Chapter 5

V-diao Compounds

After separately investigating post-verbal diao and its preceding verb, we now move our focus to their composition — V-diao compounds. The situation type and the argument structure of V-diao compounds are the two issues that interest us most, so we will deal with them in this chapter.

5.1 The Situation Type of V-diao compounds

We have shown that verbs of each situation type can co-occur with diao to form V-diao compounds, but we also declared that diao has the ability to offer an endpoint in terms of situation type. As a result, it is predictable the situation type of a V-diao compound would be a telic one. According to Smith (1997), there are two situation types having the telic feature — Accomplishments and Achievements. Which situation type V-diao compounds would be? Accomplishments, Achievements, or both? We will try to find the answer to this question in this section.

As we know, duration is the most prominent feature that distinguishes Accomplishments from Achievements. The former holds [+durative] feature, while the latter holds [-durative] feature. The first test we conduct to detect the situation type of V-diao compounds is preverbal time expression, which indicates the time it takes from the time when the action conveyed by the preceding verb is taken till the time when the endpoint conveyed by diao is reached.⁸ Accomplishments which comprise a process and an endpoint are undoubtedly compatible with preverbal time expression, yet Achievements which put stress on the endpoint are not.

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⁸ This term is borrowed from Kang (2001) which claims that it is equivalent to the English “in an hour.”
(44) a. Ta ti-diao wo shou li de qiang. (Semelfactive + diao)
   he kick-DIAO I hand in POSS gun
   ‘He kicked off the gun in my hand.’

   b.* Ta liang miaozhong ti-diao wo shou li de qiang.
   he two second kick-DIAO I hand in POSS gun

(45) a. Ta he-diao niunai. (Activity + diao)
   he drink-DIAO milk
   ‘He drank up the milk.’

   b. Ta (hua) liang fenzhong he-diao niunai.
   he spend two minute drink-DIAO milk
   ‘He drank up the milk in two minutes.’

(46) a. Tamen chai-diao fangzi. (Accomplishment + diao)
   they pull-DIAO house
   ‘They pulled down the house.’

   b. Tamen (hua) liang tian chai-diao fangzi.
   they spend two day pull-DIAO house
   ‘They pulled down the house in two days.’

(47) a. Ta si-diao le. (Achievement + diao)
   he die-DIAO LE
   ‘He has been dead.’

   b. * Ta liang xiaoshi si-diao.
   he two hour die-DIAO

(48) a. Chuanghu zang-diao le. (State + diao)
   window dirty-DIAO LE
   ‘The window became dirty.’
b. * Chuanghu liang tian zang-diao.
    window two day dirty-DIAO

From this test, it shows V-
    diao compounds may be Accomplishments or
Achievements. When diao goes with Activities and Accomplishments, the compounds
will be Accomplishments (see (45b) and (46b)); when diao goes with Semelfactives,
Achievements, and States, the compounds will be Achievements (see (44b), (47b),
and (48b)).

Smith (1997) proposes the status of Accomplishments can be validated by an
entailment: every perfective Accomplishment sentence entails an imperfective
sentence.

(45) c. Ta he-diao le niunai.
    he drink-DIAO LE milk
    ‘He drank up the milk.’

d. Ta zai he niunai.
    he PROG drink milk
    ‘He was drinking the milk.’

(46) c. Tamen chai-diao le fangzi.
    they pull-DIAO LE house
    ‘They pulled down the house.’

d. Tamen zai chai fangzi.
    they PROG pull house
    ‘They were pulling down the house.’

The entailment relationship between (c) and (d) is not hard to understand. The (d)
sentence expresses a progress which is one part of Accomplishments. Since (45c)
entails (45d), and (46c) entails (46d), we can once again make sure Activity+diao and Accomplishment+diao are Accomplishment compounds.

