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INTRANSITIVITY / TRANSITIVITY AS THE SYNTACTIC FEATURE OF SEMANTIC INFORMATION. THE CASE OF ADJECTIVE COMPLEMENT RESULTATIVE VERBS

In this paper I will present an analysis of semantic-syntactic interdependence of resultative verbs with an adjective as a resultative complement in Modern Chinese. Within a wide range of semantic-syntactic correlation of resultative complement compounds there is one category worth analysing closely, since it possesses distinctive semantic features typical of an attributional group. This category is that of stative verbs. These resultatives carry both attributive and manner information, conditioned by their interrelation with the nominals or the verb in the sentence. In the traditional approach to such a compound verb, which is formally composed of a verb in combination with a postverb, the V_1 implies an action or a process and, broadly spoken, the V_2 extends the action/process of the verb V_1 towards some kind of resulting state. There are verb-result forms where the second element possesses neither an action nor a process information and thus has nothing to do with activity or inducement. Commonly known as a stative verb, it expresses a state or a manner.

Although both a verb and a stative verb act in Modern Chinese as a predicate, the distinctive behaviour of adjectives, in fact acting as intransitive verbs complementing transitive / intransitive verbs, is to be analysed with respect to the relation to the nominals.

Introduction

It is the meaning which makes a verb transitive or not, since it implies its valency.

- [1] 别笑！
bié xiào
don't laugh
Don't laugh!

- [2] 別笑我！
bié xiào wǒ
 don't laugh I
 Don't laugh at me!

In the above sentences the verb 笑 *xiào* possesses different meanings. In the former sentence it expresses the emotion and behaviour of the agent, while in the latter it reflects an action directed at the personal object. There is no emotional cheer implied in the second 笑 *xiào* verb, but rather the intention to touch bitterly the object of the action. Therefore semantics very strongly influences the syntactic features of a verb and distinguishes the same verb in different circumstances (Li and Thompson 1981:157-164, Chao 1968:672-675).

Sybesma (1999) finds justification for the source of transitivity of the resultative compound composed of two intransitive verbs in the deep structure. The result denoting part of the sentence is treated as a small clause which functions as the complement of the matrix verb. There each of the two nominals in the sentence with complex predicate is a subject to one predicate, the component of the compound. However, one of those intransitive verbs carries the information of activity which potentially may cause an event or a new state.

- [3] 妹妹把客人哭跑了。
mèimei bǎ kèren kūpǎo le
 younger sister OM guest cry run PART
 The guest left as a result of the younger sister's crying.

- [4] 她把抹布蘸濕了再擦桌子。
tā bǎ mǒbù zhànshī le zài cā zhuōzi
 she OM mop dip in wet PART then wipe table
 She dipped the mop in (with a result of making it wet), then wiped the table.

The deep structure proves the bisentential source of the resultative compound which is true for the two intransitive elements as well. Two intransitive action verbs, 哭 *kū* and 跑 *pǎo*, as well as the action-process verb 蘸 *zhàn* combined with the state verb 濕 *shī*, with the latter event happening after the cause appears, constitute a transitive resultative compound. Patient to the transitive compound verb in [3] and [4], which is itself an Action-Process Verb, becomes the subject undergoing a change, and thus the subject to the intransitive verb represented also by an adjective as the resultative complement in [4]. Therefore the transitive resultative compound as the whole, taking an object, should be treated as a lexeme.

However not many intransitive verbs combine to form a transitive compound since all adjectives, in terms of predicates, are intransitive. The combination of two intransitives represents usually a verb of motion as well as an adjective complementing an Action verb, rarely a State or a Process verb.

1. Adjective Resultative Complement of the Transitive/Intransitive Verbal Element

Verbs of action as well as adjectives can act as complements to another verb. The phenomena of V_1 - V_2 compounds with the new state or action as a consequence of the first activity can be confirmed with the bisentential source of resultative complements as in 打翻 *dǎfān* 'knock (with the result) turn over'. It should, however, be marked here that a large number of resultative complements are adjectives. However, Adjective Resultative Complements do not always indicate a result.

