BU ‘NOT’ IN MANDARIN CHINESE: A LEXICAL STATIVE NEGATOR

Huei-Ling Lin

ABSTRACT

Bu as a negator in Mandarin Chinese cannot co-occur with an aspect marker such as le. Moreover, bu cannot occur with the first verb in a descriptive/resultative construction. Huang (1988) suggests that the sequences [bu V le] and [bu descriptive/resultative construction] are ruled out for semantic reasons. That is, bu is first attached to V and then le is attached to the negated verb. Such a sequence [[bu-V]-le] is semantically absurd since the event that has not happened cannot be said to have been completed. [Bu descriptive/resultative construction] is ruled out for similar semantic reasons. The problem this paper proposes to tackle is: At which level is bu attached to V? Two arguments may be posited for the proposal that bu is lexically attached to V. The first argument comes from a consideration of the status of both bu and le and it is shown that only when bu is attached to V in the lexicon can the ungrammatical sequence [bu V le] be explained. Further evidence comes from the focus/contrast markers, shi and bu-shi, which have a flexible distribution. If bu is lexically attached to shi and then together bu-shi is inserted as a focus/contrast marker, then the flexible distribution can be explained. Throughout the discussion, it will be shown that bu can be the manifestation of bu alone, bu-Modal, or bu-shi. That is, unlike what it appears to be, bu is not just bu.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bu, as a negative marker, is used to negate a verb in Mandarin Chinese, as in (1). However, as discussed by several scholars of Chinese linguistics (Huang & Mangione 1985, Huang 1988, Li 1990, Ernst 1995, Lee & Pan...
Huei-Ling Lin

2001, Lin 2003, among others), unlike the negative marker ‘not’ in English, bu cannot co-occur with an aspect marker in the same clause. For example, bu cannot co-occur with the perfective aspect marker le as in (2).¹

(1) Zhangsan bu mai shu.
Zhangsan not buy book
‘Zhangsan does not want to buy any books.’

(2) *Zhangsan bu mai le shu.
Zhangsan not buy ASP book
‘Zhangsan did not buy any books.’

Moreover, bu cannot be immediately followed by the first verb in a descriptive/resultative construction as in (3) and (4).

(3) *Zhangsan bu zou de kuai. Descriptive
Zhangsan not walk DE fast
‘Zhangsan does not walk fast.’

(4) *Zhangsan bu zou de lei. Resultative
Zhangsan not walk DE tired.
‘Zhangsan did not walk to the extent that he got tired.’

The co-occurrence restrictions between bu and aspect, and between bu and descriptive/resultative constructions call for an explanation. Huang (1988) proposes Principle P in order to account for these restrictions, and he suggests that sequences of [bu V le] and [bu V descriptive/resultative clause] are ruled out for semantic reasons. What is stated in Principle P is that “the negative morpheme bu forms an immediate construction with the first V₀ element following it” (Huang 1988:284). According to Principle P, in (2) bu is first attached to mai ‘buy’ and then le is attached to the negated

¹ Mei instead of bu and you instead of le have to be used to express negation in an aspectual sentence as in (i). (Wang 1965)

(i) Zhangsan mei you mai shu.
Zhangsan not have buy book
‘Zhangsan did not buy any books.’

² Abbreviations used in this paper are listed below:
ASP: aspect, ASSOC: associative, CL: classifier

68
Bu: A Lexical Stative Negator

verb, bu-mai. Such a combination [[bu-mai]-le] is semantically absurd since the event that has not happened, not buying in the case, cannot be said to have been completed. Along the same line of argument, not-walking is a non-event and thus it cannot be said to have occurred in a certain manner, fast as in (3), or have caused a certain result, got tired as in (4). (3) and (4) are both semantically absurd and thus are ungrammatical.

In addition to Huang’s proposal, there have also been several other semantic accounts of the co-occurrence restrictions. For instance, Ernst (1995) proposes that bu requires unbounded aspectual situations, and Lin (2003) suggests that bu select a stative situation as its complement. However, neither of them explicitly specifies the mechanism which will ensure that the aspectual requirements of bu are met. The required mechanism is exactly what this paper would like to discuss.