The situation type of V-diao compounds also can be realized from the change of features. Semelfactives have the [+dynamic], [-durative], and [-telic] features. When occurring with diao, which has the ability to provide an endpoint, the compound will hold the [+dynamic], [-durative], and [+telic] features, which are the features of Achievements. Activities have the [+dynamic], [durative], and [-telic] features. When occurring with diao, which has the ability to provide an endpoint, the compound will hold the [+dynamic], [+durative], and [+telic] features, which are the features of Accomplishments. Accomplishments and Achievements have the [+telic] feature themselves, so the addition of diao will not change their features. As to States, because the compounds formed by them and diao focus on the change of state, it is natural the situation types of these compounds are Achievements.

5.2 The Argument Structure of V-diao compounds

A sentence consists of a predicate and a set of arguments. A predicate is an expression denoting a state or an event, e.g. a V-diao compound. An argument is an expression denoting a participant in the relevant state or event (Radford 1997). Arguments are normally specified in terms of thematic roles, inclusive of Agent, the initiator of some action; Theme, the entity undergoing the effect of some action; Experiencer, the entity passively experiencing some psychological state; Location; the place in which something is situated or takes place; Goal, the entity towards which something moves. The argument structure of a predicate refers to the minimal numbers of arguments it needs (Haegeman 1994). Due to the composition nature of a V-diao compound, we wonder if its argument structure is also a combination of the
argument structure of the preceding verb and *diao*.

In chapter 4, three types of *diao* have been distinguished: resultative complement, phase marker, and aspect marker. For convenience, we label them as *diao*$_{\text{result}}$, *diao*$_{\text{phase}}$, and *diao*$_{\text{aspect}}$. In the following, we will inspect the argument structure of three types of V-\*diao compounds: V-\*diao$_{\text{result}}$, V-\*diao$_{\text{phase}}$, and V-\*diao$_{\text{aspect}}$.

(49) Tai zhuang-diao yachi,  
he bump-DIAO tooth  
‘He bumped off his tooth.’

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{zhuang} & \text{‘to bump’}  \\
\text{diao}_{\text{result}} & \text{‘to be removed in a downward direction’}  \\
\text{zhuang-diao} & \text{‘to bump off’}
\end{array}
\]

*Zhuang-diao* in (49) is a V-\*diao$_{\text{result}}$ compound. *Zhuang* is a transitive verb, which needs an Agent and a Theme. *Diao* is a resultative complement, which needs a Theme. Because *zhuang* as well as *diao* need a Theme, these two identical thematic roles merge to become a single role. The combination of the argument structures of *zhuang* and *diao* thus yields the argument structure of the compound as an Agent and a Theme.

(50) Tai hua-diao hen duo qian,  
he spend-DIAO very much money  
‘He spent a lot of money.’

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{hua} & \text{‘to spend’}  \\
\text{diao}_{\text{phase}} & \text{‘to be removed’}  \\
\text{hua-diao} & \text{‘to spend’}
\end{array}
\]
Hua-diao in (50) is a V-diao\textsubscript{phase} compound. Hua is a transitive verb, which needs an Agent and a Theme. Diao is a phase marker, which needs a Theme. Both hua and diao need an identical thematic role — Theme, so the combination of the argument structures of hua and diao yields the argument structure of the compound as an Agent and a Theme.

(51) Ta\textsubscript{i} pao-diao le.
   he run-DIAO LE
   ‘He has run away.’

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{lll}
pao & ‘to run’ & [A\textsubscript{i}] \\
diao\textsubscript{phase} & ‘to be removed’ & [T\textsubscript{i}] \\
pao-diao & ‘to run away’ & [A\textsubscript{i}-T\textsubscript{i}] \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Pao-diao in (51) is also a V-diao\textsubscript{phase} compound. Pao is an intransitive verb, which needs an Agent. Diao is a phase marker, which needs a Theme. The combination of the argument structures of pao and diao yield the argument structure of the compound as an Agent and a Theme. Because the person who is running and the person who is away are the same person, that is, the Agent of pao and the Theme of diao refer to the same referent (i.e. ta), the Agent and the Theme are coindexed. The coindexation of Agent and Theme confirms Jackendoff’s (1972) claim that one entity might fulfill more than one role. This idea is elaborated into his theory of tiers of thematic roles: a thematic tier which describes spatial relations, and an action tier which describes Actor-Patient type relations (Jackendoff 1990). We may say in (51) that ta fulfills the Theme role in the thematic tier, and also fulfills the Actor role in the action tier.
Kuzii song-diao le.
pants loosen-DIAO LE
‘The pants became loose.’

