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HAL Id: hal-00336148
https://hal.science/hal-00336148

Submitted on 2 Nov 2008

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This article focuses on the various uses of *gěi* 'give', as attested in a corpus of spoken Beijing Mandarin collected by the author. These uses are compared to those in earlier attestations of Beijing Mandarin and to those in Greater Beijing Mandarin and in Jì-Lǔ Mandarin dialects. The uses of *gěi* in the corpus are demonstrated to be consistent with the latter pattern, where the primary function of *gěi* is that of indirect object marking and where, unlike Standard Mandarin, *gěi* is not additionally used as an agent marker or a direct object marker. Exceptions to this pattern in the corpus are explained as a recent development arisen through reanalysis.

Key words : *gěi*, direct object marker, indirect object marker, agent marker, Beijing Mandarin, Northern Mandarin, typology.

Cet article décrit et analyse les divers usages de *gěi* 'donner' dans un corpus de langue parlée recueilli à Pékin, et les compare à ceux des textes reflétant le pékinois de la fin des Qīng, ainsi qu'à ceux du mandarin pékinois étendu et des dialectes mandarins de Jì-Lǔ. Il montre que les usages de *gěi* dans le corpus sont dans leur majorité identiques à ceux de ces dialectes mandarins, où la fonction primaire de *gěi* est celle d'un marqueur d'objet indirect, et où, contrairement au chinois standard, *gěi* ne fonctionne ni comme marqueur du passif ni comme marqueur d'objet direct. Les exceptions observées dans le corpus sont interprétées comme un développement récent dû à une réanalyse.

Mots-clés : *gěi*, marqueur d'objet indirect, marqueur d'objet direct, marqueur du passif, mandarin pékinois, mandarin du nord, typologie.

1. Introduction

1.1. *Gěi* in Standard Mandarin and in Beijing Mandarin and the grammaticalization zones for the identical marking of agent and direct object

The meanings and functions of the verb *gěi* 'give' are among the most extensively researched topics in Chinese linguistics. This is to a large extent due to its paradoxical ability to function in Standard Mandarin both as an agent marker similar to *bèi*, as in example (1), and as a direct object marker similar to *bǎ*, as in example (2) (*cf.* Chao 1968: 330-331; Liú, Pān and Gù 2001 [1983]: 294-295):[2]

(1) 羊给狼吃了。
     yáng gěi   láng chī   le.
     sheep GIVE wolf eat   PF

'The sheep has been eaten by the wolf.'

(2) 狼给羊吃了。
     láng gěi   yáng chī   le.
     wolf GIVE sheep eat   PF

'The wolf has eaten the sheep.' (both examples from Xu 1994:364, my glosses)

To date, research on *gěi* has focussed mainly on (1) providing a coherent account of the relationship between these divergent meanings and on (2) giving a diachronic outline for the pathways of their grammaticalization in connection to each other (*cf.* Bennett 1981; Newman

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[2] Following Yuen Ren Chao (1968: xvii), I give examples both in characters and in romanized transcriptions (Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, in this case), with English glosses. The characters are included for the convenience of readers who prefer those over romanization.

1993; Paris 1989, 1998; Jiāng 1999; Jiǎng 2002; Lǐ 2004; Shí 2004; Lǐ and Chén 2005; Kimura 2005 — to name just a few works on this topic).

The meanings and functions of *gěi* in Beijing Mandarin have been argued to be identical to those in Standard Mandarin (*e.g.* Xu 1994, Shěn 2002 or Zhōu 2002). In other words, it is held that *gěi* in Beijing Mandarin can function as an agent marker in the passive and as a direct object marker in the disposal construction. While no one suggests that *gěi* is the *main* agent marker or the *main* direct object marker in Standard Mandarin or in Beijing Mandarin, its ability to perform both roles has been assumed for both varieties, suggesting some similarity in the grammaticalization pathways of *gěi* in Standard Mandarin and in Beijing Mandarin.

According to Chappell's (2007) recent typological study of the grammaticalization zones for the identical marking of agent in the passive and direct object in the disposal construction in Chinese dialects, the Standard Mandarin type with the verb *gěi* used to mark both agent and direct object corresponds to a similar pattern found in the central linguistic zone of China: Zhōngyuán 中原, Jiāng-Huái 江淮, Southwestern Mandarin 西南官话, as well as in some Jìn 晋, Xiāng 湘 and Huī 徽 dialects, which all have the verb meaning 'give' serving as an agent marker in the passive and a direct object marker in the disposal construction. In her survey, based on a sample of 70 dialects representative of the ten major dialect groups within Sinitic, Chappell notes that this central linguistic zone pattern so far has not been attested either in Southern Sinitic languages (Mǐn 闽, Yuè 粤, Gàn 赣, Pínghuà 平话 and the majority of Hakka 客家 dialects), or in Northeastern 东北 or Shāndōng 山东 Mandarin dialects, where markers for agent and direct object are distinct.[3]

The finding that, with respect to the grammaticalization of *gěi*, both Standard Mandarin and Beijing Mandarin gravitate towards the central linguistic zone, is surprising, since (1) Beijing Mandarin is a Northern Mandarin dialect, which would rather be expected to be typologically similar to Northeastern and Shāndōng Mandarin dialects, in which the identical marking of agent and direct object by the verb 'give' has not, to date, been observed, and (2) Standard Mandarin is held to be closely related, if not identical to Beijing Mandarin (*e.g.* Li and Thompson 1981:1, Norman 1988:136-137). A closer look at Standard Mandarin and Beijing Mandarin and the presumed link between the two is required to explain the discrepancy between the expected and the attested patterns.

1.2. Standard Mandarin, Beijing Mandarin and Northern Mandarin dialects: Some definitions
In its canonical 1955 definition, Standard Mandarin, *pǔtōnghuà* 普通话, is stipulated to be "the standard language of China that takes the pronunciation of Beijing as its norm of pronunciation, is based on the dialects of the North [the Mandarin supergroup], and has the grammar of exemplary modern vernacular texts as its normative grammar" (*cf.* Guō 2000:978). This definition postulates Standard Mandarin as essentially transdialectal and composite in matters of grammar, marrying syntactic features of, for the most part, related but nonetheless distinct varieties. That Standard Mandarin exhibits patterns of the central linguistic zone with respect to the grammaticalization of *gěi* then naturally follows from the fact that Zhōngyuán, Jiāng-Huái and Southwestern Mandarin dialects, where verbs of giving serve as an agent marker in the passive and a direct object marker in the disposal construction, belong to the Mandarin supergroup, to which Standard Mandarin cannot help but bear a relationship.

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[3] Chappell (personal communication, May 2008) stresses that this survey is limited to available second-hand data on Chinese dialects and is therefore not comprehensive. Dialects spoken in Shāndōng belong to Jì-Lǔ Mandarin 冀鲁官话 and Jiāo-Liáo Mandarin 胶辽官话. Together with Northeastern Mandarin 东北官话 and Beijing Mandarin 北京官话, Jì-Lǔ and Jiāo-Liáo Mandarin form a higher group: Northern Mandarin 北方官话. Northern Mandarin, Zhōngyuán Mandarin 中原官话 (comprising Central 中部官话 and Lányín Mandarin 兰银官话) and Southern Mandarin 南方官话 (comprising Jiāng-Huái 江淮官话 and Southwestern Mandarin 西南官话), in turn, form the Mandarin supergroup 北方话 (Liú 1995:453).