1.1. $V_{\text{TRANSITIVE}} + R_{\text{ADJ.}}$

A transitive verb compounded with a resultative complement can remain transitive, as in 打窗戶 *dǎ chuānghu* 'hit the window' and 打破 *dǎpò* 'hit-break, hit-broken'. The question arises whether the adjective always represents the new attribute of the object to the compound as a whole, originally associated with V_1 . The examples below provide evidence for the following assumptions:

- The activity influences an object in the way that it undergoes the changing process and thus gains a new attribute or state.
- The activity, although indicating an inborn object, is an inducing self-result activity directed towards an actor performing it.

In the former it is a subject (agent) that is acting towards an object in a clearly influential way. The performed activity focuses on the object [5]. In the latter it is the subject, which obtains a new attribute or state. As the action which strongly indicates result does not go from the subject to the object, the compound of a transitive verb with the adjective as a complement loses its transitivity [6].

[5] 孩子要睡了，你把燈光遮暗些。(S₁ V_TR O/S₂)¹
háizi yào shuì le nǐ bǎ dēngguāng zhē àn xiē
 child want sleep PART you OM lamp cover dark a bit
 The child wants to sleep so turn the light down a bit.

[6] 他喝醉了酒。(S₁ V_TR O)²
tā hē zuì le jiǔ
 he drink drunk PART liquor
 He got drunk with liquor.

¹ S₁ V_TR O/S₂ – the activity named by the verb focuses on the object which in the deep structure becomes the subject.

² S₁ V_TR O – the action named by the verb does not go from the subject to the object; the compound of a transitive verb with the adjective as a complement loses its transitivity.

The presence of a direct object (酒 *jiǔ* ‘alcohol’, ‘beverage’) to V_1 does not give a guarantee that it is compulsory for the complex predicate to have a sentence completed with the object. The object seems to be incorporated into the compound 喝醉 *hēzùi* and, only when specified (e.g. 一杯酒, 葡萄酒), allows to treat the verb 喝 *hē* ‘drink’ as transitive. The sentence below is also correct:

- [7] 他喝醉了。(S₁ V_{IT}R)³
tā hēzùi le
 he drink drunk PART
 He got drunk.

It is the case for 吃飽(土豆) *chībǎo (tǔdòu)* ‘eat full (potato)’. However the precise meaning does not indicate the direct source of the result with the same power. As Sybesma (1999) explains it is certainly 酒 *jiǔ* wine/alcohol that makes one drunk; it might be 土豆 *tǔdòu*, but also any other eatable product that makes one satisfied. The resultative attributes 飽 *bǎo* ‘full’ and 醉 *zùi* ‘drunk’ function as predicates to the subject, as, obviously, it is a person who ends up drunk or satisfied.

There are also some ambiguous sentences, with a transitive verb complemented by an adjective, like:

- [8] 他騎累了那匹馬。(S₁ V_TR O/S₂) / (S₁ V_TR O)
tā qílèi le nài pī mǎ
 he ride tired PART that CL horse
 i. He rode – the horse got tired as a result.
 ii. He rode – He got tired as a result.
 (Sybesma 1999:50-51)

1.2. V_{INTRANSITIVE} + R_{ADJ.}

Here is an example [9] of two intransitive verbs as components of a process leading to the new state and its result. The result is expressed by the adjective extending the process. The compound remains intransitive.

- [9] 他 那盆衣服再不洗澡 就泡臭了。(S₁ V_{IT}R)
nǐ nài pén yīfú zài bù xǐ jiù yào pàochòu le
 you that washbasin clothing again NEG wash soon will soak stinking PART
 If you do not finally wash that washbasin of clothing, it will stink of soaking!

³ S₁ V_{IT}R – the intransitive action / process / state named by the verb / adjective remains intransitive.

Referring to Sybesma (1999:17) the matrix predicate is not necessarily verbal, indeed. It might be adjectival as well. Since adjectives (i.e. stative verbs) denote non-dynamic states, one does not expect them to function as the matrix predicate in resultative structures. There are certainly very good reasons why the matrix verb in resultatives should represent an activity. However, the range of resultatives in Mandarin Chinese allows the adjectives (i.e. stative verbs) to act as the matrix predicate. If 醉 *zuì* ‘drunk’ is a state, it may communicate different intensities. It may imply the process of getting drunk (then it is a process verb) until 眼睛 *yǎnjīng* one’s ‘eyes’ turn red. It becomes not only the predicative, as adjectives do, but an inducing result predicate directed at a given object. Thus the compound of two adjectives, here semantically a process verb and a state verb, e.g. 醉紅 *zuìhóng* ‘get drunk’ + ‘red’ = ‘red of getting drunk’ become a transitive verb, as in:

[10] 他的眼睛醉紅了。(S_{1+obj/S2} V_{IT}R)
tāde yǎnjīng zuìhóng le
 his eyes drunk red PART
 His eyes got red from being drunk.

