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Syntactic-semantic Approach to Completive Verb Compounds in Modern Chinese and its Contribution to Learning Process

Abstract

The correlation of semantics and syntax of the ‘verb-complement constructions’ in Chinese explains structures which do not have their counterpart in other languages known to the student. The ‘verb-complement constructions’ (also referred to as completive verb compounds) is a grammatical phenomenon in Modern Mandarin Chinese without any close parallels in other languages. Process of learning the compounds, which form a distinct class of compounds, depends on comprehension of semantic-syntactic relation in the lexemes. In the course of linguistic studies on Chinese the class of complement in the postverbal position obtained a grammatical description. Recently semantic analysis has significantly contributed to the understanding of the directional and resultative compounds’ structure. This paper is devoted to the presentation of subclasses of the completive verb compounds along with the new approach to the adjective as a complement.

Learning Chinese is, undoubtedly, a challenge not only for the students but also for those who teach them. The mother tongue structures firmly established in the mind become the barrier, which has to be overcome in order to improve the command of Chinese language and the understanding of Chinese culture. The correlation of semantics and syntax in Chinese is an important approach especially to those structures which do not have their counterpart in already spoken languages.

Completive compounds

This paper explores verb-resultative complement compounds. Compound verbs in Chinese, as other compounds, are not much the same regarding semantics. Nor are they **structurally** homogeneous. Therefore the term ‘compound’ is ambiguous. Being a combination of two or more free forms, it is often used in a wider sense in the Chinese linguistic tradition and refers to any combination of morphemes, i.e. independent root words, composed according to their semantic information and syntactic relation, apart from root + affix (Chao 1968:359–360, Packard 2000:90). The traditional terms ‘**resultative verb compound**’ (Thompson 1973) or ‘**verb-complement constructions**’ (Zhu 1982) refer to a grammatical phenomenon in Modern Mandarin Chinese without close parallels in English, or other Indo-European languages. Therefore, most Western-inspired grammars of Chinese have treated that class scarcely and unsatisfactorily.

A sequence of two verbs V_1 - V_2 , with one immediately following the other, is a widespread phenomenon in Mandarin Chinese. The term ‘verb’ in Chinese grammar is used both for verbs in a narrow sense and for adjectives. Chao Yuen Ren (1968:663) gives the basic definition of a verb as a word “which can be modified by the negative 不 *bù* ‘not’ or 沒 *méi* ‘have not or did not’ and which can serve as the predicate or the center of a predicative expression”. Basically both elements in a resultative verb are predicative. In fact, this construction, when indicating result in Mandarin Chinese, proves to be an extremely complicated matter. Many distinct syntactic behaviours of several classes in the V-V construction would be inexplicable if their underlying representations were not taken into consideration. That large and differentiated class of compound verbs with the second verbal element V_2 following the verb V_1 (action verb, action-process verb, rarely process verb) and being evidently a complement to the verb, as in 放下 *fàngxià* ‘put’ + ‘direction down’ = ‘to put down’, 吃飽 *chībǎo* ‘eat’ + ‘full’ = ‘to eat enough’, 掃乾淨 *sǎogānjìng* ‘sweep’ + ‘clean’ = ‘sweep with the result of clean’, 壓沉 *yāchén* ‘press’ + ‘sink’ = ‘to sink under the heavy pressure’, is very common in Chinese. This class of **completive compounds**, often called the **resultatives**, contains many structurally alike but semantically diverse subclasses. It seems that Edward McDonald’s reinterpretation of resultative verbs is an important contribution to the structural analysis and systemic description of verb compounds. The term ‘resultative’ has long been used ambiguously, commonly referring not only to a large class of compounds that may be said to express resultative meanings, but also to a wider and heterogeneous class of compounds which express directional meanings. Therefore, a new term for the class as a whole, based on the complement function of the second element, is suggested by McDonald (1994). He includes in the term ‘**completive verb compounds**’ the two major subclasses, i.e. ‘directionals’ and ‘resultatives’. Lu John H-T. (1977:277–278) also argues against the traditional way of defining resultative verbs. Evidence has been presented to prove that among the so-called resultative verbs there are actually **many different subclasses of V-V constructions**. Each of them possesses a specific semantic implication due to the second element in the construction. Hence, some linguists reserve ‘resultative’ to those

verb compounds of which the complement indicates the result of the activity, ‘completing’¹ or ‘filling out’ the meaning of the main verb (McDonald 1994:318,321). In such constructions, the first verb V₁ plays the main role in the sequence and the second one V₂ a complement role; e.g. 洗乾淨 *xǐgānjìng* ‘wash’ + ‘clean’ = ‘wash-clean’;

