

## Chinese Adversative *Bèi* Passive and Its English Translations in Literary Texts

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### Abstract

This research aims at finding the commonalities and distinctive features of translating *bèi* (被) passive into English in the context of literary texts and investigating different approaches translators adopt. Twelve English translation in the Spring 2015 edition of *Pathlight* will be analyzed as a way to develop translation resources. The main approaches to translation are: (1) retaining the original passive sentences and/or passive construction, (2) changing to corresponding active sentences, (3) changing into active sentences with the same narrative perspective, and (4) paraphrasing the original passives. Translation of adversative *bèi* passive sentences is evaluated from the perspectives of semantic equivalence and aesthetic effect in order to investigate whether they effectively and successfully express the original adversative meaning and represent the original aesthetic effect. Reasons for ineffective and unsuccessful semantic equivalence are analyzed, that include translators failing to recognize the adversative expression of *bèi* passive, and not paying sufficient attention to preserving the original lexical terms which express the adversative connotation and present the literary effect and adversative resultative compounds in *bèi* passive.

*Keywords:* adversative *bèi* passive, aesthetic effect, semantic equivalence, translation evaluation

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