

THE SYNTAX OF EVENT STRUCTURE IN CHINESE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

LINGUISTICS

MAY 2001

By

Jung-hsing Chang

Dissertation Committee:

William O'Grady, Chairperson
Byron W. Bender
Yi-Leng Chen
Roderick A. Jacobs
Ying-che Li

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 The background of eventuality	3
1.2.1 Eventuality classes.....	3
1.2.2 Aspectual shift.....	7
1.2.3 Event structure and argument assignment	10
1.3 The main issues of the dissertation	15
1.3.1 The historical background of RVCs in Chinese.....	15
1.3.2 RVCs and their relevant syntactic constructions	20
1.3.3 Grammatical contrasts between English and Chinese	24
1.4 Organization of the dissertation	29
Chapter 2 EVENT STRUCTURE IN ENGLISH	31
2.1 Introduction.....	31
2.2 Syntactic properties of eventuality classes.....	33
2.2.1 Activities.....	33
2.2.2 States	35
2.2.3 Achievements.....	37
2.2.4 Accomplishments.....	40
2.2.5 Summary	44
2.3 Theoretical framework.....	47
2.3.1 Situational complex of eventuality	47
2.3.2 Event-component Fusion and Event Projection.....	51
2.4 An integrated account	59
2.4.1 Syntactic phenomena and Event Projection.....	59
2.4.2 Interpretations of <i>almost</i> -adverbials.....	60
2.4.3 Interpretations of temporal adverbials	67
2.4.3.1 Frame adverbials.....	67
2.4.3.2 Durative adverbials	73
2.4.4 Interpretations associated with "keep V-ing".....	76
2.5 Concluding remarks	77
Chapter 3 EVENTUALITIES AND GRAMMAR IN CHINESE	80
3.1 Introduction.....	80
3.2 Aspect marker <i>le</i> and its aspectual properties.....	81

3.2.1	<i>Le</i> as an aspectual focus marker.....	81
3.2.2	Aspect marker <i>le</i> and state eventualities	88
3.2.2.1	Stage-level and individual-level states.....	88
3.2.2.2	<i>Slightly</i> - and <i>almost</i> -adverbial tests	92
3.2.2.3	State eventualities and their aspectual properties	95
3.2.3	Summary	101
3.3	Syntactic properties of different eventualities in Chinese	102
3.3.1	Activities	102
3.3.2	States	108
3.3.3	Accomplishments.....	111
3.3.4	Achievements.....	119
3.3.5	Summary	121
3.4	Resultative verb constructions in English and Chinese	122
3.4.1	Syntactic properties of resultative verb constructions	122
3.4.2	A contrastive account.....	133
3.4.2.1	Event Projection and the syntactic properties associated with it ..	133
3.4.2.2	Interpretations of <i>almost</i> - and <i>in</i> -adverbials	134
3.4.3	Interpretations associated with different adverbials.....	137
3.4.4	Summary	138
3.5	Concluding remarks	139
Chapter 4	THE RELATION OF GRAMMAR TO EVENT STRUCTURE	142
4.1	Introduction.....	142
4.2	Linguistic properties of RVCs, SVCs, and DVCs in Chinese	151
4.2.1	Grammatical phenomena associated with EP and ECF	151
4.2.2	Grammatical phenomena associated with temporal structure.....	159
4.2.3	Summary	169
4.3	An account for the development of Chinese RVCs	171
4.3.1	The relation between form and meaning.....	171
4.3.2	Grammaticalization of RVCs in Chinese.....	178
4.3.3	Summary	186
4.4	Concluding remarks	187
Chapter 5	EVENT STRUCTURE AND ARGUMENT LINKING.....	190
5.1	Introduction.....	190
5.2	Chinese RVCs and their relevant syntactic constructions	191
5.2.1	Both V_1 and V_2 are intransitive verbs	193
5.2.2	V_1 is a transitive verb while V_2 is an intransitive verb	197
5.2.3	RVCs with ambiguous interpretations	203
5.2.4	Summary	205
5.3	Linking theoretical framework.....	207
5.3.1	Argument linking and thematic roles.....	207
5.3.2	Representation of event structure.....	213
5.3.3	Event roles.....	217
5.3.4	Argument linking and RVCs in Chinese.....	221

5.3.4.1 Both V_1 and V_2 are intransitives	228
5.3.4.2 V_1 is a transitive whereas V_2 is an intransitive	231
5.3.4.3 Passivization of RVCs in Chinese	237
5.3.4.4 RVCs with ambiguous interpretations	242
5.4 Concluding remarks	247
Chapter 6 CONCLUSION	249
REFERENCES	257

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
2.1 The syntactic properties of the four eventuality classes	44
2.2 The semantic properties of the four eventuality classes	45
3.1 Aspectual properties of stage-level and individual-level states.....	101
3.2 Linguistic properties of activity eventualities in Chinese.....	108
3.3 Linguistic properties of state eventualities in Chinese.....	111
3.4 Syntactic properties of RVCs in English and Chinese.....	133
3.5 Adverbial interpretations of English and Chinese RVCs.....	139
4.1 Linguistic properties of RVCs, SVCs, and DVCs	170
5.1 Different types of RVCs and syntactic constructions associated with them.....	205