An alternative view would be to consider Standard Mandarin grammar as having developed through complex interaction between two successive models of *guānhuà* 官话 'language of the officials', the koiné of the Míng 明 (1368-1644) and Qīng 清 (1644-1911) dynasties, one model being southern-based and the other northern-based (cf. Coblin 2007). While the southern *guānhuà* model was based on the dialects of the Lower Yangtze region, the central linguistic zone of China; the northern model was rather closely connected to Northern Mandarin dialects. Similar to the standard pronunciation of *guānhuà*, which until the end of the Qīng dynasty was based on Jiāng-Huái Mandarin, as demonstrated by W. South Coblin (2007), northern *guānhuà* grammar is likely to have been closely connected to and influenced by the grammar of the southern-based koiné of China. The similarity of Standard Mandarin to the dialects of the central linguistic zone with respect to the grammaticalization of *gěi* may be symptomatic of this close historical relationship.

The similarity of Beijing Mandarin to the dialects of the central linguistic zone, on the other hand, is more problematic.

In its narrow, geographical, definition, Beijing Mandarin 北京话 (hereafter 'Beijing Mandarin') is a language spoken in the city of Beijing by its natives. In Chinese grammar studies, this narrowly defined Beijing Mandarin is widely held to be identical to Standard Mandarin. Nonetheless, as the Standard Mandarin pronunciation type is demonstrably distinct from the sound system of Beijing (*cf.* Coblin 2007:23-24), the grammar of Standard Mandarin differs from that of Beijing Mandarin. In fact, a number of studies have demonstrated that the two varieties are markedly distinct in their syntactic patterns (*e.g.* Chirkova and Lamarre 2005 for the meanings of postverbal locative constructions in Beijing Mandarin and in Standard Mandarin). In sum, Standard Mandarin and Beijing Mandarin are distinct languages (cf. Zhū 1987).

In a broader definition, the concept of Beijing Mandarin is associated in Chinese linguistics not only with the dialect of the Chinese capital, but also with the *Běijīng guānhuà* 北京官话 group (hereafter 'Greater Beijing Mandarin'), a cover term for the dialects spoken in the municipality of Tiānjīn 天津, in the north-eastern part of Héběi 河北 (Chéngdé 承德 and environs), in the eastern part of Inner Mongolia 内蒙古 and in Liǎoníng 辽宁 (Hè, Qián and Chén 1986; Wurm, Lǐ *et al.* 1988: Map B-2; Zhāng 2008). The major criterion for this subgrouping is the uniform reflexes of the entering *rù* 入 tone in modern dialects constituting the group. In the *Language atlas of China* (Lǐ, Xióng and Zhāng 1988: B-2), this Greater Beijing Mandarin is linked to the Jì-Lǔ Mandarin group, which in turn embraces the dialects of Beijing and Tiānjīn municipalities, parts of Héběi, Shānxī 山西 and western Shāndōng 山东 (Liú 2006:357).[4]

Together with Northeastern Mandarin and Jiāo-Liáo Mandarin (eastern Shāndōng), Greater Beijing Mandarin and Jì-Lǔ Mandarin form the Northern Mandarin 北方官话 group of dialects, which geographically covers the areas of the Chinese North-East. As is the case for all Chinese dialect groups, the Northern Mandarin group has been proposed on phonological grounds. In the case of Northern Mandarin, these are: unvoicing of the ancient voiced stops, affricates and fricatives; the disappearance of the entering 入 *rù* tone and tonal systems consisting of four tones (*cf.* Li 1937). Even though the present classification of Chinese dialects is based entirely on phonological criteria, the recognised groupings are traditionally held in Chinese linguistics to be indicative of a certain degree of coherence, including: the lexical and syntactic features of each particular dialect group (*e.g.* Huáng and Liào 1999 [1983]: 5, Zhān et al. 2001:257). Given this general assumption, the presumed similarity of the meanings and functions of *gěi* in Beijing Mandarin and Standard Mandarin, is at odds with the linguistic and geographical affiliation of Beijing Mandarin to the dialects of the

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[4] *Běijīng guānhuà* and *Jì-Lǔ guānhuà* share the characteristics of having four tones each and exhibiting fairly uniform tone changes in the Middle Chinese tone categories of *píng* 平, *shǎng* 上 and *qù* 去 as well as that of the *rù* tone with voiced initials. The two groups differ in the tone values and in the modern reflex of Middle Chinese *rù* tone in the presence of a voiceless initial.

Greater Beijing Mandarin and Jì-Lǔ Mandarin dialect zone (and ultimately Northern Mandarin) and therefore requires an explanation.

1.3. Goals

To explain the discrepancy between the presumed similarity of the uses of *gěi* in Beijing Mandarin to the patterns observed in the central linguistic zone of China, on the one hand, and the geographical affiliation of Beijing Mandarin to Northern Mandarin dialects in general and to Greater Beijing Mandarin in particular, on the other hand, I propose the following:

(1) to re-examine the uses of *gěi* including as a marker of the agent in the passive and of the direct object in the disposal construction in Beijing Mandarin, based on a spoken corpus;

(2) to examine the uses of *gěi* including as a marker of the agent in the passive and of the direct object in the disposal construction in two texts reflecting the Beijing Mandarin of the turn of the 20th century. I deem this important in order to define traditional Beijing Mandarin patterns in the use of these markers and to create a historical frame of reference for the usages attested in the corpus;

(3) to examine the meanings and functions of *gěi* in Northern Mandarin dialects. In this study, I will limit myself to the two groupings to which Beijing Mandarin in its narrow definition is most close: Greater Beijing Mandarin and Jì-Lǔ Mandarin dialects. It is plausible that patterns observed in these dialects are shared by a larger number of Northern Mandarin dialects, pending further investigation;

(4) to compare the findings of (1), (2) and (3) to determine whether the uses of *gěi* in Beijing Mandarin and in Greater Beijing Mandarin and Jì-Lǔ Mandarin are similar, as expected from their linguistic affiliation and geographical distribution;

(5) to compare these meanings and functions with those in Standard Mandarin to determine whether the uses of *gěi* in Beijing Mandarin and in Standard Mandarin are indeed identical, as most scholars currently hold;

(6) to explain the observed patterns of the use of *gěi* in Beijing Mandarin in relation to the dialects of Greater Beijing Mandarin and Jì-Lǔ Mandarin.