[1] 他洗乾淨了衣服。

tā xǐgānjìng le yīfu

he wash clean PART clothes

He washed the clothes clean. (Lu 1977:276–277)

Complement Theory

The definition of **complement**, in Chinese 補語 *bǔyǔ*, given by O’Grady and Dobrovolsky in *Contemporary Linguistic Analysis* (1992:161) is “the element or elements for which a head is subcategorized and which provides information about entities and locations whose existence is implied by the meaning of the heads, for example, the meaning of ‘eat’ implies an object that is eaten, the meaning of ‘in’ implies a location.” That is the concept of the complement class represented by many grammarians, especially in early studies of modern Chinese grammar. It gathers together into one syntactic category both an object and a complement, which are presently often considered syntactically quite different classes, although possessing some common features.

In the short history of research on modern Chinese grammar, the only common feature of different structures falling to the complement class is their postverbal position. Although Peter Kupfer clearly distinguishes the complement structures from the object, he also suggests the term ‘extended postverbal category’ instead of 賓語 *bīnyǔ* (object) and three 補語 *bǔyǔ* (complement) classes, which would allow to treat them all as a single syntactic category (Kupfer 1995:85–86, 94). In the tradition of Chinese grammar, the complement is recognised as the heterogeneous class and causes problems in grammatical description.

In *Guoyuxue*, Luo Zaojin (1990) considers a verb and indicated object (賓語 *bīnyǔ*) to be mutual ‘partners’. As for the complement (補語 *bǔyǔ*), supplementary information to a verb or a stative verb in the first position of the predicate makes their relation strong enough to consider the complement to be inherent in a predicate. The sentence with the predicate without 補語 *bǔyǔ* would be incomplete (Luo 1990:221–228).

The necessity to distinguish between object and complement, the post-centre constituents which behave quite differently in verbal expression, has been acknowledged by many Chinese linguists. In *Essential Grammar for Modern Chinese*, Helen T. Lin emphasises the function of the complement which is “to provide information in addition

¹ “Complete”: etymologically connected to “complement” – Latin “complere”, Chinese 補充 *bǔchōng*. It must be made clear that for the so-called “completed” aspect with 了 *le* the term “perfective” is used (McDonald 1994:321).

to that already disclosed by the verb” (Lin 1984:13). Among the kinds of complements she considers, there are particular postverbal simple or complex elements, such as:

- complement of degree or manner of action introduced by 得 *de* marker;
 - [2] 來得(很)早。
lái de (hěnn) zǎo
 come POT/DEG (very) early
 come very early
- verbal expression with 去 *qù* / 來 *lái* as a complement in the series of verbs in a bound form;
 - [3] 想起來
xiǎngqǐlái
 think up come
 remember, recall
- simple or complex directional ending; (expressing speaker’s judgement)
 - [4] 帶來 (simple directional complement)
dàilái
 carry/bring come
 bring
 - [5] 走出來 (complex directional complement)
zǒuchūlái
 walk out come
 come out of
- resultative complement both actual and potential (Lin 1984:219–239, Kupfer 1995:89–90).
 - [6] 看見 (resultative)
kànjiàn
 look see
 see/saw
 - [7] 回答對 (resultative)
huídáduì
 answer correct
 answered correctly
 - [8] 看得懂 (potential)
kàn de dǒng
 look POT/DEG understand
 can understand

It is not the aim of this paper to discuss either terminological or categorial problems concerning complement theory. It aims to depict how complex the notion of complement is in Chinese grammar. In studies on Chinese grammar, complement class is usually treated syntactically and not morphologically (Kupfer 1995:91). Correlated with semantic approach, the resultative compounds theory seems to be fundamental for teaching such a distinctive construct as verb compounds. Therefore, it is essential to the resultative

complement compounds studies to focus more precisely on the resultative complement, in the traditional sense of the notion.