[11] 他醉紅了他的眼睛。(S₁ V_{IT}R O/S₂)
tā zuìhóng le tāde yǎnjīng
 he drunk red PART his eye
 He got his eyes red from being drunk.

It is questionable whether the predicates in these sentences with the two-valency verb can be treated as intransitive in the former and transitive in the latter sentence, as Sybesma proposes (1999:17). Though 他的眼睛 *tāde yǎnjīng* [10] is in the pre-predicative position, it is still 他 *tā* who is drunk and whose eyes have turned red. So the compound 醉紅 *zuìhóng* remains transitive. The possessive nominal phrase as the subject, as in [10], needs to be analysed in light of the possessor – possessed relationship to decide which of the nouns undergoes the change. Since it is 眼睛 *yǎnjīng* that gets red, although it is 他 *tā* that gets drunk, it becomes clear that the adjective describes the possessed noun in the nominal phrase. Here the adjective 醉 *zuì*, understood as the process verb ‘get drunk’ and the adjective 紅 *hóng* ‘red’ in terms of the new state, refers to two different nominals, i.e. the possessor and the possessed.

Intransitive verbs cannot occur with the object moving 把 *bǎ* as they have no direct objects. But an intransitive verb of process or action may become a component of a compound resultative verb which might itself be transitive, as is mentioned before 哭跑 *kūpǎo* ‘cry’ + ‘run’ = ‘crying, make somebody run’, 泡臭 *pàochòu* ‘soak’ + ‘stinking’ = ‘soak till become stinking’ or 哭亂 *kūluàn* ‘cry’ + ‘upset’ = ‘made upset by crying’. However, verbs expressing action: 跑 *pǎo* and 哭 *kū*, and an adjective expressing state 亂 *luàn* are intransitive, yet 哭跑 *kūpǎo* and 哭亂 *kūluàn* are transitive (Thompson 1973), as in [3] and [12]:

- [12] 妹妹哭亂了我的心。(S₁ V_{IT} R O/S₂)
 mèimei kūluàn le wǒde xīn
 younger sister cry upset PART my heart
 The younger sister's crying upset me (i.e. my heart).

An intransitive verb of action (for example 哭 *kū*) often becomes a component of a transitive compound verb (as in 哭亂 *kūluàn*) by being compounded with a resultative complement. In fact, it is a resultative compound verb that is regarded as the transitive compound verb. More of such compounds are as follows: 哭啞嗓子 *kūyǎ sāngzi* 'cry one's throat hoarse', 笑疼肚子 *xiàoténg dùzi* 'laugh until the stomach hurts', 跌傷腿 *diēshāng tuǐ* 'falls and injures the leg', all of which allow the pretransitive constructions, such as 把嗓子哭啞 *bǎ sāngzi kūyǎle* (Chao 1968:674).

Nevertheless the transitivity of such a compound verb does not naturally co-occur with 把 *bǎ* as a marker of transitivity. Its absence does not exclude the transitivity of a verb. The transitivity of a verb is not the only condition that eventually allows a verb to appear in the BA construction (Thompson 1973:209).

The sentences with a transitive resultative compound of intransitive V₁ and V₂, which is, as a whole, related to the object, seem to have an adjectival complement as the nucleus of the sentence. An intransitive V₁ composing a transitive resultative compound represents the event/action which itself neither demands any complement nor is in any way an inducing self-result in relation to the subject. An adjective as a complement expresses the state of the object induced indirectly by the event/action performed by the subject. The object in that case is in no way linked to the matrix verb, yet very strongly associated with the adjectival predicate in a small clause.