1.4. Sources
1.4.1. Beijing Mandarin

To determine the extent to which Beijing Mandarin and Standard Mandarin correspond or differ in their use of *gěi*, I propose to examine the use of *gěi* in a corpus of Beijing Mandarin which I collected in 2000-2001 (hereafter, 'the corpus'). The corpus consists of informal, unplanned conversations between native speakers of Beijing Mandarin from at least two generations. Most of my language consultants had not been exposed to higher education and their language, as a consequence, retained those features that distinguish it from the official educational model, Standard Mandarin. The conversations range in length from 30 minutes to one hour and are transcribed in the Hànyǔ Pīnyīn system of transcription. The corpus totals 17,844 sentences. (For further details on the corpus, see Chirkova 2003:6-11).

In addition, I use two attestations of Beijing Mandarin from the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century in order to create a historical reference frame for the usages attested in the corpus. These sources are: *Guānhuà zhǐnán* 《官话指南》 [A guide to the Mandarin language] (1881), a collection of dialogues in colloquial Beijing Mandarin compiled by Wú Qǐtài 吴启太 and Zhèng Yǒngbāng 郑永邦, Japanese interpreters of Chinese descent (hereafter '*Guānhuà zhǐnán*'); and *Structural principles of the Chinese language* (1932, 1937) by Joseph Mullie, a reference grammar of Northern Chinese (hereafter '*Structural principles*').

Guānhuà zhǐnán is generally held to be representative of the colloquial dialect of the Chinese capital in the late Qīng. I will be using the first three, most informal and conversational volumes of *Guānhuà zhǐnán*, consisting of approximately 1,577 sentences.

Structural principles is a reference grammar of the dialect of Rèhé. Rèhé, also known as Jêhol, is the name of a defunct Chinese province (of the 1930s) with the capital in Chéngdé, which occupied the area north of the Great Wall, west of Manchuria and east of Mongolia. In other words, it partly overlaps with the Greater Beijing Mandarin region.[5] I will hereafter refer to the language that is the object of Mullie's study as 'Rèhé Mandarin'.

1.4.2. Greater Beijing Mandarin and Jì-Lǔ Mandarin
It is generally understood in Chinese linguistics that among Mandarin dialects there is a great degree of uniformity in matters of grammar (*cf.* Yuán *et al.* 2001 [1960]: 23-24, 46), for which reason Mandarin dialects in general and Northern Mandarin dialects in particular remain to date the least researched among all Chinese dialects (*cf.* Liú 1995:447; Zhāng 2008:71). This near absence of descriptive data on the dialects of the Greater Beijing Mandarin area complicates the task of comparing the usage of agent and direct object markers as well as that of *gěi* in these dialects. I am not aware of any outlines of the use of the said markers for the dialects of Héběi, East Inner Mongolia or Liǎoníng. The present overview in this study is essentially based on *Hànyǔ fāngyán yúfǎ lèibiān* 《汉语方言语法类编》 [Concordance of Chinese Dialect Grammar] (1996). Some additional information on Jì-Lǔ dialects has been quoted from *Chānglí fāngyán zhì* 《昌黎方言志》(1984), as well as from *Shāndōng fāngyán yánjiū* 《山东方言研究》 [A study of Shāndōng dialects] by Qián Zēngyí 钱曾怡 *et al.* (2001) for the Dézhōu dialect.

1.5. Structure of the article
In § 2.1, I summarize agent and direct object markers as well as different uses of *gěi* as defined in *Structural principles* and attested in *Guānhuà zhǐnán*. In § 2.2, I examine the same markers in the present-day Greater Beijing Mandarin and Jì-Lǔ Mandarin dialects, summing up their characteristic features in order to provide a general typological background for the usages observed in the corpus. In § 3.1-3.4, I outline agent and direct object markers as well as different uses of *gěi* in the corpus and compare them to similar patterns in *Structural principles*, *Guānhuà zhǐnán* and the dialects of the Greater Beijing Mandarin and Jì-Lǔ Mandarin area. I demonstrate that both in its use of *gěi* and in its use of agent and direct object markers, Beijing Mandarin, unlike Standard Mandarin, gravitates towards the Northern Mandarin type. I argue that patterns observed in the latter group can shed light on the meaning and functions of *gěi* in the dialect of the Chinese capital.

2. Agent and direct object markers and the uses of *gěi* in Beijing Mandarin
2.1. *Structural principles* and *Guānhuà zhǐnán*
In *Structural principles*, Mullie (1937:45) indicates that Rèhé Mandarin has three agent markers, *bèi*, *ràng* and *jiào*, of which the former, *bèi*, belongs to the literary register, but is used in the spoken language in some cases. The direct object marker, or "the determinated or preposed accusative" in Mullie's formulation, is expressed by the preposition *bǎ* (1932:56). Notably, Mullie does not mention *gěi* as either a passive or a direct object marker.

Speaking about *gěi* (*ibid.*, p. 55), Mullie distinguishes between its three major uses:

(1) as the verb 'give';

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[5] Mullie (1932: xii) describes the object language of his study and its relationship to the language of the Chinese capital as follows: "The dialect spoken in Eastern Mongolia (*Jêhol* province 熱河省 Rèhé shěng) belongs to the Northern *guānhuà* and approaches very close to the genuine Pekingese; just for that reason it deserves the denomination of *Northern Pekingese*, although it cannot without some difficulty be maintained that this is a different and an independent dialect. Hence the name Northern Pekingese has more a geographical than a linguistic value, because it indicates primarily the geographical position of this dialect, not an essential and noticeable difference from Pekingese."

(2) as a verbal preposition with the sense 'to' and 'for' (a "dative" marker in Mullie's formulation, or, in my analysis hereafter, an indirect object marker);

(3) as a verb form that can be added to some verbs with the completive notion of 'to give, to make a present of' ("converb" in Mullie's formulation), *e.g.* 借給 *jiè gěi* 'to lend to'. (I will hereafter refer to this usage as 'VERB+*gěi*'.)[6]

    The following two observations concerning the use of *gěi* in Rèhé Mandarin by Mullie are pertinent to the present discussion:

First, Mullie (1937:505-506) points out that personal pronouns following the preposition *gěi* are often omitted, as in the following examples:

他不給辦 *TĀ BÙ GĚI BÀN* 'he does not do that for me';

這一位先生不給講書 *ZHÈ YÍ WÈI XIĀNSHENG BÙ GĚI JIĂNG SHŪ* 'this master does not explain the texts for us';

你給牽一匹馬來，我騎騎 *NÍ GĚI QIĀN YÌ PǏ MĂ LÁI, WǑ QÍ QI* 'bring me a horse, that I may ride it';

他不給捎那一包衣裳來，怕道上挨短 *TĀ BÙ GĚI SHĀO NÀ YÌ BĀO YĪSHANG LAI, PÀ DÀO SHANG ÁI DUĂN* 'he does not bring that parcel of clothes for you, lest he be held up (*i.e.* robbed) on the way';

你給帶道罷。我們這兒不熟[7] *TĀ GĚI DÀI DÀO BA, WǑMEN ZHÈR BÙ SHÚ* 'lead us on the way, because we are not acquainted with the country'.

Note that such omissions of pronouns after *gěi* result in a construction in which *gěi* directly precedes the verb, and to which I will hereafter refer as the '*gěi*+VERB' construction.