Assuming that Huang’s Principle P holds, this paper aims to tackle the following problem: At which level is bu attached to V? Is it inserted in the NEG position and then attached to V in syntax or it is attached to V as a prefix in the lexicon? This paper proposes two arguments for the second option; that is, bu is lexically attached to V. To be specific, negated verbs or modals such as bu-mai ‘not buy’ and bu-hui ‘not will’ are argued to be lexically formed, as are negated adjectives in English such as unforgettable and impossible.

The first argument in Section 2 is constructed under the consideration of the status of both bu and le. It will be shown that only when bu is lexically attached to V can the co-occurrence restrictions be explained. The second argument presented in Section 3 comes from the focus/contrast markers.

Lin (2003) considers Huang’s Principle P problematic. However, as discussed in Section 3, the problem Lin points out is with the way in which Principle P is applied in Huang (1988), but not with the idea of Principle P itself. Even though as one reviewer pointed out, in recent literature (Klein et al. 2000, Lin 2003) le is not taken to mean completion but rather considered an assertion marker or a realization operator, these proposals are alternative accounts of the same phenomenon, and Principle P still works in those frameworks. For instance, under the assumption that le is a realization operator, [bu V le] is ruled out for the semantic violation that an event that has not taken placed can not be realized. No matter whether le is a completion marker, an assertion marker, or a realization operator, the problem with the semantic accounts given by Ernst (1995), Lin (2003), etc. still exists. That is, neither of these semantic proposals explicitly specifies the mechanism which ensures that the aspectual requirements of bu are met. Since Principle P works in different frameworks, assuming that Principle P holds, this paper aims to spell out the mechanism.
shi and bu-shi, whose distribution is flexible, and the flexibility can be explained only if bu is attached to shi in the lexicon and then bu-shi as a whole is inserted before the constituent which is to be focused on. Moreover, throughout the discussion, it will be shown that bu can be the manifestation of bu, bu-Modal, or bu-shi, and thus bu does not simply mean ‘not’.

2. THE STATUS OF BU AND LE

To account for the ungrammatical sequence [bu V le], we need to consider the status of both bu and le and four possibilities arise. Possibility (I): bu and le are inserted in the Neg and Asp positions, respectively. Possibility (II): bu is inserted in the Neg position while le is attached to V in the lexicon. Possibility (III): both bu and le are attached to V in the lexicon. Possibility (IV): bu is lexical while le is syntactic.

2.1 Lexical BU

Under Possibility (I), bu and le are inserted in the Neg and Asp positions in syntax, respectively. If Neg has scope over Asp as proposed by Zou (1995), le is attached to V before bu does, assuming I (Asp) to V movement (Tang 1990, Zhou 1990, etc.). The resulting sequence [bu [V-le]] is semantically well-formed, and thus the ungrammaticality of [bu V le] is not captured under this analysis. On the other hand, if Asp has scope over Neg as proposed by Gu (1992), after le lowers to V, V-le subsequently has to move back to I (Asp) at LF in order to form a proper chain (Chomsky 1991). The subsequent movement at LF, however, violates the Head Movement Constraint (Travis 1984) as stated in (5) because Neg bu, which intervenes between I (Asp) and V, is a potential governor and thus the V-le to I (Asp) movement violates the Relativized Minimality Condition as in (6) (Rizzi 1990).

---

4 Here I only refer to the structure proposed by Zou (1995), not his analysis. Zou assumes that aspect markers such as le are lexically attached to V.
(5) **Head Movement Constraint (HMC)**

Movement of a zero-level category $\beta$ is restricted to the position of a head $\alpha$ that governs the maximal projection $\gamma$ of $\beta$, where $\alpha \theta$-governs or L-marks $\gamma$ if $\alpha \neq C$.

(6) **Relativized Minimality:** $X \alpha$-governs $Y$ only if there is no $Z$ such that

(i) $Z$ is a typical potential $\alpha$-governor for $Y$,

(ii) $Z$ c-commands $Y$ and does not c-command $X$.

Under this analysis, sentences like (2) are ruled out because they violate the HMC and thus are syntactically ill-formed, rather than semantically ill-formed. This analysis, however, cannot account for the co-occurrence restriction between *bu* and descriptive/resultative constructions as in (3) and (4) because aspect markers do not co-occur with the first verb in the descriptive/resultative constructions as in (7) and (8).