2. Adjective Complement Resultative Verbs as Transitive/Intransitive

In most sentences with resultative verbs the matrix subject enters a mutual relation with the matrix verb, which can be defined as $SV_1V_2 > SV_1$, $SV_1V_2O > SV_1 + S_{obj}V_2$. However the agent, as the doer (actor) of the action, is in some sentences hidden and should be marked with agreement to the verb's meaning, which excludes the semantic relation with animated/unanimated nominals. Thus SV_1V_2 , where S represents 我的 *wǒde* + inanimate noun, can be defined more precisely as $S_{anim}V_1 + S_{inanim}V_2$.

The resultative compound verb treated lexically should be taken as transitive or intransitive on the basis of the nominal valency criteria. If the agent's activity is self-oriented and therefore indicates the result focused on the doer, the resultative compound is intransitive, as in $SV_1V_2 > SV_1$. On the contrary, if the result of the action is related to the patient, and therefore the compound as a whole is supplied with the second nominal phrase, the resultative compound is considered

transitive: $SV_1V_2O > SV_1 + S_{obj}V_2$. However for SV_1V_2 , where a complex nominal phrase of the possessive pronoun indicates the doer, the possessed noun receiving the action, as in: 我的 *wōde* plus a noun, $S_{actor}V_1 + S_{patient}V_2$ is true, regardless of the transitivity or intransitivity of the two components of the compound which is, as a whole, transitive, as in [10] and consequently in [11].

The ambiguous example of 騎累 *qílèi* mentioned earlier, has different justifications for the two ways it may be interpreted (Sybesma 1999:50), depending on the transitivity/intransitivity of the compound as a whole.

- [13] 他騎累了那匹馬。(S₁ V_T R O/S₂) / (S₁ V_T R O)
tā qílèi le nài pī mǎ
 he ride tired PART that CL horse
 i. He rode – the horse got tired as a result.
 ii. He rode – He got tired as a result.

According to Sybesma's explanation, 'he' rides, with the result of the horse getting tired. Semantically 那匹馬 *nài pī mǎ* 'that horse' is related to the embedded predicate. 'He' is the subject of the matrix verb. The matrix verb is complemented by a result denoting the small clause, i.e. 那匹馬累 *nài pī mǎ lèi* 'that horse tired'. In this bisentential analysis 累 *lèi* becomes a predicate to the embedded subject composing the small clause headed by 累 *lèi* 'tired'. In the [13.ii] interpretation i.e. where 'he' ends up tired, there is an intransitive 騎累 *qílèi* as a head of an intransitive resultative structure. The matrix verb is complemented by a result denoting the small clause 他累 *tā lèi*. In semantic terms 累 *lèi* 'tired' is the head of the clause, in which it is a two place predicate with an external argument 他 *tā* and internal argument 那匹馬 *nài pī mǎ* (Sybesma 1999:50-57).

The two interpretations have been accepted by native speakers. However, [13.i] was more popular and natural in meaning. The sentence: 他騎累了那匹馬。 *tā qílèi le nài pī mǎ* is ambiguous since the 騎累 *qílèi* resultative compound can be considered both as transitive and intransitive. As transitivity seems to indicate the physical effect of being tired, 騎累 *qílèi* is an activity passed on from the agent 他 *tā* to the patient 那匹馬 *nài pī mǎ*. For some speakers, 累 *lèi* 'tired of' may be a synonym of 煩 *fán* 'fed up with'. Then 累 *lèi* 'tired' substituted by 煩 *fán* 'fed up' makes the sentence grammatical as well (Sybesma 1999:57):

- [14] 他騎煩了那匹馬。
tā qífán le nài pī mǎ
 he ride fed up PART that CL horse
 i. He rode – the horse got fed up as a result.
 ii. He rode – He got fed up as a result.

Native speakers agree that it is 'he' that becomes fed up with the horse and not the other way round. And that means that a psychological interpretation of 累 *lèi*, synonymous with 煩 *fán* 'fed up with', where 煩 *fán* is a psychological expe-

rience, explains the two possibilities. Understood in this way, the intransitive 累 *lèi* is the self-inducing experience of the doer of the activity, while the physical result of the activity of riding passed on to the object (the horse), changes 累 *lèi* grammatically to the transitive verb.