Second, judging by Mullie's examples (1947:504), in the disposal construction with *bǎ*, in the majority of cases the indirect object of the verb introduced by *gěi* is typically specified. For example:

我把這一條布給你撕下來。 *WǑ BĂ ZHÈ YÌ TIÁO BÙ GĚI NǏ SĪ XIALAI.* 'I tear off this piece of linen for you';

我把這三百銅子給你留下。 *WǑ BĂ ZHÈ SĀN BĂI TÓNGZI GĚI NǏ LIÚ XIÀ.* 'I leave these three hundred coppers behind for you';

我把刀子給你遞上。 *WǑ BĂ DĀOZI GĚI NǏ DÌSHANG.* 'I hand you the knife'.

The disposal construction with *bǎ* with the indirect object of the verb introduced by *gěi*, as in *Structural principles*, also frequently occurs in *Guānhuà zhǐnán*. Notably, in such sentences in *Guānhuà zhǐnán*, the pronoun following *gěi* is often omitted, resulting in the '*bǎ* PATIENT *gěi* VERB' structure, *e.g.* 快去把他那倆紅皮箱子給找回來 *kuài qù bǎ tā nà liǎ hóng pí xiāngzi gěi zhǎo huílai* 'quick, go bring (me) back those two red chests of his'.

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[6] Examples from *Structural principles* are quoted in Chinese characters, as in the original, accompanied by the original English translations. In citations, I have re-transcribed the original non-Hànyǔ Pīnyīn romanized transcriptions ("based on the Wade system with a few alterations as required for the pronunciation of the Northern Pekingese" Mullie 1932:1) in the Hànyǔ Pīnyīn system and added Hànyǔ Pīnyīn transcriptions to words and sentences originally quoted in Chinese characters. Added transcriptions are marked by small capitals. Examples from *Guānhuà zhǐnán* are quoted in Chinese, followed by my Hànyǔ Pīnyīn transcriptions.

[7] The "兒" is in superscript as in the original.

Altogether, the characteristics of Rèhé Mandarin with respect to the use of agent and direct object markers and the overall uses of *gěi*, as presented in Mullie, are all valid for Beijing Mandarin in its narrow definition, as attested in *Guānhuà zhǐnán*. The agent markers found in *Guānhuà zhǐnán* are *bèi* (3 occurrences) and *jiào* (2 occurrences); while the direct object marker is *bǎ* (241 occurrences). Furthermore, *gěi*, which is used in *Guānhuà zhǐnán* with high frequency (a total of 334 occurrences or one token for every 4.5 sentences), is employed predominantly in its function of indirect object marking.

    Guānhuà zhǐnán also has a considerable proportion of sentences with the *gěi*+VERB construction (40 occurrences). It appears 8 times in the disposal construction with *bǎ* (*bǎ* OBJECT *gěi* VERB) and 4 times in the passive construction (*bèi/jiào* AGENT *gěi* VERB):

Type of construction	Number of occurrences	%
bǎ OBJECT *gěi* VERB	8	20
bèi/jiào AGENT *gěi* VERB	4	10
gěi VERB	28	70
Total	**40**	**100**

Table 1. Frequency of occurrences of the gěi+VERB construction in Guānhuà zhǐnán

Finally and most importantly, *gěi* is used neither as a passive marker nor as a direct object marker in *Guānhuà zhǐnán*.

2.2. Greater Beijing Mandarin and Jì-Lǔ Mandarin dialects
The most common direct object marker in Greater Beijing Mandarin and in Jì-Lǔ Mandarin dialects is *bǎ*.[8] The two most frequent agent markers in the passive in these dialects are *jiào* and *ràng*. For example, *jiào* is the most common agent marker in Jì-Lǔ Mandarin dialects (other agent markers being *bèi*, *ràng*, and 着 *zhāo*/找 *zhǎo*) (Qián *et al.* 2001:304-305).

    In Jì-Lǔ dialects, the verb in the passive construction can frequently be preceded by the indirect object marker *gěi*. Notably, the pronominal object following *gěi* and specifying the indirect object of the verb (*e.g. wǒ* 我, *ān* 俺, *zán* 咱, *nǐ* 你, *tā* 他, *tāmen* 他们, *rénjiā* 人家, *dàhuǒr* 大伙儿 etc.) can be either present or omitted, yielding the following sentence structure:

jiào/ràng AGENT *gěi* (PRONOUN) VERB

Consider the following examples:[9]

I: Dézhōu 德州 (Qián et al. 2001: 307)

那个茶碗叫孩子给摔俩。NÀ GE CHÁWǍN JIÀO HÁIZI GěI SHUĀI LIA. 'That teacup has been broken by the child.' vs. 那个茶碗叫孩子给我摔俩。 NÀ GE CHÁWǍN JIÀO HÁIZI GÉI WǑ SHUĀI LIA. 'My teacup has been broken by the child. (or 'That teacup has been broken by the child in connection with me)';

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[8] Yuán *et al.* (2001 [1960]:54) indicate a total of four disposal markers for Northern Mandarin dialects, *i.e.* 把 *bǎ*, 拿 *ná*, 帮 *bāng* and 将 *jiāng*, without, however, further specifying their geographical or functional distribution. The direct object markers in Jì-Lǔ dialects are primarily 把 *bǎ*, but also 来 *lái* and 连 *lián* (Qián *et al.* 2001:303).
[9] Examples for Jì-Lǔ Mandarin dialects are quoted in Chinese, as in the original. For quotations purposes, I will provide Hànyǔ Pīnyīn transcriptions in small capitals for those sentences which are not accompanied by romanized transcriptions. Tone notations in tone letters for the dialect of Chānglí have been converted to tone notations in Chao Yuen Ren's tone numbers. The neutral tone is indicated by the lack of tone mark. Tone sandhi is indicated as a cluster of two tones divided by a forward slash, the original tone on the left and the tone sandhi on the right. For example, the notation *kei*[213/24] indicates that 213 is the citation tone of *kei*, whereas 24 is its tone sandhi form.

小车儿让对门儿给借去了。 XIǍO CHĒR RÀNG DUÌMÉR GĚI JIÈ QU LE. 'The car has been borrowed by the next door neighbour.' vs. 小车儿让对门儿给咱借去了。 XIǍO CHĒR RÀNG DUÌMÉR GĚI ZÁN JIÈ QU LE. 'Our car has been borrowed by the next door neighbour. (or 'The car has been borrowed by the next door neighbour in connection with us.')'.

Notably, the object of *gěi* in such examples refers to the owner or possessor of the patient of the main verb.

II. Chānglí dialect (Chānglí Gazetteers 1984:272)

茶碗教他給打咧。 CHÁWǍN JIÀO TĀ GÉI DǍ LE. 'The teacup was broken by him.';

窗户让风刮开咧。 CHUĀNGHU RÀNG FĒNG GUĀ KĀI LE. 'The window was opened by the wind.'

In sum, in these dialects, *gěi* is used to refer to an entity indirectly involved in the action or event expressed by the verb (literally translated here as 'for' or 'in connection with').