(7) *Zhangsan zou le de kuai.*

Zhangsan walk ASP DE fast

‘Zhangsan walked fast.’

(8) *Zhangsan zou le de lei.*

Zhangsan walk ASP DE tired.

‘Zhangsan walked to the extent that he got tired.’

Aspect markers are not involved in (3) and (4), I-to-V and subsequent V-to-I movements are not required, and thus Sentences (3) and (4) do not violate the HMC. As such, these sentences are not syntactically ill-formed and are wrongly predicted to be grammatical under this analysis. Even though this analysis accounts for the co-occurrence restriction between *bu* and *le*, a separate account is needed for the restriction between *bu* and descriptive/resultative constructions.

---

5 A reviewer suggested that *de* be taken as an aspect marker like *le*, and then under an assumption similar to Gu’s proposal of V-to-I movement, the ungrammaticality in (2-4) can be attributed to violation of HMC. Moreover, the ungrammaticality of (7) and (8) could be taken to result from the aspect conflict of two aspect markers *de* and *le*. This proposal does sound appealing; however, for this proposal to hold, independent evidence needs to be provided to prove that *de* is indeed an aspect marker.
Under Possibility (II), *le* has to be attached to *V* in the lexicon before *bu* is attached to *V* in syntax. Again the resulting sequence [*bu [V-le]*) is semantically well-formed and thus sentences like (2) are wrongly predicted to be grammatical. One may assume that *V-le* has to move to *Asp* at LF for feature checking (Chomsky 1993) and this LF movement violates the HMC because Neg intervenes between *V* and *Asp*. Thus (2) is a case of syntactic ill-formedness. However, this analysis still cannot account for the co-occurrence restriction between *bu* and descriptive/resultative constructions since these two constructions do not involve aspect markers and thus no feature checking is necessary. No feature checking means no movement and no violation of the HMC. Therefore, (3) and (4) cannot be cases of syntactic ill-formedness, and another account is called for.

Possibility (III) assumes that both *bu* and *le* are attached to *V* in the lexicon. *Bu* as a derivational prefix must be attached to *V* before the inflectional suffix *le* is. After the affixation, the resulting sequence [*bu-V]-*le* is semantically ill-formed. Therefore, this analysis accounts for the co-occurrence restriction between *bu* and *le*.

Possibility (IV) supposes that *bu* is attached to *V* in the lexicon and then *le* is attached to *bu-V* in syntax. The resulting sequence [*bu-V]-*le* is semantically anomalous and thus ruled out. As such, Possibility (IV) also accounts for the co-occurrence restriction between *bu* and *le*.

Moreover, both Possibility (III) and (IV) can explain the ungrammaticality of (3) and (4). Under both analyses, *bu* is attached to *V* in the lexicon and as discussed above, the combination [*bu-V*] descriptive/resultative clause] is semantically anomalous because a non-existing event [*bu-V*] cannot be said to occur in a certain manner or cause a certain result. Therefore, the ungrammaticality of (3) and (4) results from semantic anomaly.

2.2 Seeming Counter-examples

However, there are cases where the sequence [*bu V* descriptive/resultative clause] seems to be allowed as in (9).

(9) Ruguo ni bu zuo de kuai, ni jiu zhui-bu-shang wo. (cf. (3))
    if you not walk DE fast you then chase-not-up I
    ‘If you don’t walk fast, then you won’t catch up with me.’
To account for this type of data, Huang (1988) suggests that bu in (9) is supported by an abstract modal element in Infl rather than attached to the verb directly and the sequence [[bu-Modal] [zuo de…]] is not semantically anomalous. Along the same line of argument, this paper proposes that bu in (9) contains an abstract modal element such as hui ‘will’ or yao ‘want to’. That is, bu in (9) denotes ‘will not’ rather than simply ‘not’. Even in cases like (9), bu is a lexical prefix, which is attached to Modal in the lexicon. The only difference between bu-V and bu-M is that V in the former cannot be omitted while M in the latter is optional when the reading of modality is clear or can be inferred from the context.

The proposal assuming the existence of an abstract modal can also account for cases where bu seems to co-occur with le in the same sentence as in (10). The intentional adverbial guyi ‘deliberately’ in (10) clearly indicates that the modality reading is there, and thus bu in (10) is also argued to contain an abstract modal element. The sequence [[bu-M]…V-le] is not semantically anomalous; therefore, (10) is not ruled out.

