

# Affectedness in Passives

Colin Hirschberg (chirschb@ucsc.edu), Jess H.K. Law (jlaw5@ucsc.edu)

University of California, Santa Cruz

## Take home message

- Passives are licensed by affectedness.
- Affectedness comes in degrees (Beavers 2011)
- Typology of passives predicted based on affectedness

## Selectional properties of *bei* and *get*-passives

Mandarin *bei*-passives and English *get*-passives both impose selectional requirements on predicates undergoing passive formation:

- (1) Shucaï bei Mali chi-le.  
veggies PASS Mary eat-PERF (Accomplishment)  
'The veggies got eaten by Mary.'
- (2) Men bei Lisi kai-le.  
door PASS Lisi open-PERF (Achievement)  
'The door got opened by Lisi.'
- (3) \*Shucaï bei Mali qie-le.  
veggies PASS Mary cut-PERF (Degree achievement)  
'The veggies got cut by Mary.'
- (4) \*Beijixing bei Lee Typhoon gensui-le.  
Polaris PASS hikers follow-PERF (Activity)  
'Polaris got followed by Typhoon Lee.'
- (5) \*Beijixing bei yuanzuzhe gensui-le.  
Polaris PASS hikers follow-PERF (Activity)  
'\*Polaris got followed by the hikers.'
- (6) \*Binqiling bei Xiaoli xihuan(-le).  
ice-cream PASS Ashley like-PERF (Stative Verb)  
'\*Ice-cream got liked by Ashley.'

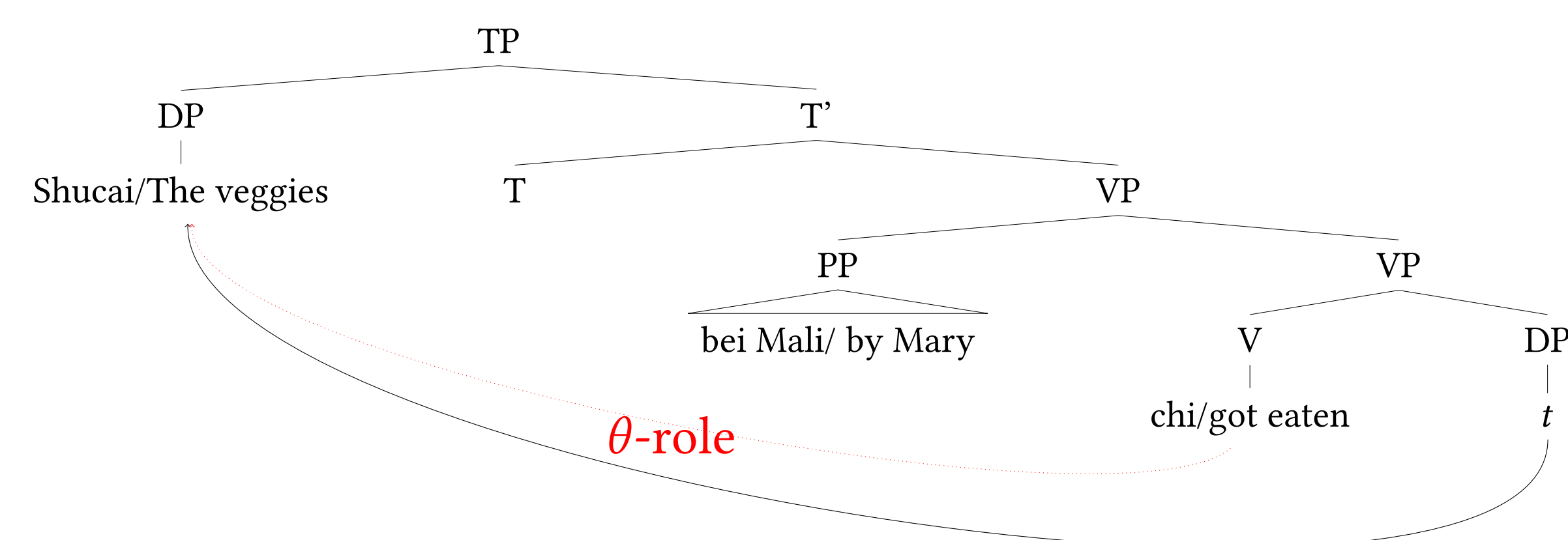
- *Bei*-passives: requires a unique **endpoint** provided by the predicate
- *Get*-passives: requires the potential of **impact** following the onset of an event

As these requirements are not found in active sentences, they must stem from passive formation.