      The data that we have on Greater Beijing Mandarin and Jì-Lǔ dialects, however scarce, suggest that the use of *gěi* in these dialects is altogether similar to that in Beijing Mandarin. In these dialects, *gěi* is used neither as an agent nor as a direct object marker. Instead, *gěi* functions predominantly as a marker specifying a (mostly human) entity — the indirect object — involved in the action or event expressed by the verb. The pronoun referring to this indirect object can often be omitted. And as Mullie describes, the use of the indirect object marker *gěi* (with the pronoun after it present or omitted) in Greater Beijing Mandarin and in Jì-Lǔ Mandarin is not restricted to the passive construction, but also occurs on its own, directly preceding the verb, or in the direct object construction with *bǎ*, as in the following examples from Chānglí (Chānglí Gazetteers 1984:138): 老大气的把树給放咧。 $lɑu^{213}$ $tɑ^{53}$ $tɕi^{53}$ ti $pɑ^{213}$ $ʂu^{53}$ kei $fɑŋ^{53}$ lie. 'The elder brother got angry and let go of the tree.'

3. Agent and direct object markers and the uses of *gěi* in the corpus

3.1. Functions of *gěi* in the corpus
Similar to other dialects of Greater Beijing Mandarin, *gěi* occurs in my corpus of Beijing Mandarin with a relatively high frequency (approximately one token in every 16 sentences). It occurs a total of 1,130 times in six different functions, as detailed in Table 2.

Function	Number of occurrences	%
(1) *gěi* as the verb 'give'	252	22.3
(2) VERB+*gěi*[10]	38	3.3
(3) *gěi* as an indirect object marker	477	42.2
(4) *gěi*+VERB	279	24.7
(5) *gěi* as an agent marker	1	0.1
(6) *gěi* as a direct object marker	83	7.4
Total	**1,130**	**100.0**

Table 2. Functions and frequency of occurrences of gěi *in the corpus*

In the vast majority of cases (92.5% of all occurrences, functions 1-4 in Table 2), the use of *gěi* in the corpus corresponds to that in the Beijing Mandarin of one hundred years ago (as

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[10] In the corpus, *gěi* most frequently co-occurs with the verbs 还 *huán* 'return', 嫁 *jià* 'give to marry', 教 *jiāo* 'teach', 交 *jiāo* 'hand over', 卖 *mài* 'sell', 让 *ràng* 'let, allow', 送 *sòng* 'give as a present', 指 *zhǐ* 'point at'.

attested in *Structural principles* and *Guānhuà zhǐnán*, and as apparently consistent with the patterns observed in Greater Beijing Mandarin and Jì-Lǔ Mandarin dialects). Overall, the use of *gěi* as an indirect object marker remains one of its most salient functions, which accounts for 42.2% of all its occurrences in the corpus. The *gěi*+VERB construction, treated in *Structural principles* as a subtype of the "dative" (or indirect object marker) usage of *gěi* with the pronoun after it omitted, accounts for a total of 24.7% of all occurrences.

The functions that are neither reported in *Structural principles* nor attested in *Guānhuà zhǐnán* are the use of *gěi* as an agent marker (0.1%) and the use of *gěi* as a direct object marker similar to *bǎ* (7.4%). These two functions will be considered in the next two sections.

3.2. *Gěi* as an agent marker

In the linguistic literature, the question of whether or not *gěi* can serve as an agent marker in Beijing Mandarin, both diachronically and synchronically, is a matter of considerable dispute.

On the one hand, it is claimed that this use of *gěi* is not typical for Beijing Mandarin (Ōta 1957:139-140; see also Wáng 1984 [1957]:41, note 1). In fact, even some reference grammars of Standard Mandarin, for which variety the use of *gěi* as an agent marker appears to be generally agreed upon, make an explicit note that this use of *gěi* is a characteristic of southern speech (*cf.* Liú, Pān and Gù 2001 [1983]:294), hence also indirectly confirming that this use is not typical for the Chinese North. Moreover, recent studies on vernacular Beijing Mandarin texts from the mid-Qīng dynasty onwards suggest that the use of *gěi* as an agent marker is not typical in the history of Beijing Mandarin either. These studies by Yamada (1998a, 1998b, 1999; quoted from Kimura 2005: 15), Lǐ Wěi (personal communication March 2004), Lǐ and Chén (2005:289), Zhāng Měilán (2007), Lǐ and Setokuchi (2007) are based on the following texts: *Hónglóumèng* 红楼梦 [The dream of red chambers], *Érnǚ yīngxióng zhuàn* 儿女英雄传 [The tale of heroic sons and daughters], *Yǔyán zì'ěr jí* 语言自迩集 [Teach yourself Chinese], *Xiǎo É* 小额 [Young É] and *Guānhuà zhǐnán* 官话指南.

On the other hand, in outlines of the grammaticalization of *gěi*, claims that there are examples of *gěi* used as an agent marker in the same texts have also been made. In reality, these examples are exceedingly few and far between, and open for different interpretations depending on the language background of the researcher in question. Thus, while Jiǎng (2002) sees one sentence in *Hónglóumèng* and two in *Érnǚ yīngxióng zhuàn* as evidence of *gěi* being agentive, no examples of agentive *gěi* in the same sources are mentioned in Yamada (1998a, 1998b) and Lǐ Wěi (2004).

For contemporary Beijing Mandarin, some sporadic examples of *gěi* in the function of an agent marker have been reported in recent works by northern writers such as Féng Jìcái 冯骥才 (Lǐ 1994:218) and Wáng Shuò 王朔 (Lǐ and Chén 2005). Moreover, in his grammar of spoken Beijing Mandarin, in the section on agent markers in the passive, Zhōu Yīmín 周一民 (1998:222) describes the use of *gěi* in this function as occasional.

In the corpus, *gěi* has been attested in this function in one sentence only, which accounts for a mere 0.1% of all occurrences of *gěi*:[11]

(3)   在北锣鼓巷 大口 有一个小
       zài Běi Luógǔ xiàng dàkǒu   yǒu yí ge xiǎo
       be.in North *Luógǔ* alley big.entrance exist one item small

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[11] All examples, unless otherwise specified, derive from my corpus of spoken Beijing Mandarin. Abbreviations: 1, 2, 3: first, second, third person personal pronouns; EC: expected continuation, expressed by the particle *a* and its morphophonemic variant *ya*; ENM: enumeration expressed by the particle *a*; DUR: durative aspect expressed by the particle *zhe*; HON: honorific form; NP: nominal phrase; P: plural; PF: perfective aspect expressed by the particle *le*; PSV: passive marker *bèi* used to mark an agent in the passive; PTR: pre-transitive particle *bǎ~bǎi* used to mark a direct object; S: singular; RLV: particle *ne*, indicating contextual relevance of the preceding expression; SUB: subordination expressed by the particle *de*; SUG: suggestion expressed by the particle *ba*; VP: verbal phrase. Tone sandhi is indicated in the transcriptions.