2.1. VR_{ADJ.} as Transitive Verb

As it is presented above, a transitive verb with an adjective as a resultative complement can remain transitive i.e. 掃乾淨 *sǎogānjìng* 'sweep' + 'clean' = 'sweep with the result of cleaning', and an intransitive verb of action often becomes transitive when compounded with a resultative complement, 笑傻 *xiàoshǎ* 'laugh' + 'stupid' = 'laugh at somebody', 'make a fool'. Two functional phenomena of the transitive resultatives play a significant role in sentence structure; firstly, the interaction of nominal phrases with the verb phrase, and secondly, the various possible constructions of the sentence with a transitive resultative compound verb.

The following sentence and phrase constructions with the transitive (or transitive-like) resultative compounds are available (Chao 1968:473-475):

– V-R O

The simplest way a resultative compound can take an object is the common for Modern Chinese verb-object order, for which both, the transitive [15] and transitive-like [16] ($S_1 V_1 R O$) interpretation is true, as for:

- [15] 哭壞了身體
kūhuài le shēntǐ
 cry harmful PART body
 To cry until one harms oneself;

- [16] 吃飽了飯
chībǎo le fàn
 eat full PART meal
 To eat a meal until one is full; [To eat a meal and be satisfied;]

The V-R O constructions given above, representing the compound with an adjective as the resultative complement, should be clearly distinguished from the V-R_{VO} constructions ($S_1 V_{IT(VT.O)}$). Here there is a resultative construction with a complement, which is itself a verb-object construction, involving obviously a transitive verb, as in:

- [17] 碰流血了
pèng liúxuè le
 run into shed blood PART
 To knock against and shed blood;

- [18] 碰出血了
pèng chūxuè le
 run into bleed PART
 To knock against and bleed;

There are no resultatives of a type that involves adjectives as a component of VO since the adjectival predicate does not take an object. This means that the complement phrase of $V_1 - V_2O$ has verbs in the V_1 and V_2 positions. Thus the construction of the adjective complement resultative verbs with an object does not overlap with $V_1 - V_2O$ since it is evidently a verb, not a predicative adjective, that forms the verb-object construction. An adjective, which precedes a noun, functions attributively not predicatively. However some VO compounds appear to be an adjective. This is the case when the compound loses its literal meaning.

- [19] 學到家了
xué dàojiā le
 study perfect PART
 To study until one reaches perfection.

- VO VR

The adjective complement verbs might be preceded by a V_1O construction, where V_1 is a transitive verb associated with its object. In such a sentence sequence the frequent bound forms of both VO and VR remain undivided, as in [20] ($S_1 V_T O V_T R$). The verb of action is repeated, as it first goes with the object then with the complement. For some VO VR constructions, the bound forms and the transitive resultative compound are possible ($S_1 V_T O/S_2 V_T R > S_1 V_T R O/S_2$ [21] or $S_1 V_T O V_T R > S_1 V_T R O$ [22]).

- [20] 嘗一口就嘗飽了
cháng yì kǒu jiù chángbǎo le
 taste a bite taste full PART
 To try a mouthful and become full;

- [21] 掃地掃乾淨了
sǎo dì sǎogānjìng le
 sweep floor sweep clean PART
 To sweep the floor clean;

- [22] 吃飯吃飽了
chī fàn chībǎo le
 eat rise eat full PART
 To eat a meal and become full; [To eat a meal and be satisfied;]

The VO VR sequence appears with the complement represented by either by a verb, as in: 讀書讀完了 *dúshū dúwán le*, or an adjective, as in [20].

The object moving BA construction provides another possibility, namely that the verb and the complement, represented also by an adjective, remain one unit. (S_1 BA O/ S_2 V_TR > S_1 V_TR O/ S_2)

- [23] 把地板掃乾淨了
bǎ dìbǎn sǎogānjìng le
 OM floor sweep clean PART
 To sweep the floor clean.