Although in the complement theory, 結果補語 *jiéguǒ bǔyǔ*, 趨向補語 *qūxiàng bǔyǔ* and 可能補語 *kěnéng bǔyǔ*, i.e. the resultative, directional and potential complement respectively, are separated into parallel complement classes, they are recognised by some linguists as complements of one resultative class dividing into subclasses, here referred to as **completive compounds**.

Syntax and semantics

Unlike **semantic** classification, **syntactic** classification is restricted by limited syntactic environment which is obvious in the surface structure. There is a sequence of constituents in the sentences. But classifying verbs only according to their syntactic criteria does not release all the information embodied in them. Some semantically close to each other verbs will not necessarily show it up in their syntactic properties, such as the transitive verb 認識 *rènshi* 'know' and an intransitive verb 熟 *shóu* 'familiar' (both modifiable by the degree adverb 不太 *bùtài* 'not very' and excluded from the progressive aspect) (Teng 1974:84). The syntactically significant division into intransitive and transitive verbs is a starting-point to the further classification.

Semantic classification may be infinite. The attempt of classifying verbs leads to establishing as many categories as there are verbs. The more precise meaning of a verb decides which class it is to be assigned to, and this results in a more complex network of cross-membership. McDonald (1994) presents a range of collocations of the two verbs V_1V_2 on the basis of the semantic grouping of both verbs and postverbs. As to verbs V_1 in the first position, the following process types can be distinguished:

- material (process of action or event);
- ascriptive (process ascribes certain features to participant);
- mental (process of perception, reaction and cognition);
- verbal (process of saying);
- relational (process signifies a relationship between two participants) (McDonald 1994:345).

Teng Shou-hsin's (1975) approach to classification cuts across all the labels of verbs suggested by linguists. At the highest level of division of semantic units he lists Action, State and Process. Although these categories are based on semantic information, they have, in Argument Structure, well justified syntactic connotations.

Studies on subclasses of the completive verb compounds

Chao (1968:441–446), supporting the structuralist school, treats the verb-complement compounds purely on a formal basis. He distinguishes 'phase complement' of an action

indicated by the first verb, ‘resultative complement’ and ‘directional complement’, which is apparently semantically oriented (C h a o 1968:446–472). By so doing, he does not simply derive transformationally the potential mode by inserting 得 *de*/不 *bù* marker but forms the classes of potential complements.

Anne Hashimoto (1965) was the first linguist who applied the transformational approach to the analysis of completive verb compounds. The analysed sentences present her explanation of the irregular syntactic behaviour of the two different types of the resultatives, exemplified by 吃完 *chīwán* ‘eat-finish’ and 吃飽 *chībǎo* ‘eat-full’, and that was indeed no small contribution at the time. She refers to the co-reference condition in the deep structure.

She provides the following examples:

[9] 他吃完了飯。

tā chīwán le fàn

he eat finish PART rice

He ate the rice to the extent that the rice was finished.

[10] 他吃飽了飯。

tā chībǎo le fàn

he eat full PART rice

He ate the rice to the extent that he was full.

In these, only the sentence [9] can have the object moved in the BA (indicating the SOV sequence in the sentence) and BEI constructions (indicating a passive construction):

[11] 他把飯吃完了。

tā bǎ fàn chīwán le

he OM rice eat finish PART

He ate the rice to the extent that the rice was finished.

[12] 飯被他吃完了。

fàn bèi tā chīwán le

rice PASS he eat finish PART

The rice was finished by him.

Hashimoto subjects the BA and BEI transformations to the relation between complex predicate and agent/patient. She suggests that when the **embedded subject** is identical to the **matrix subject**, both transformations are unacceptable. In the example [9], 飯 *fàn* is the embedded subject in [9], and is not identical to the matrix subject.

Lu (1973b,1977:278) focuses rather on the implication of the complement with its function and stresses result, achievement, completion and direction as the specific information widening the meaning of the activity.