## Implications for extant theories of passives

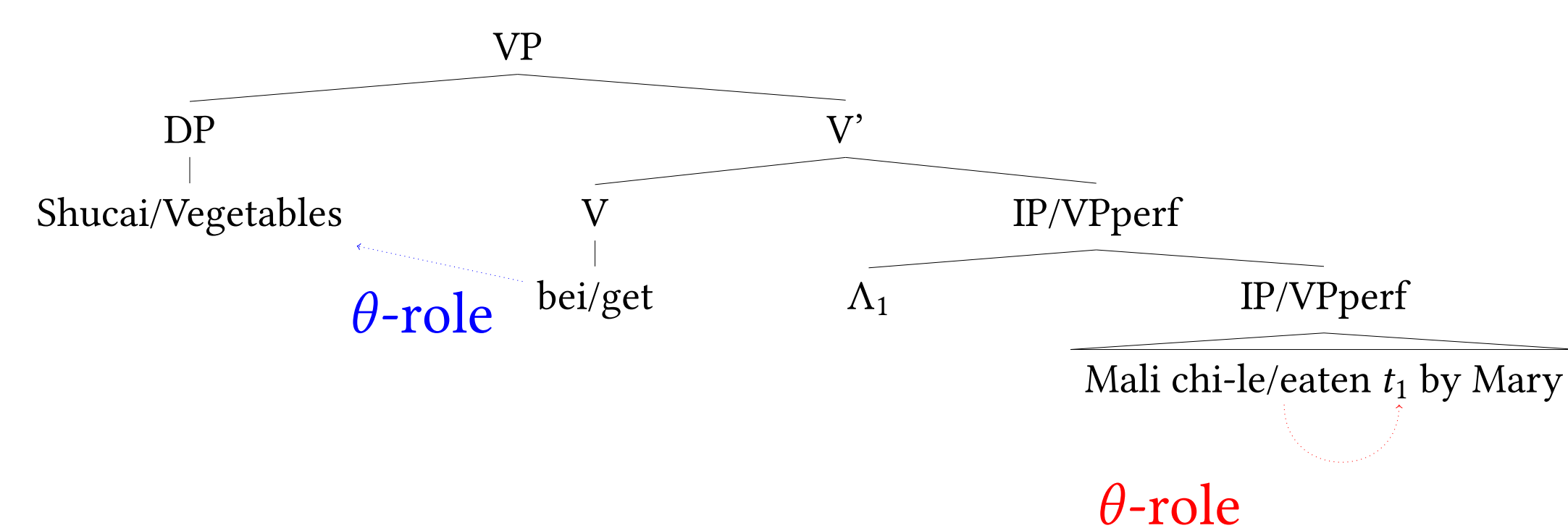
Movement(-only) approach (Wang 1970, Li 1985, 1990, Huang 1999, a.o.)

- Passivization involves movement to a non-thematic A-position.
- The surface subject receives **one thematic role**, from the verb via an A-chain.
- Additional properties are attributed to discourse/pragmatics.



Predication approach (Hashimoto 1987, Feng 1995, Chiu 1995, Cheng et al. 1996, a.o.):

- Passivization involves complex predicate formation.
- The surface subject receives **two thematic roles**, a primary role from the main verb (via an A- or A'-chain) and a secondary role from the passive morpheme *bei* and *get*.



The selectional requirements are the content of the secondary thematic role.