(10) Ta guyi       bu ba suoyou de        xinjian dou diu-le.
     he deliberately not BA all       ASSOC letter   all  throw-ASP
     ‘He deliberately did not throw all the letters away.’

At first glance, (10) seems to present another problem for the proposal that bu is attached to V or Modal in the lexicon, since bu in (10) is immediately followed by ba, not a verb or a modal. Other than (10), sentences like (11), where bu is immediately followed by a preposition, also present similar problems. However, again the proposal assuming the existence of an abstract modal explains this seeming contradiction, since bu in (11) must be taken as a combination of bu and Modal. That bu in (11) also has a volitional reading can be supported by the fact that it can co-occur with intentional adverbs like guyi ‘deliberately’ as in (12).

---

6 The following example where the modal yao ‘want’ is overtly shown illustrates the point that bu in (10) is not simply bu; it also contains an empty modal.

(i) Ta guyi       bu-yao ba suoyou de xinjian dou diu-le.
     he deliberately not-want BA all       ASSOC letter all  throw-ASP
     ‘He deliberately did not want to throw all the letters away.’

7 One of the functions of de is as an associative marker, which associates or connects two elements.
It is also possible that the action in (11) is taken to be habitual as indicated by the frequency adverb tongchang ‘usually’ in (13). With this reading, bu is followed by an abstract habitual aspect marker, as Ernst (1995) proposes. Therefore, (11) can either mean ‘he is not willing to take a rest at home’ or ‘he usually does not take a rest at home.’ Its precise reading would have to be determined by the context. What is relevant to our discussion here is that in those examples bu is attached to an abstract modal element rather than to a verbal element directly.

(13) Ta tongchang bu zai jia xiu.           
    he usually not at home rest        
    ‘He usually does not take a rest at home.’

To sum up, after the close examination of the four possible combinations of the status of bu and le, it is argued that only when bu is a lexical prefix

8 Given the following pair of examples, a reviewer questioned the feasibility of the proposal that the bu preceding a preposition must contain a zero modal. Since it is not possible for bu in (ii) to co-occur with intentional adverbs such as guyi ‘deliberately’ as the ungrammaticality of (ii) indicates, this proposal does not seem to hold water.

(i)  Ta bu zai kanshu, daodi pao nali qu le? 
    he not ASP read-book on-earth run where go ASP   
    ‘He is not studying. Where on earth did he go?’

(ii) *Ta guyi bu zai kanshu. 
    he deliberately not ASP read-book        
    ‘He is deliberately not studying.’

However, even if guyi ‘deliberately’ can not co-occur with bu in (ii), it does not mean that no empty modal is there in (i) or (ii). The empty modal in (i) can be taken to be ken ‘willing to’. However, guyi is not compatible with the modal ken ‘willing to’ since one cannot be deliberately willing to do something as shown in (iii), and thus (ii) is ungrammatical.

(iii) *Ta guyi ken zai kanshu. 
    he deliberately willing ASP read-book   
    *‘He is deliberately willing to be studying.’
can the co-occurrence restrictions between *bu* and *le* and those between *bu* and descriptive/resultative constructions be both accounted for. Moreover, the proposal that in some cases *bu* contains an abstract modal can well explain those seeming counter-examples where the co-occurrence restrictions are violated or *bu* is not immediately followed by a verb.  

2.3 Derivation of Negated Forms

As discussed in Section 2.1, the co-occurrence restrictions between *bu* and *le* and those between *bu* and the descriptive/resultative clause can be explained only if *bu* is assumed to be attached to V in the lexicon, while there is no conclusive evidence indicating whether *le* is also lexically attached to V. Under this assumption, this section will further demonstrate the derivation of negated verbs. Take (14) to be a simplified version of sentence structure for Mandarin Chinese. *Bu-mai* ‘not buy’ as in Sentence (1) is inserted into the V slot. As to the *bu*-abstract modal in examples such as (9-13), it is inserted under the M slot.

9 A reviewer pointed out the possibility of treating *bu* as an adverb. This possibility, however, is not considered in this paper. As discussed in Section 2.1, under the assumption that Principle P holds, which works even in different frameworks, the lexical status of *bu* accounts for the co-occurrence restrictions between *bu* and *le* and those between *bu* and the descriptive/resultative clause, which would be hard to explain, if *bu* were an adverb.