[13] 洗乾淨

xǐgānjìng (Result)

wash clean

washed clean. (something became clean as a result of washing it)

[14] 跑出去

pǎochūqù (Direction)

run go out

ran out (of some place in a direction away from the speaker)

[15] 買到

mǎidào (Achievement)

buy reach

buy / bought

[16] 打完 (球)

dǎwán (qiú) (Completion)

play finish ball

finished playing the ball game (play the ball game to its completion)

The connotation suggested by complementing V_2 has been previously largely neglected in the analysis of the V-V construction. Verb-Complement compounds in the given examples, traditionally combined into one class on the basis of the function of the second verb in the construction, possess the very individual implications, which allow to bring to the focus the semantic information enclosed in them. By so doing, more specific subcategories can be distinguished. Some resultative compounds would normally be excluded from the resultative class because of syntactic criteria (e.g. no potential derivation, as 餓病 *èbìng* ‘hungry-sick’ (sick as a result of suffering hunger), 病死 *bìngsǐ* ‘sick-die’ (die as a result of sickness), 走累 *zǒulèi* ‘walk-tired’ (become tired as a result of walking). The connotation of V_2 shows an important role of semantics and proves the compounds to be clear resultative constructions.

Lu (1977:281–305) discusses the resultative verb class against the directional verb class. They differ by distinctive syntactic behaviour, correlating respectively with ‘cause-result’ and ‘manner-direction’ relations of the two elements in the compound. Since there are compounds which in certain situations reveal both resultative and directional implications, he suggests one more subclass of V-V construction related to the resultatives and the directionals, viz.

- resultative verb subclass, complemented by a verb or an adjective;
- directional verb subclass, including ‘non-literal’ directionals as well as ‘literal’ directionals with vectorial postverbs i.e. 開 *kāi* ‘away’, 出 *chū* ‘exit’, orientational postverbs, i.e. 來 *lái* ‘come’ and vectorial-orientational postverbs, i.e. 出來 *chūlái* ‘out’ + ‘towards the speaker’ = ‘out (towards the speaker)’;
- ambiguous case of resultative and directional verb subclass (Lu 1977).

Here, a resultative verb is defined in terms of elements involved in the construction as well as their function in a sentence. Lu also points to the resultatives’ and directionals’ presuppositions. The sentences with a directional verb share the same presupposition, i.e. manner and direction. The object or the person is moving or induces something moving in some manner toward some direction. The information ‘how’ or ‘what direction’ is omitted and the presupposition of the sentence is simple. On the contrary, that is obviously not the case in the resultative verb construction, which presupposes the nonexistence of the result before the existence of the reason.

This implies that a **directional verb is basically different from a resultative verb**, because the complement V_2 of a directional construction conveys the semantic implication of ‘direction’ while the complement V_2 of a resultative verb conveys the semantic implication of ‘result’. Only the sentences with resultative verbs are semantically related to the two sets of sentences transformed with 才 *cái* ‘then’ and 是因為 *shì yīnwèi* ‘because’, **implying that any reason–result relation** is unacceptable for the sentences with directional verbs.

- [17] 妹妹把客人哭跑了。

mèimei bǎ kèrén kūpǎo le

younger sister OM guest cry run PART

The guest left as a result of the younger sister’s crying.

- [18] 妹妹哭了客人才跑的。

mèimei kū le kèrén cái pǎo de.

younger sister cry PART guest until then run POSS/NOM

The guest didn’t leave until the younger sister cried.

- [19] 客人跑了是因為妹妹哭的緣故。

kèrén pǎo le shì yīnwèi mèimei kū de yuángù.

guest run PART is because younger sister cry POSS/NOM reason

The reason that the guest left is that the younger sister cried. (L u 1977:286)

The other subclass involves the idiomatization of a verb with a certain dual-direction construction, as: 忙下去 *máng xiàqù* ‘busy’ + ‘keep on’, 病下去 *bìng xiàqù* ‘sick’ + ‘keep on’ 跑下去 *pǎo xiàqù* ‘run’ + ‘keep on’. The dual-direction construction 下去 *xiàqù* ‘go down’ has apparently lost its ‘directional’ meaning here due to idiomatization. Almost any verb can occur now along with 下去 *xiàqù*. The question 到哪兒去 *dào nǎr qù* ‘where go’ referring to direction cannot be applied to it any more.