庙，这个小庙儿 呢不大，现在呢
miào, zhèi ge xiǎo miàor ne bú dà, xiànzài ne
temple this item small temple RLV not big now RLV

头几 年还没这样，现在都
tóu jǐ nián hái méi zhèiyang, xiànzài dōu
previous several year still not.exist this.kind now all

给人改成铺子了。
gěi rén gǎichéng pùzi le.
GIVE person change.become shop RF

'At the big entrance of the North Luógǔ Alley, there is a small temple, this temple is not big, nowadays… several years ago it was like that, now it has been changed into a shop.'

Other, more recurrent agent markers in the passive in the corpus are *bèi*, *ràng* and *jiào*. The number of their occurrences in the corpus is summarized in Table 3:

Agent marker	Number of occurrences	%
bèi	22	37.3
rang	31	52.5
jiào	6	10.2
Total	**59**	**100**

Table 3. Frequency of the agent markers bèi*,* ràng *and* jiào *in the corpus*

The use of these markers in the corpus is illustrated in examples (4-6):

Bèi-passive

(4) 你这…这被 狗咬了以后，你容易得狂犬病。
　　Nǐ zhè... zhè bèi góu yǎo le yǐhòu, nǐ róngyì dé
　　2S this this PSV dog bite PF afterwards 2s easy get

　　kuángquǎnbìng.
　　rabies

'After you are eh... eh… bitten by a dog, you can easily get rabies.'

Ràng-passive

In example (5), the informant recalls how his wallet was stolen in a bus:

(5) 快到终点站 了，让人拿 走了。
　　kuài dào zhōngdiǎnzhàn le, ràng rén ná zǒu le.
　　quick arrive final.stop PF PSV person take walk PF

'It was stolen just before the final stop.'

Jiào-passive

In sentence (6), the language consultant speaks about a Hàn Chinese who was adopted by a Manchu family:

(6)　完了最后叫一个满族人收养　了。
　　　wán le zuìhòu jiào yí ge　Mǎnzúrén　　shōuyǎng le.
　　　finish PF　finally PSV one item Manchu.person adopt　　PF

'So finally, the child was adopted by a Manchu.'

In connection with diachronic studies in Chinese, it has been suggested by Alain Peyraube (personal communication, September 2007) that if the number of examples illustrating a certain syntactic pattern is very small, the existence of this pattern in the examined sources cannot be postulated. Given this principle, the isolated nature of the use of *gěi* in the function of an agent marker, both diachronically and synchronically, probably does not warrant calling it an established pattern in Beijing Mandarin.

　　　This marginal use of *gěi* in the function of an agent marker in Beijing Mandarin can tentatively be explained as a result of contact influence from southern dialects, where verbs of giving are a common source of agent markers in the passive (Hashimoto 1986; see also Lǐ 1994:217; Lǐ and Setokuchi 2007), or as an influence from Standard Mandarin (via mass media and education). Alternatively, it can be seen as having arisen through reanalysis of the *gěi*+VERB construction, as discussed in § 3.4.

3.3. *Gěi* as a direct object marker
In the corpus, the direct object marker in the disposal construction is predominantly *bǎ* or *bǎi* (the latter form is more frequent in the speech of older language consultants above 50 years of age). The marker *bǎ~bǎi* occurs in the corpus no fewer than 385 times, *e.g.* sentence (7):

(7)　那小伙子开出租的把人给救了。
　　　nèi xiáohuǒzi kāi chūzū de bǎ　　rén gěi jiù le.
　　　that lad　　　drive taxi　SUB PTR　person GIVE save PF

'That young chap, the taxi-driver, saved him.'

The use of *gěi* in a comparable function is attested in the corpus for a total of 83 sentences. For example:

(8)　说把老头儿叫进来吧。给 老头儿
　　　shuō bá lǎotóur jiào jinlai　　ba. Géi lǎotóur
　　　speak PTR old.man call enter.come SUG GIVE old.man
　　　叫 进来。
　　　jiào　jinlai.
　　　call　enter.come

'So he said: "Please, call the old man in, call the old man in." '

(9)　给他吓坏了。
　　　Gěi　tā　xià　huài　le.
　　　GIVE 3　scare spoil PF
'They scared him to death.'

(10)　他就给羊宰了。
　　　Tā　jiù　gěi　yáng　zǎi　　le.
　　　3　just GIVE sheep slaughter PF

'He slaughtered the sheep.'

The use of *gěi* in the function of a direct object marker has also been reported for Wáng Shuò's prose (Zhū 1995) and it is basically seen as acceptable for Beijing Mandarin by Zhōu Yīmín (1998:218). I will return to its analysis in the next section.

3.4. *Gěi*+VERB

The use of *gěi* in the position directly preceding the verb (the *gěi*+VERB construction) accounts for almost one quarter (24.7%) of all occurrences of *gěi* in the corpus. In previous studies, this use of *gěi* has been considered as special to colloquial Beijing Mandarin (Ōta 1957; Lǐ 2002, 2004; Xu 1994). As an important property of this construction, the verb following *gěi* is always transitive (Lǐ 1994:219). The occurrences of *gěi* in the position preceding the verb in the corpus can be subdivided into two groups (Type A, Type B), depending on the position of the patient of the verb:

Type A. With the patient of the verb following the verb, as in examples (11) and (12). The *gěi* VERB PATIENT type accounts for 39 sentences or 14% of all occurrences of *gěi* in the *gěi*+VERB construction:

(11) 他呀给写了 一个回民的 字儿。
      tā ya géi xiě   le yí ge   huímín de   zèr.
      3S EC GIVE write PF one item Muslim SUB character

'He wrote (for him) a word in Arabic.'

In sentence (12), the language consultant speaks about Muslim burial rituals:

(12) 这人呀男同志啊，给做一
      zhèi   rén   ya nán tóngzhì a, gěi   zuò yí
      this.item person EC male comrade ah GIVE do   one.item
      大   裤衩儿。
      dà   kùchǎr.
      big   undershorts

'If the deceased is a man, one makes (for him) big undershorts.'

Type B. With the patient of the verb preposed, as in example (13). The PATIENT *gěi* VERB type accounts for 86% (240 sentences) of all occurences of the *gěi*+VERB construction. The verb in this type of sentences must be followed by the perfective particle *le*.

(13) 我呀那张照片儿给丢了。
      wǒ ya nèi zhāng zhàopiār gěi   diū le.
      1S EC that sheet photo   GIVE lose PF

'As for that photo, I lost it.'

Type B (*i.e.* PATIENT *gěi* VERB) can be further subdivided into the following groups: (B1) PATIENT *gěi* VERB, (B2) *bǎ* PATIENT *gěi* VERB, (B3) PATIENT *bèi/jiào/ràng* AGENT *gěi* VERB. The number of their occurrences in the corpus is detailed in Table 4:

NP *gěi* VP	Number of occurrences	%
(B1) PATIENT *gěi* VERB	175	73
(B2) *bǎ* PATIENT *gěi* VERB	54	22.5
(B3) PATIENT *bèi/jiào/ràng* AGENT *gěi* VERB	11	4.5
Total	**240**	**100**

Table 4. Subtypes of the gěi+*VERB construction*

Type B1 can be found in example (14); B2 in example (7), repeated below; and B3 in examples (15) and (16).