- V-O R

In contrast to the object belonging to the V-R construction as a whole, there might occur a verb-object unit in the first position as V_1 . In such a construction a verb is preceding the object and governing it. The object seems to be incorporated, unless the construction does not take the directionals as the complement, where the verbs of displacement take any object. Thus the resultative complement following the VO construction is not a complement to the verb itself but belongs to the VO construction as a whole (S_1 V_TOR > S_1 V_(VT-O)R). For most V-O R examples the resultative complement is a complement of degree expressed by an adjective, and thus, in fact, should be regarded as intransitive. Moreover, many of them are lexicalized forms:

- [24] 擔心死了
dānxīn sǐ le
 worry dead PART
 To worry to death;
- [25] 關心極了
guānxīn jí le
 be concerned about extremely PART
 To be concerned about to an extreme degree; [To be extremely concerned about;]
- [26] 傷心過分了
shāngxīn guòfēn le
 worry excessive PART
 To be extremely sad;

- [27] 這件是讓我傷心過分了。
zhè jiàn shì ràng wǒ shāngxīn guòfèn le
 this CL matter make me worry excessive PART
 This matter has been worrying me a lot.

When an adjective as the resultative complement means an extreme point, it is understood to be the highest degree.

2.2. VR_{ADJ.} as Intransitive Verb

An intransitive verb compounded with a resultative complement can become transitive. This is the case when an object of the compound as a whole is an embedded subject of the sentence for which an adjectival complement becomes a predicate. In such bisentential transformation the subjects of the two sentences differ. On the contrary the intransitive verb compounded with a resultative complement remains intransitive when the intransitive verb of action or process focuses on the subject. For the bisentential transformation the subject remains the same for the two sentences. This means that it is the doer who gains the new attribute as the result of an intransitive activity, process or state. However some activities appear to be described by an adjective as a complement, and they can be called resultative-like constructions e.g., 走快 *zǒukuài* 'walk' + 'fast' = 'walk fast'. Verbs of motion, natural reactions or physical behaviour, as well as extremes of activity and stative verbs tend to remain intransitive (S₁ V_{IT} R) e.g., 跑累 *pǎolèi* 'run' + 'tired' = 'run to become tired', 坐錯 *zuòcuò* 'sit' + 'wrong' = 'sit in the wrong place, take the wrong bus', 餓病 *èbìng* 'hungry' + 'sick' = 'be so hungry as to get sick'.

- [28] 他餓病了。
tā èbìng le
 he hungry sick PART
 He became sick as a result of suffering hunger.
- [29] 他走累了。
tā zǒulèi le
 he walk tired PART
 He became tired as a result of walking.
- [30] 他喝醉了。
tā hēzùi le
 he drink get drunk PART
 He got drunk as a result of drinking.

The intransitive resultative verb compounds with adjectives as the complement, form sentences in which either the relation between the subject and the

components of the compound or the components of the compound themselves are direct. The intransitive verb of action / process / state, its adjectival complement, and the compound as a whole possess only one valency. Any other nominal phrase apart from the subject extends the meaning beyond the basic message.

Summary

I have realised that Adjective Complement Resultative Verbs constitute a distinctive subclass of the completive verb compounds, i.e. verbs compounded with a complement acting as the complex predicates. In this paper I have presented the semantic-syntactic correlation of resultative complement compounds with the special focus on Adjective as Complement to transitive / intransitive verbs. Since transitivity / intransitivity of those compounds is irregular, both grammar structure and semantics play an important role in the new approach to the understanding of patterns of information of the resultatives in Modern Chinese. I have benefited from numerous sources of traditional and formal grammar, i.e. syntactic and semantic functions of grammatical structure, which provided me with the theory for this analysis. This study has aimed to reveal the transitivity / intransitivity of compounds with Adjectives as complements.

Abbreviations

CL	classifier, e.g. 個 <i>gè</i> , 本 <i>běn</i> , 件 <i>jiàn</i>
IT	intransitive
NEG	negation 不 <i>bù</i> , 沒 <i>méi</i>
O/obj	object
OM	object movement marker 把 <i>bǎ</i>
PART	structural particle (perfective, modal, progressive, experiential) 了 <i>le</i> , 著 <i>zhe</i> , 呢 <i>ne</i> , 在 <i>zài</i> , 過 <i>guo</i>
PASS	passive marker 被 <i>bèi</i>
POSS/NOM	possessive/nominal/associative marker 的 <i>de</i>
R	resultative complement (verbal or adjectival)
S	subject
S ₁	matrix subject
S ₂	small clause subject
T	transitive
V ₁ V ₂	verbs in series
VO	verb-object contraction

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