10 Given the following dialogue, one reviewer wondered how a lexical account of *bu* as an affix can explain its occurrence as a free morpheme.

Q: Women de zou le.
we have-to go ASP
‘We have to go now.’

A: Bu, shijian hai zao.
o time still early
‘No, it’s still early.’

This conversation is like one of the seeming counter-examples discussed in Section 2.2. *Bu* in this conversation actually contains an abstract element. Another possible explanation is that this *bu* is a different *bu*. As the translation indicates, this *bu* means ‘no’, not ‘not’. In languages such as English, *no* instead of *not* is also used as an exclamation marker.
Without NegP projection in (14), a problem that immediately arises will be how to account for licensing conditions on negative polarity items (NPI) as illustrated in (15).\footnote{This was pointed out by one of the reviewers.}

(15) Ta bu gen renhe ren shuo renhe hua.

he not with any person say any word

‘He does not say anything to anyone.’

Even though NegP is not opted for in this proposal, licensing conditions on NPI can still be well-accounted for, if we assume that the negative feature of \textit{bu} is percolated up. That is, in the case of \textit{bu-mai}, once \textit{bu-mai} is inserted into \textit{V}, \textit{V} is marked with a negative feature, while in the case of \textit{bu-M}, it is \textit{M} that gets marked with the negative feature. Since in (15) the negated modal, \textit{bu}-abstract modal, c-commands the NPI, the grammaticality of (15) is accounted for. It should be noted that lexical negations such as \textit{bu-V} and \textit{bu-M} differ from inherently negative verbs such as \textit{fandui} ‘oppose’, which cannot occur with NPI as shown in (16). The difference between lexical negations and inherently negative verbs is that the latter is not marked with the negative feature; as such, the NPI is not licensed as in (16).

(16) *Ta fandui renhe shi.

he oppose any matter

*‘He opposes any matter.’

3. FOCUS/CONTRAST MARKERS, \textit{SHI} AND \textit{BU-SHI}

Further evidence for a lexical account of \textit{bu} comes from the focus/contrast markers, \textit{shi} and \textit{bu-shi}. As discussed in Li (1990), \textit{shi}, as a
focus/contrast marker, can be placed before a constituent for the purpose of indicating if this constituent or this constituent plus the following constituents are focused on or contrasted as in (17) (Li’s (41), 1990:37). (The focused/contrasted parts are in bold face.)

(17) a. Ta ba ta taitai zhaogu de shi hen hao.
   he BA he wife care DE be very well
   ‘He took care of his wife very well.’

b. Ta pao de shi hen kuai.
   he run DE be very fast
   ‘He runs very fast.’

The negative form bu-shi also has the function of a focus/contrast marker, as in (18). Like shi, bu-shi can be placed in front of a constituent to indicate whether this constituent or this constituent plus the following constituents are focused on or contrasted.

(18) a. (i) Bu-shi ta ba taitai zhaogu de hen hao.
    not-be he BA wife care DE very well
    ‘It’s not that he took care of his wife very well.’
    (ii) Bu-shi ta ba taitai zhaogu de hen hao.
         ‘It’s not him who took care of his wife very well.’

b. (i) Ta bu-shi ba taitai zhaogu de hen hao.
    ‘He did not take care of his wife very well.’
    (ii) Ta bu-shi ba taitai zhaogu de hen hao.
         ‘It’s not his wife whom he took care of very well.’

c. (i) Ta ba taitai bu-shi zhaogu de hen hao.
    ‘As for his wife, he did not take care of her very well.’
    (ii) Ta ba taitai bu-shi zhaogu de hen hao.
         ‘It’s not taking care of his wife that was what he did for her that he did very well.’

d. Ta ba taitai zhaogu de bu-shi hen hao.
   ‘As for taking care of his wife, he did not do it very well.’
If \( bu \) is inserted in syntax, it should occupy the Neg position, whose exact position might vary depending on one’s analysis. In any case, Neg is a fixed position in a sentence. That is, if \( bu \) is inserted in syntax, it should occupy a fixed position rather than a flexible position. As shown in (18), \( bu\text{-}shi \) can occur at the beginning of the sentence (18a), before the BA-phrase (18b), and before the verb (18c-d). Therefore, if \( bu \) is inserted in syntax, depending on one’s analysis, only one (but not all) of the four sentences in (18) is allowed.\(^\text{12}\)

