

1990). However, it is not necessary for the degree word *bi* to be flanked by the standards and their correlates, as illustrated by (14a-b).^{12, 13}

- (14) a. Xianzai wo erzi bi yiqian guaiduo le.
 now I son than before well.behaved.more SFP
 ‘Now my son is more well-behaved than before.’
- b. Zai xuexiao xuesheng zongshi bi zai jiali
 at school student always than at home.inside
 tinghua.
 well.behaved
 ‘Students are more well-behaved in school than at home.’

Moreover, in a Chinese pivotal construction like (15a), the pivotal verb *rang* ‘let’, as Tang (2010:184-187) suggests, selects a VP as complement. Hence, it is very difficult to analyze (15a) as one with a syntactic structure like (15b), where the predicate *zhu san tian* ‘live for three days’ takes the string *wo rang ni* ‘I let you’ as the sentential subject.

- (15) a. Wo [VP [V rang [VP ni [V zhu san tian]]]].
 I let you live three day
 ‘I let you live here for three days.’
- b. [s [s wo rang ni] [VP zhu san tian]].
 I let you live three day

Given this, Lin’s (2009) analysis will be challenged by (16a), which has a syntactic structure like (16b) under his analysis, because the degree word *bi* will take the non-argumental pivotal verb *rang* ‘let’ as argument.

¹² Among the twenty-three native speakers I have checked on (14a-b), all of them accept (14a-b) as grammatical sentences.

¹³ One might say Lin (2009) can avoid this problem by assuming that the temporal adverb *xianzai* ‘now’ in (14a) is moved from the position adjacent to the *bi* phrase *bi yiqian* ‘than before’ to the sentence-initial position, as (i) shows.

(i) Xianzai_i wo erzi t_i bi yiqian guaiduo le.
 now I son than before well.behaved.much SFP
 ‘Now my son is more well-behaved than before.’

However, this will bring us the question of why (ii), in which the NP *gou* ‘dog’ is moved from the position adjacent to the *bi* phrase *bi mao* ‘than cat’, is ungrammatical.

(ii) *Gou_i Zhangsan t_i bi mao xihuan.
 dog Zhangsan than cat like
 ‘Zhangsan likes dogs more than cats.’