Consequently, the conclusion becomes clear that the V_1V_2 constructions with the dual-directional V_2 , which became lexicalized, are neither directionals, because the dual-directional complement V_2 there no longer carries the implication of ‘direction’, nor can they be called resultatives since they do not imply a cause-result relationship (L u 1977).

The same set of postverb forms applies to the non-literal directionals and to the literal directionals. A large number of directionals do not denote movement and direction in physical space, although their V_1V_2 construction possesses a directional verb as a complement, e.g.: 醒過來 *xǐngguòlái* ‘wake’ + ‘across’ ‘come’ = ‘wake up’, 說出來 *shuōchūlái* ‘speak’ + ‘out’ + ‘come’ = ‘speak out’. Therefore, they might be called ‘**non-literal**’ directionals (McDonald 1994:329). They are distinguished from the literal directionals in several ways (McDonald 1994:329-230, Cartier 1972):

- The verb V_1 does not convey meaning of motion but belongs to the semantic group of verbal verbs, expressing the process of saying (e.g. 騙 *piàn* ‘cheat, lie’), mental

verbs representing the process of perception, reaction and cognition (e.g. 想 *xiǎng* 'think'), and so on.

- The verb-postverb combination is not the sum of their respective V_1 and V_2 meanings but must be interpreted as a whole, e.g. 想出來 *xiǎngchūlái* 'think' + 'out' + 'towards-to' = 'think up (an idea)'. It is related to restricted substitutability. The only possible alternative combination is 想出 *xiǎngchū* 'think' + 'out' = 'think up', while, for example, 想出去 *xiǎngchūqù* 'think' + 'out' + 'away' can never occur. Unlike the literal directionals, vectorial and orientational postverbs are not widely applicable to the verb in non-literal directionals.
- Taking into account the judgment of literalness of the directional V_1 - V_2 construction, the syntactic potential (e.g. the ability to occur separately) which it shares with the literal directionals, gradually declines until some compounds are permanently "frozen" in one form.

The directionals subclass contains a wide range of examples, which are very difficult to bring under a single classification. Teng considers different types of 'displacement' to be significant for the classification of non-literal directionals (Cartier 1972, Teng 1977, McDonald 1994:330). On the contrary, **literal directionals**, e.g. 走出來 *zǒuchūlái* 'walk' + 'enter' + 'come' = 'out' 'come' 'come out of the place towards speaker' 進去 *jìnqù* 'go in (in a direction away from the speaker)', 進來 *jìnlái* 'move' + 'up' + 'go' = 'go in' (in the direction to the speaker, 搬上去 *bānshàngqù* 'move-go up' (in the direction away from the speaker) indicate direction in a physical space.

There are compounds where the directional verb construction and the resultative verb construction can hardly be distinguished from each other. For a simple sentence, both the presupposition of the result caused by the first action and the question referring to the place/manner are applicable, as in:

[20] 他把客人請上去了。

tā bǎ kèren qǐng shàngqù le

he OM guest invite go up PART

He invited the guest to go up and the guest did.

This sentence can be transformed into the other two sentences so as to be qualified as a resultative:

[21] 他請了客人客人才上去的。

tā qǐng le kèren kèren cái shàngqù de

he invite PART guest guest until then go up POSS/NOM

The guest didn't go up until he invited him to.

[22] 客人上去了是因為他請的緣故。

kèren shàngqù le shì yīnwèi tā qǐng de yuángù

guest go up PART is because he invite POSS/NOM reason

The reason that the guest went up is that he invited him to. (Lu 1977:300)

However, the corresponding question, which proves the compound can be qualified as a directional can also be applied to it:

- [23] 他把客人請到哪兒去了。

tā bǎ kèrén qǐng dào nǎr qù le

he OM guest invite to where go PART

Where did he invite the guest to? (L u 1977:300)

Since both, the sentences and the question are grammatically correct, Lu regards such **an ambiguous case** of V_1 - V_2 construction as **simultaneously a resultative and directional compound**. The bisentential source of the resultative compound indicates one action as the result of the other. On the contrary, directional complement is not predicative (L u 1977:301).