Ernst (1995) proposes that \( bu \), as a clitic, must be attached to the following word and it requires unbounded aspectual situations. Both \([V \text{ le}]\) and \([V \text{ resultative clause}]\) denote bounded situations and thus \( bu \) cannot co-occur with these sequences.\(^\text{13}\) Ernst’s proposal correctly describes the phenomenon and accounts for the co-occurrence restrictions. However, such an account with \( bu \) being inserted in syntax still cannot account for the flexible distribution of the focus/contrast marker \( bu\text{-}shi \).

On the other hand, if \( bu \) is lexically attached to \( shi \) and then \( bu\text{-}shi \) as a whole is inserted as a focus/contrast marker before the constituent which is to be focused on, the flexible distribution of \( bu\text{-}shi \) is accounted for. Moreover, it should be noted that \( bu \) alone does not have the floating feature. Even though \( bu \) in (19) seems to occur in different positions, these two sentences are not derived from the same underlying structure; that is, they have to be considered different sentences as they have different readings, not just the difference in terms of focus/contrast.

\(^\text{12}\) A reviewer mentioned the possibility that what is moved around is not the focus marker \( bu\text{-}shi \), but the focused elements. That is, the focus marker occurs at a fixed position in a sentence and the focused elements are moved into the focal position. However, close examination of the examples in (18) yields no such possible proposal. If we assume the focus marker occurs at the sentence-initial position and whatever is to be focused on is moved to the focal position immediately following the focus marker, no other elements should go before the focus marker. Then, sentences (18b-d) cannot be derived under such an account. In consequence, the flexible distribution of the focus marker simply cannot be accounted for under a movement analysis.

\(^\text{13}\) As for the descriptive construction, Ernst argues that the manner adverbial is base-generated between \( bu \) and \( V \) and then moved to the postverbal position. The trace left by the adverbial blocks the cliticization of \( bu \) to \( V \). \( Bu \) thus cannot co-occur with \([V \text{ descriptive clause}]\).
Bu: A Lexical Stative Negator

(19) a. Ta bu neng  ba  taitai zhaogu de   hen  hao.
    he not can BA wife care DE very well
    ‘He cannot take care of his wife very well.’

b. Ta neng bu ba taitai zhaogu de   hen  hao.
    he can not BA wife care DE very well
    ‘He can (choose) not to take care of his wife very well.’

As discussed in Radford (1988), sentences such as (20) (Radford’s (42), 1988:66) are ambiguous with two interpretations as shown in (21) (Radford’s (43), 1988:66). For reading (21i), (22i) is proposed to be the D-structure, where not goes with Modal and thus has scope over could, while for reading (21ii), (22ii) is the D-structure, where not goes with VP and thus has scope over ratify the treaty. ((22) is Radford’s (45), 1988:67.)

(20) The President could not ratify the treaty.

(21) (i) It would not be possible for the President to ratify the treaty.
    (ii) It would be possible for the President not to ratify the treaty.

(22) (i) S
    NP                M                VP
    The President   could not     ratify the treaty

    (ii) S
    NP                M                VP
    The President   could    not ratify the treaty

Along the same line of argument, in the case of (19a), bu goes with neng ‘can’ and thus the ability to take good care of his wife is negated, while in (19b) bu goes with the following abstract modal and (19b) implies that he has the ability to take good care of his wife but he may
choose not to use it. When \( bu \) occurs in different positions, the scope of negation is also different, while when \( bu-shi \) is inserted before different constituents, what changes is mainly the focus. Therefore, it is \( bu-shi \), not \( bu \) alone, that has flexible distribution.

Both \( shi \) and \( bu-shi \) have been shown to be able to be inserted as a whole as a focus/contrast marker. It should be noted that just as \( bu \)-Modal can be manifested as \( bu \), \( bu-shi \) can also be manifested as \( bu \). To illustrate, as shown in (23), both \( shuo \) ‘speak’ and \( xie \) ‘write’ are in focus, and the contrast can be clearly shown in (24), where the words being focused on, \( shuo \) and \( xie \), are preceded by the focus marker \( bu-shi \) and \( shi \), respectively. Therefore, \( bu \) in (23) should be taken as a combination of \( bu \) and \( shi \).

