanalysis" here and not of "restructuring" will be discussed in chapter 6.

'orange'), and not the derivation from the same underlying representation which establishes a relation between bǎ júzi bō pí and bō júzi-de pí. Figure (91) depicts the two kinds of relations between bǎ júzi bō pí and bō júzi-de pí:



To summarize, there are several reasons why the underlying representation [\bar{v} V [NP outer O. inner O.]] based on the existence of the possessive object is not appropriate. First, the movement of the outer object from its original position to the preverbal position, where it is marked by a coverb, constitutes a movement prohibited by the LBC. Secondly, with this underlying representation, the passivisability of the outer object is completely unexpected; furthermore, the so far valid generalization that modifier NPs cannot be passivised must be weakened to allow for those cases where the modifier is the possessive object (and thus passivisable). Thirdly, the relation of 'action - affected object' existing between the VOP and its outer object is not reflected at all in an underlying representation where the outer object appears as the modifier of the inner object.

4.7. The outer object in the indirect object position

In this final section, I will briefly discuss those cases where the outer object, instead of appearing as the possessive object or being marked by a coverb, simply follows the verb:

- (92) 我可以幫你一個忙?
 Wo keyi bang ni yi-ge mang? (cf. 65))
 1SG can assist 2SG 1 -CL activity
 Can I help you?
- (93) 你跟他說我還有別的女朋友，這是拆我台嘛!
 Ni gen ta shuo wo hai you biede nüpengyou;
 2SG GEN 3SG talk 1SG still have another girlfriend
 zhei shi chai wo tai ma!¹³
 this be take:apart 1SG platform PART
 You told her that I have another girlfriend; there you
 really let me down!
- (94) 他們要我唱歌，這可將了我一軍
 Tamen yao wo chang ge ,
 3PL want 1SG sing song
 zhei ke jiang -le wo yi-jun¹⁴
 this really embarrass-PERF 1SG 1 -general
 They wanted me to sing which really embarrassed me.
- (95) 他開了我一個玩笑
 Ta kai -le wo yi-ge wanxiao (cf. (56))
 3SG open-PERF 1SG 1 -CL joke
 He made fun of me.

 13 This sentence is only acceptable in a very colloquial style.
 Otherwise, the possessive object is preferred:

- (i) 他拆我的台
 Ta chai wo -de tai
 3SG take:apart 1SG-SUB platform
 He lets me down.

14 jiāng X yī-jūn represents an idiomatic expression because
 there is no other form available for the outer object (which is
 always preceded by yī 'one'). But there can be no doubt that wǒ
 is the outer object, for it can be passivised:

- (i) 我被他將了一軍
 Wo bei ta jiang -le yi-jun
 1SG PASS 3SG embarrass-PERF 1 -general
 I was brought into an embarrassing situation by him.

- (96) 小心，他佔你便宜
 Xiaoxin, ta zhan ni pianyi
 attention 3SG seize 2SG cheap
 Be careful, he wants to profit at your expense.

The comparison between the structure of sentences (92) - (96)
 and the double object construction illustrated in (97):

- (97) 我送他一本書
 Wo song ta yi-ben shu
 1SG give 3SG 1 -CL book
 I give him a book (as a present).

shows that in sentences (92) - (96), the outer object occupies
 the same position as the indirect object in (97). The phenomenon
 involved here apparently is the same as that observed in
 connection with verb copying, namely restructuring modeled on the
 double object construction. As shown in chapter 3.2.1., verb
 copying (in the presence of a direct object and a complement of
 duration or of frequency) is not obligatory if the direct object
 is referential and animate/definite, for the resulting structure
 looks like the typical structure of double object verbs, where
 the verb is followed by an animate indirect object and an in-
 animate direct object. In fact, in all the sentences (92) - (96),
 the outer object is referential, animate and definite and thereby
 allows restructuring modeled on the double object construction:
 the (animate) outer object occupies the indirect object position
 and the (inanimate) inner object occupies the direct object
 position.

But contrary to verb copying whose optionality is predictable
 on the basis of the referential and definite/animate nature of
 the direct object, the cases where the outer object appears in
 the indirect object position cannot be predicted. On the
 contrary, this structure is only acceptable for some VOPs and
 represents the exception rather than the rule for referential and

animate/definite outer objects. I have no explanation to offer at this time but this phenomenon seems to deserve more attention because it can perhaps give us some indication as to the constraints governing restructuring.

In this chapter, we have given a complete overview of the forms available for the outer object. The outer object can be marked by bǎ, gěi, gēn, it can appear as the possessive object or be restructured as the indirect object in a double object construction.

The existence of different forms for the outer object does, however, not imply that the outer object plays different roles. The role of the outer object is always the same, i.e. patient of the VOP. What can vary, though, is the extent of the impact of the action on the outer object, and it is these variations in the degree of Transitivity of the VOPs which can give rise to the different forms.

Marking with the coverb gěi is by far the most frequent form, probably because gěi is associated with a non-maximal degree of Transitivity.

It is impossible to predict which form the outer object of a particular VOP will take, not to mention the eventuality of a choice between different forms. Consequently, the form(s) of the outer object must be included in the lexical entry of each VOP. Apparently, the form of the outer object is not predictable because it is impossible to determine the degree of Transitivity for a given VOP in isolation, i.e. without knowing its use in a sentence.