The interpretation of deep grammatical relation has contributed significantly to the understanding of resultative compounds. It provides evidence for a **bisentential** source of resultative verbs. Only the deep structure for resultative verb sentences provides a bisentential justification of irregular syntactic behaviour. The two clauses joined with 才 *cái* and 是因為 *shì yīnwèi* are semantically related to the resultative verb, where one indicates the cause and the other the result. Thus such a sentence shares the same presupposition as the one with a resultative verb, i.e. nonexistence of the state before action. The clauses derived from the resultative sentences display the cause and the cause-and-reason interrelation in compounds.

- [24] 他拉了門，門才開的。

tā lā le mén mén cái kāi de

he pull PART door, door until then open POSS/NOM

The door didn't open until he pulled it.

- [25] 他喝了酒，(他) 才醉了。

tā hē le jiǔ (tā) cái zuì le

he drink PART wine (he) until then get drunk PART

He didn't get drunk until he drank wine.

- [26] 門開了是因為他拉的緣故。

mén kāi le shì yīnwèi tā lā de yuángù

door open PART is because he pull POSS/NOM reason

The reason that the door opened is that he pulled it.

- [27] 他醉了是因為(他) 喝酒的緣故。

tā zuì le shì yīnwèi (tā) hē jiǔ de yuángù

he get drunk PART is because (he) drink wine POSS/NOM reason

The reason that he got drunk is that he drank wine.

As for the compounds 拉開 *lākāi* and 喝醉 *hēzuì*, the presupposition of nonexistence of the state before action confirms that they are resultative compounds. The door was closed. The door became open [24, 26]. He was not drunk. He got drunk [25, 27] (L u 1977:286–287).

The new approach to the completive compounds evolved gradually from lexical, through syntactic and semantic, to correlated semantic-syntactic studies. It emphasizes collocation of action or event and the result it enforces on something or somebody. State and Process semantic functions within the scope of predicates proves the very basic

message implied in adjectives, which is that their attributes are either inherent or gained/to be gained, or in a process of being obtained. I have realised that Adjective Complement Resultative Verbs themselves not only constitute a distinctive subclass, which has not yet received respectful attention, but they are also diverse in their semantic function. The argument theory, which most precisely reflects semantics and syntax, allows to focus on the adjective which complements verbs, in order to determine its attributive functions in the sentence.

Attributive Functions of Adjectives as Complement

Although adjectives in Chinese can be predicative, they are analysed here as the complement to the predicate and thus extending the verb's meaning. As such, the Adjective Resultative Complement meets the non-nominal valency of the verb potentially open to resultative or resultative-like information in terms of the predicative-argument structure.

Semantic analysis contributes to the understanding of Adjective Complements as it refers to either one of the elements of a sentence while the already well-founded deep structure provides bisentential source for result-implying resultatives but not for, what I call, resultive-like compounds. The latter significantly contrast with the 'result' notion since no message regarding consequences is implied in them.

Thus the conclusion can be drawn that adjectives which can be treated essentially as the argument to the verb, fall into three basic attributive functions, viz. attributive function to Agent [28], Patient [29] and Event [30]. The first two convey static description, perfective aspect or evaluation, whereas the attribute of event refers to the manner of action/process. The adjectives attributing Agent or Patient take any one of them as their argument in bisentential rephrasing, which is impossible for manner function resultative-like compounds, which do not find bisentential counterparts (Zajdler 2005).

- [28] 生氣就氣飽了，那兒還吃得下飯。

shēngqì jiù qìbǎo le nǎr hái chī de xià fàn

get angry just anger full, how come still can eat POT/DEG down food

I've got angry enough (I'm extremely angry). How can I still manage to eat anything!

- [29] 她大概是因為和愛人吵架氣病的。

tā dàgài shì yīnwéi hé àiren chǎojià qìbìng de

she probably be because with husband argued get angry sick POSS/NOM

She got so angry she became sick because she argued with her lover.

- [30] 看好大小再買，別買錯了。

kàn hǎo dàxiǎo zài mǎi, bié mǎi cuò le

Look good size then buy don't buy wrong PART

Have a good look at the size, then buy. Don't buy wrongly.