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## The Affectedness Hierarchy

An individual  $x$  is affected with regard to a predicate  $\phi$  by... (Beavers 2011)

- (7) **Quantized Change (Affectee4)** iff  $\phi \rightarrow \exists e \exists s [\text{result}(x, s, e, g_\phi)]$ , where  $e$  is an event,  $s$  a scale, and  $g_\phi$  a **specific result state** on  $s$  provided by the predicate  $\phi$  in relation to the event  $e$ . (E.g., *eat, open*)
- (8) **Non-Quantized Change (Affectee3)** iff  $\phi \rightarrow \exists e \exists s \exists g [\text{result}(x, s, e, g)]$  where  $g$  is any result state entailed by  $\phi$ . (E.g., *fold, cut*)
- (9) **Potential change (Affectee2)** iff  $\phi \rightarrow \exists e \exists s \exists \theta [\theta(x, s, e)]$ , where  $\theta$  is a thematic role allowing change to be measured on some scale  $s$ . Although change is allowed, a **result state** is not entailed. (E.g., *hit, wipe*)
- (10) **Unspecified change (Affectee1)** iff:  $\phi \rightarrow \exists e \exists \theta' [\theta'(x, e)]$ , where  $\theta'$  is a thematic role that does not measure any change in relation to  $e$ . (E.g., *like, follow*)

## Analysis

Mandarin *bei* realizes a *voice* head requiring **quantized change**.

- Two ways to be quantized
  - an endpoint introduced by an accomplishment/achievement verb (as in (1) and (2))
  - an endpoint introduced by a resultative predicate (as in (3))

- (11) Shucaï bei Mali qie-(hao)-le.  
veggies PASS Mary cut-complete-PERF  
'The veggies got (completely) cut by Mary.'

English *get* realizes a *voice* head requiring **potential change**.

- Only events have an onset (though some states can be coerced into events)
- Only certain events have the potential to impact their objects (compare (12) and (13))

- (12) What happened to Polaris is that Typhoon Lee followed it.
- (13) #What happened to Polaris is that the hikers followed it.

## Predictions

Mandarin **non-canonical objects** do **not delimit events**, so they **cannot form passives**:

- (14) a. Xiaoli pao-le shangwu.  
Ashley run-PERF morning  
'Ashley ran **in the morning**' (TIME)  
\*Shangwu bei Xiaoli pao-le.  
b. Morning PASS Ashley run-PERF  
Intended: 'Morning got affected by Ashley's running.'
- (15) a. Zhangsan chi-le haohua canting.  
John eat-PERF fancy restaurant  
'John ate **at a fancy restaurant**' (LOCATION)  
\*Haohua canting bei Zhangsan chi-le.  
b. fancy restaurant PASS John eat-PERF  
Intended: 'A fancy restaurant got affected by John eating there.'

**The role of sentience:** the affectedness approach can be enriched so that sentient individuals can be affected in more ways than non-sentient individuals

- (16) Haizi bei jiaolian kuajiang-le.  
child PASS coach praise-PERF  
'The child got praised by the coach.'
- (17) Xuesheng bei laoshi piping-le.  
student PASS coach criticize-PERF  
'The student got criticized by the teacher.'
- (18) Mao/\*Yizi bei xiaopengyou da-le.  
cat/chair PASS children hit-PERF  
'The cat/chair got hit by children.'

English *get*-passives trigger a **state-to-event coercion**:

- (19) The picture got liked by Ashley.

## Limitations

- (Pseudo-)agency requirement on the lower subject of *bei*-passives

- (20) Niurou bei chushi/jiaobanji/\*dadao qie-hao-le.  
Beef PASS chef/blender/big.knife cut-complete-PERF  
'The beef was cut by a chef/blender/big knife.'

- English *be*-passives: seemingly much weaker affectedness requirement

- (21) The end table is/?got liked by Susie's grandmother.

- Impersonal passives: no internal argument to begin with

- (22) Der bliver arbejdet.  
There become work.past-participle (Danish, Müller 2013)  
'There is working.'