(14) 今儿个他给喝了，是啊，明天还得打。
jīr ge tā gěi hē le, shi a, míngtian hái déi dǎ.
today 3 GIVE drink PF be eh tomorrow still should get

'Today they drank (all the water), right?, so tomorrow they will still need to go get it again.'

(7) 那小伙子开出租的把人给救了。
nèi xiáohuǒzi kāi chūzū de bǎ rén gěi jiù le.
that lad drive taxi SUB PTR person GIVE save PF

'That young chap, the taxi-driver, saved him.'

(15) 你不改善生活，那你很快就被
nǐ bù gǎishàn shēnghuó, nà ní hěn kuài jiu bèi
2S not improve life that 2S very quickly then PSV

那个沙漠给侵吞了。
nèi ge shāmò gěi qíntūn le.
that item desert GIVE swallow PF

'If you don't improve the quality of life, the city will very soon be absorbed by the desert.'

(16) 一老太太丢了五万多，叫
yí lǎo tàitai diū le wǔ wàn duō, jiào
one.item old lady loose PF five ten.thousand more order

人给蒙了。
rén gěi mēng le.
person GIVE cheat PF

'One old lady lost in this way over fifty thousand *yuan*, she was cheated upon.'

Most research on the *gěi*+VERB construction concentrates on those instances where it makes part of the disposal construction with *bǎ* (i.e. *bǎ* PATIENT *gěi* VERB) (my Type B2) or of the passive construction with *bèi*, *jiào* or *ràng* (i.e. PATIENT *bèi/jiào/ràng* AGENT *gěi* VERB) (my Type B3). I note, however, that, in the corpus, the *gěi*+VERB construction most frequently occurs on its own: 214 sentences (77%) out of the total of 279 sentences with *gěi*+VERB in the corpus. The prevailing view in the linguistic literature is that *gěi* in the passive and disposal construction is optional and serves to reinforce the disposal or passive function of the predicate (Wáng 1984 [1958]: 52; Li & Thompson 1981:482, 508; Paris 1982:74-75; Wǔ, Táo, Xǔ and Yán 1988:9, 12-13, 214; Lǐ 1994:221-222; Cóng 2001; Wáng 2001 and Lǐ 2004: 58).

With respect to the function of *gěi* in the *gěi*+VERB construction in the dialect of the Chinese capital, I propose that *gěi* in this construction (both Type A and Type B) is an indirect object marker with the pronoun referring to this indirect object omitted, as consistent with the pattern attested in *Structural principles* and *Guānhuà zhǐnán*, and as also common in Jì-Lǔ Mandarin dialects, as discussed in §2.2. However, in those instances where the patient of the verb precedes the verb (my Tape B), this construction in the dialect of the Chinese capital has undergone reanalysis, as explained below.

In the corpus, pronouns after *gěi* are frequently omitted. Consider the following examples with several occurrences of *gěi*, in which a pronoun is specified after *gěi* on its first occurrence, but omitted in all subsequent cases.

In the following sentence, example (17), the language consultant explains that Beijing natives usually celebrate only every tenth birthday and that the 50th, 60th and the 70th birthdays are particularly festive occasions, in which large birthday parties should be organized for elders. When first introducing the subject, the language consultant says: 给老人办生日 *géi lǎorén bàn shēngrì* 'organize birthday parties for old people'. On subsequent occurrences, this expression is shortened to 给办生日 *gěi bàn shēngrì* 'organize birthday parties (for them)':

(17) 老人一过五十岁了，五十啊，六十
       lǎorén   yí   guò wǔshí suì le, wǔshí a,   liùshí,
       old.people once pass fifty year PF fifty ENM sixty

       七十…对给 办生日。
       qīshí...   duì, gěi bàn   shēngrì.
       seventy   right GIVE do   birthday

'When elders turn fifty, fifty, sixty, seventy… right, one organizes birthday parties for them.'

(18) 结果军代表 说："你回去吧，我给
       jiéguǒ jūn dàibiǎo   shuō: "Nǐ huí   qu ba, wǒ géi
       result army representative say   2S return go SUG 1S GIVE

       你们那儿去 一电话。"给去了 一
       nǐmen nàr qù yí   diànhuà." Gěi qù le yí
       2P   there go one.item telephone GIVE go PF one.item

       电话 啊。
       diànhuà,   a.
       telephone   eh

'Finally, the army representative said: "Go home, I will call you there." So, he called them at home, eh.'

The identification of the omitted pronoun for sentences with the patient following the verb (*i.e.* construction Type A: *gěi* VERB PATIENT), as in the examples above, usually presents little difficulty. For example, one would immediately associate *gěi* in example (17) with the indirect object *lǎorén* 'old people'.

The same task for sentences with the patient of the verb preposed (i.e. construction Type B: PATIENT *gěi* VERB), which far outnumber the former group (86% of all occurrences of the *gěi*+VERB construction), is more challenging. Consider example (13), repeated here:

(13) 我呀那张照片儿给丢了。
       wǒ   ya   nèi   zhāng zhàopiār gěi   diū le.
       1S   EC   that   sheet photo   GIVE   lose PF

'As for that photo, I lost it.'

This sentence is ambiguous because the pronoun omitted after *gěi* can be interpreted as either referring to some human indirect object, in connection with whom the action of losing is performed, or to the (inanimate) direct object, patient of the verb, 'photo'.

In Jì-Lǔ Mandarin, as discussed in §2.2, *gěi* in this sentence can probably be only interpreted as referring to the human referent indirectly involved in the action expressed by the verb, or more specifically, to the owner or possessor of the patient of the verb. In this case, the photo belongs to the speaker herself, thus yielding the reading 'As for that photo of mine, I lost it.' In the present-day dialect of the Chinese capital, as reflected in the corpus, on the other hand, *gěi* in this syntactic environment (i.e. with the patient of the verb preposed) is liable to reanalysis. In this syntactic enviroment, *gěi* develops to refer, instead of the indirect human referent, to any prominent noun phrase that is the object of a verb, regardless of its animacy. Hence, *gěi* develops to refer to the direct object of the verb, *e.g.* in sentence (13), 'photo'. *Gěi* thus spreads to items down a hierarchy of potential discourse topics: from highly animate participants to ordinary inanimate objects, always provided that they are actually present in the discourse context. This development can be summarized as follows:

Grammaticalization pathway of gěi in the gěi+V construction (construction Type B)
(i) benefactive *gěi* with full, human, NP's > (ii) generalized *gěi* with full NP's, both human and inanimate, provided that they are individuated > (iii) direct object marker

Once reanalyzed into a direct object marker, *gěi* becomes synonymous with *bǎ* and can be used in the function of introducing the direct object marker in the disposal construction, as discussed in § 3.3 or as in the following example:

(19)　其实就是过去的女真族 给统治
　　　qíshí jiu　shi　guòqude　Nǚzhēnzú　géi　tǒngzhì
　　　in.fact just　be　past SUB　Jurchen　　GIVE　rule

　　　起来的，给 他那个各个 部落 统治
　　　qilai　　de, gěi　tā nèi ge　gège　bùluò tǒngzhì
　　　rise.come SUB GIVE 3　that item each　tribe　rule

　　　起来…　　努尔哈赤。
　　　qilai…　　Nú'ěrhāchì.
　　　rise.come　Nurhachi

'In fact, he united those Jurchens of the past, he united all of their tribes… Nurhachi.'