However, one more specific function of adjectives as complements can be distinguished. When an adjective complements the locative verb, it concerns in most cases the Patient

which undergoes dislocation but only indirectly, since it evaluates or demands the specific position of something that is or should be in. Consequently it refers to the verb V_1 in the first position not in the terms of manner, but rather in terms of expectation directed to the location of the something (Zajdler 2005).

[31] 把水龍頭安矮些，孩子們就可以自己取接水了。

bǎ shuǐ lóngtóu ān ǎi xiě hái zimen jiù kěyǐ zìjǐ qǔ jiē shuǐ le

MO water pipe instal low children just can themselves go get water PART

Place the faucet lower. The children can get water themselves.

Since the high level semantic selectional features of verbs, viz. Action, State and Process are of great importance in the argument theory, they determine the adjectives' syntactic and semantic correlation which here, due to function and meaning, is concluded to be the attributive function within the resultative compound.

The source of transitivity of the resultative compound consisting of the two intransitive verbs is well justified by Rint Sybesma (1999) in the deep structure, where each of the two nominals in the sentence is a subject to a different predicate in the compound. However, one of the predicates, although they are both intransitive, can potentially cause an event, expressed by the intransitive verb. Thus, the subject undergoing a change is Patient to the transitive compound verb, which is itself an Action-Process Verb. Therefore the transitive compound as the whole should be treated as a lexeme (Zajdler 2005).

However, not many intransitive verbs combine to form a transitive compound. Since all adjectives, in terms of predicates, are intransitive, a combination of two intransitives refers to adjective complementing an Action verb only.

Contribution to learning process

This paper has attempted to reveal the functions of resultative and resultative-like compounds in the traditional terms of that class, but now more often referred to as completive verb compounds.

The adults understand the relation of reason and its consequence as a natural process. On the contrary, it is not so obvious when confronted with language structures where the unique representation encloses syntax and semantic units in a lexeme. The process of learning the completive verb compounds in Chinese demands both firm syntactic structures of the simple clause and reach vocabulary, especially adjectives and verbs, including motion verbs and directionals. The compound, formally simple in the surface structure, reveals its irregular syntactic-semantic relation in the deep structure. Therefore, only when one is familiar with diversity and mutual interdependence of the verb and its complement, can one easily move between the sentence with the completive compound and its counterparts in simple clauses where they are possible.

The understanding of the crucial linking between the deep structure and the semantic interpretation can immensely contribute to the analysis of teaching and learning process. Yet, the question of the sequence in obtaining grammar structures and high level semantic

features arises. The structure of a simple Chinese clause, with verbs and adjectives as predicates, seems to be substantial in learning the diverse class of resultative compounds. The bisentential source of the resultatives and more specific attributive functions of adjectives as complements demand comprehension of Modern Chinese on the level of simple clauses. The manner function in resultative-like compounds, which do not find bisentential counterparts can be obtained only when treated essentially as the argument to the verb. The directionals, whether lexicalized or not, first of all require understanding of semantic units in vectorial and orientational system.

Process of learning Chinese resultative verbs, aside from treating the compound as the unit, seems to be directly associated with comprehension of semantic-syntactic approach to that distinct class of the compound verbs in Modern Chinese. A perfect classification of verbs, which would be able to resolve all the systemic questions concerning verbs and the patterns in different grammar environments and psychosocial conditions, does not exist. It is already widely accepted that neither syntactic nor semantic classification alone can promote explanation of verbs and their relation to other constituents in a compound, phrase or sentence. Already developed understanding of functions of the directional, resultative and resultative-like complement as the basis of syntactic environment and semantic units seems to be of great importance for the advanced learners of Chinese language.

Research has been carried out on this unique and large class of compounds, firstly because of its complex morphological structure. In the course of time, syntactic and semantic approaches to the study of the diverse subcategories came to be seen as highly significant for the research. The paper aimed to correlate syntactic-semantic studies as the mean of learning process of completive compounds in Modern Chinese, traditionally called resultatives.

Abbreviations

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>
POT/DEG	potential/degree marker 得 <i>de</i>
SOV	Subject Object Verb sequence
V, V ₁ , V ₂	verb

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