

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).<sup>12, 13</sup>

- (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.

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

<sup>13</sup> 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<sub>i</sub> wo erzi t<sub>i</sub> 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<sub>i</sub> Zhangsan t<sub>i</sub> bi mao xihuan.  
 dog Zhangsan than cat like  
 ‘Zhangsan likes dogs more than cats.’