(23) Ta \( bu \) \( shuo \) de hen kuai, ta \( xie \) de hen kuai.
   he not speak DE very fast, he write DE very fast.
   ‘It’s not that he speaks very fast. He writes very fast.’

(24) Ta \( bu-shi \) \( shuo \) de hen kuai, ta \( shi \) \( xie \) de hen kuai.
   he not-be speak DE very fast, he be write DE very fast.
   ‘It’s not that he speaks very fast. He writes very fast.’

Lin (2003) considers examples such as (25) as problematic cases against Huang’s Principle P. ((25) is Lin’s (46), 2003:445.) After the stative verb \( er \) ‘hungry’ raises to I, the sequence \([bu-er \] zenme\] should be semantically absurd since the nonproperty denoted by \( bu-er \) cannot be stated to be in any degree.

(25) Wo hai bu \( zenme \) \( er \).
   I yet not very hungry
   ‘I am not very hungry yet.’

However, (25) is not a problem under the current analysis, since what is negated in (25) is \( zenme \) ‘very’, not \( er \) ‘hungry’. \( Bu \) in Mandarin Chinese can be attached to not only activity verbs such as \( mai \) ‘buy’,

---

14 Note that the English example in (20) is ambiguous with there being two interpretations while the Chinese examples in both (19a) and (19b) are not. These conditions exist because, unlike the English negator \( not \), which can either go with the preceding Modal or the following VP, the negator \( bu \) in Mandarin Chinese is a prefix which is attached to the following element. Therefore, \( bu \) must negate over the following element and never over the preceding element.
modals such as *hui* ‘will’, and the focus marker *shi*, but also to stative verbs such as *er* ‘hungry’ as in (26). (25) is simply a case of *bu* attached to an adverb *zenme* ‘very’ in the lexicon.\(^\text{15}\)

(26)  
*Wo bu er.*  
I not hungry  
‘I am not hungry.’

### 4. CONCLUSION

This paper has argued that the co-occurrence restrictions between *bu* and *le*, and between *bu* and descriptive/resultative constructions can be well accounted for if *bu* is assumed to be attached to V or M in the lexicon. Two arguments are proposed for such a lexical account. The first argument is given under the consideration of the status of both *bu* and *le*. It is argued that only when *bu* is lexical can the co-occurrence restrictions be accounted for. The second argument comes from the focus/contrast markers, *shi* and *bu-shi*, whose distribution is flexible. Again, the flexible distribution of *bu-shi* can be explained only if *bu* is lexically attached to *shi* and then *bu-shi* is inserted as a unit wherever appropriate.

Moreover, as discussed above, *bu* may represent three combinations of negative elements: *bu* alone, *bu* and Modal, and *bu* and *shi*. *Bu* alone may be followed by V, Modal or the focus marker *shi*. *Bu-Modal* occurs in conditionals or sentences with modality or a habitual reading, for example when they occur with intentional adverbs like *guyi* ‘deliberately’ or frequency adverbs like *tongchang* ‘usually’. As for *bu-shi*, it occurs before the elements which are focused on. The account given in this paper which

\(^{15}\) That *bu-zenme* is indeed a word formed in the lexicon can be further supported by the following example. As shown in the answer, *bu-zenmeyang* ‘not very nice’ is indeed a word, which can not be taken to be composed of two words *bu* + *zenmeyang*, since *zenmeyang* with the meaning ‘nice’ is not a possible word.

**Q:**  
*Ta zhei ge ren zenmeyang?*  
he this CL person how  
‘How is this person?’

**A:**  
(i)  
*Bu-zenmeyang.*  
‘Not very nice.’

(ii)  
*Zenmeyang.*  
‘Nice.’
appeals to an abstract element in \textit{bu} can well explain seeming counter-examples where the co-occurrence restrictions appear to be violated.

\textbf{REFERENCES}


Bu: A Lexical Stative Negator


Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
National Chung Cheng University
Min-Hsiung, Chiayi, Taiwan 621, ROC
folhill@ccu.edu.tw

中文的「不」: 詞庫裡衍生的狀態否定詞

林惠玲
國立中正大學