Interestingly, after *gěi* is already reanalyzed as a direct object marker akin to *bǎ* and is fronted before the direct object, the slot in front of the verb can be filled by another *gěi* (again, tentatively, by analogy with the *bǎ* PATIENT *gěi* VERB construction), thus giving rise to a *gěi* PATIENT *gěi* VERB construction (attested 5 times in the corpus, included in the *bǎ* PATIENT *gěi* VERB subtype in Table 4), as in the following example. In this sentence, the language consultant speaks about her father, an ethnic Manchu, who chose to be officially registered as Chinese:

(20)　我爸爸给这 个民族给改成
　　　wǒ　　bàba gěi　zhèi　ge　mínzú géi　gǎichéng
　　　1S　　father GIVE　this　item　nationality GIVE　change

汉族了。
Hànzú   le.
Chinese   PF

'My father had his nationality changed to Hàn Chinese.'

The marginal use of *gěi* as an agent marker in Beijing Mandarin may be a development akin to that of the direct object marker, as discussed above. This development tentatively procedes along the following lines. Given a suitable context where the patient of the verb is the subject of the sentence and the agent, performing the action expressed by the verb, is omitted, as in *Bēizi gěi dǎsuì le yí ge.* 杯子给打碎了一个。 'One of the cups has been broken.' (quoted from Lǚ Shūxiāng 1980: 198), *gěi* in front of the verb is reanalyzed as referring to the missing participant of the action, the agent, and becomes synonymous with the 'regular' agent markers *bèi*, *jiào* and *ràng*.

The imbalance between the direct object usages (relatively many, a total of 83 examples) and agentive usages (only one sentence) of *gěi* in the corpus can be explained by the universal tendency to use passive voice much less frequently than active voice.[12] In other words, there are more contexts in which the reanalysis of *gěi* into a direct object marker is possible, than those in which *gěi* can be reanalyzed into an agent marker.

In sum, in my analysis, it is this particular environment (PATIENT *gěi* VERB) that triggers reanalysis of *gěi* into a direct object marker and, possibly, into an agent marker. Altogether, given that the uses of *gěi* as a direct object marker or an agent marker do not appear to be typical for other dialects of the Greater Beijing Mandarin and Jì-Lǔ Mandarin area, and that it is attested at best sporadically in earlier attestations of Beijing Mandarin (*cf.* Zhāng 2007), this is probably a relatively recent development, tentatively attributable to contact influence of southern dialects or of Standard Mandarin on Beijing Mandarin.

4. Summary and conclusions
Having examined the uses of *gěi* in Beijing Mandarin (as reflected in the corpus, *Structural principles* and *Guānhuà zhǐnán*) and in Greater Beijing Mandarin and Jì-Lǔ Mandarin, the following points can be noted in relation to the goals formulated in §1.3:

(1) The use of *gěi* in the corpus is by and large consistent with that in *Structural principles* and *Guānhuà zhǐnán* and that in Greater Beijing Mandarin and Jì-Lǔ Mandarin dialects, where the primary function of *gěi* is that of indirect object marking and where, dissimilar to Standard Mandarin, *gěi* is used neither as an agent nor as a direct object marker.

I have argued that the *gěi*+VERB construction in the corpus can be analyzed as identical to the Greater Beijing Mandarin and Jì-Lǔ Mandarin *gěi* (PRONOUN) VERB construction, where *gěi* refers to an entity indirectly involved in the action or event expressed by the verb. *Gěi* in the Beijing Mandarin *gěi*+VERB construction, in my analysis, is essentially an indirect object marker with an omitted pronoun.

(2) I have proposed that the uses of *gěi* as a direct object marker in the present-day dialect of the Chinese capital is a relatively recent development, arisen through reanalysis of the *gěi*+VERB construction with the patient of the verb preposed. The marginally attested use of *gěi* in the function of the agent marker in the passive is plausibly the result of contact influence from southern dialects or of Standard Mandarin on Beijing Mandarin. Alternatively, it may have developed through reanalysis of the *gěi*+VERB construction with the patient of the verb preposed.

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[12] This tendency is also mirrored in the relatively frequent use of the direct object construction with *bǎ* (385 occurences) and the relatively infrequent use of the passive construction with *bèi*, *jiào* and *ràng* (59 occurrences) in the corpus.

(3) With respect to the grammaticalization zones for the identical marking of agent and direct object, Beijing Mandarin conforms to the Northeastern and Shāndōng type.

It should be noted that, for reasons outlined in §2.1., the present discussion is based on incomplete data and is unavoidably speculative on many points. I therefore hope that the following issues can be taken up in future research in this direction:

(1) Individual Northern Mandarin dialects should become the object of detailed descriptive studies in the near future. Such studies are indispensable for a better understanding of the dialect of the Chinese capital, its relationship to Standard Mandarin and the development of its syntactic markers.

(2) It would be of interest to test the assumption that the patterns for the use of *gěi* as observed in Greater Beijing Mandarin and in Jì-Lǔ Mandarin dialects are common for Northern Mandarin dialects at large.

(3) It would also be valuable if the distribution and the exact functions of *gěi* in the present day dialect of the Chinese capital could be verified by means of more spoken corpora and that more corpora of spoken Beijing Mandarin could be collected and made available in the future.

On a broader scale, it is hoped that the steady increase in Chinese dialect grammar studies will soon culminate in a new classification of Chinese dialects, one in which syntactic criteria will be taken into consideration. A classification based also on bundles of syntactic isoglosses, rather than solely on phonological criteria or the geographical distribution of the dialects in question may considerably advance our understanding of, among others, the largest and the least researched of all Chinese dialect groups, Mandarin dialects. As argued by Baxter (2000, 2006), the usual phonological grouping of Mandarin dialects is frequently in conflict with the phylogenetic relations of these dialects, so that modern Mandarin dialects may in fact not necessarily be a discrete genetic unit. In the domain of grammar, the internal heterogeneity of this group is suggested, among others, by the dissimilarity of the Zhōngyuán, Jiāng-Huái and Southwestern Mandarin dialects on the one hand, and Northeastern and Shāndōng (Jì-Lǔ and Jiāo-Liáo) Mandarin dialects on the other hand, with respect to the grammaticalization of verbs of giving, as observed in Chappell (2007). Whether or not this feature can be adopted as a possible isogloss for this future classification, a better understanding of individual Mandarin dialects will undoubtedly shed light on the validity of the Mandarin grouping and contribute to a more coherent assessment of the relationship between individual Mandarin dialects and the Standard language of China.

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