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{song} & \text{‘to loosen’} \\
\text{diao}_{\text{aspect}} & \text{‘*’} \\
\text{song-diao} & \text{‘to became loose’}
\end{array}
\]

Song-diao in (52) is a V-diao\text{aspect} compound. Song is an intransitive verb, which needs a Theme. Diao is an aspect marker, which is not a verb so it has no arguments. The argument structure of the compound naturally only comes from the verb song.

The examples given above tell us that if a V-diao compound including diao_{result} or diao_{phase}, its argument structure would be a combination of the argument structures of the preceding verb and diao; if the compound including diao_{aspect}, then its argument structure would be the same with that of the preceding verb, since diao_{aspect} has no argument structures. However, some cases do not follow these formation rules of the argument structure of a V-diao compound.

(53) a. Ta_i mai wo_j yi tai che_k.
\begin{align*}
\text{he} & \text{ sell I one CL car} \\
\text{‘He sold me a car.’}
\end{align*}

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{mai} & \text{‘to sell’} \\
\end{array}
\]

b. Ta_i mai-diao wo yi tai che_j.
\begin{align*}
\text{he} & \text{ sell-DIAO I one CL car} \\
\text{‘He sold away one of my cars.’}
\end{align*}

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{mai} & \text{‘to sell’} \\
\text{diao}_{\text{phase}} & \text{‘to be removed’}
\end{array}
\]
Mai ‘to sell’ is a ditransitive verb, which takes three arguments: an Agent, a Theme, and a Goal. It is interesting that when mai occurs with diao to form a compound, the Goal would be suppressed; otherwise, the sentence will be ill-formed as (53d) and (53f) show. Chen (2003) explains because diao encodes a goal itself, the appearance of a Goal in the argument structure of the compound would cause redundancy. The suppression of Goal happens to three-place transactional verbs such as mai ‘to sell’, song ‘to give’, and pei ‘to compensate.’

Besides suppressing arguments, diao may create arguments for V-diao compounds, too. Examine the following sentence.
In (54), *xiao* is an intransitive verb, which needs an animate Agent, and *diao* needs an inanimate Theme. Because the argument of *xiao* and that of *diao* are incompatible, instead of merging them, an argument should be created for the *xiao-diao* compound, and thus making the compound a transitive one. This phenomenon can also be observed in the following sentence:

(55) Tai ba wo de haoyun ku-diao le.

*he BA I POSS good luck cry-DIAO LE*

‘He cried away my good luck.’

There is a third circumstance other than the two ones mentioned above: *diao* may suppress an argument of the preceding verb and then create a new one for the compound.

(56) Tai (xie xin) xie-diao san zhang zhi.

*he write letter write-DIAO three CL paper*

‘He used three pieces of paper because of writing a letter.’
In (56), *xie* is a transitive verb, which needs an Agent and a Theme, and *diao* needs a Theme. Although *xie* and *diao* both need a Theme, the Themes they need actually contradict each other in nature. The Theme for *xie* is an entity that is produced, while the Theme for *diao* is an entity that is removed. In order to express ‘something is removed’ in compounds, *diao* suppresses the Theme of the preceding verb (i.e. *xin*) and creates a new Theme (i.e. *san zhang zhi*) for the compound. Another explanation for this phenomenon may contribute to incremental themes proposed by Dowty (1991). The action and the state of the associated Theme are in a proportional relationship: some writing produces some parts of the letter, more writing, more parts of the letter, etc. until completing the action produces the whole letter. Given *xin* ‘the letter’ in (56) is an incremental theme, which may be an incomplete entity. It goes without saying that if we want to remove something, it must be a complete entity. Hence, as an incomplete entity, *xin* ‘the letter’ cannot be removed. In other words, it is not compatible with *diao*. Nonetheless, the compound still needs a Theme, so *diao* brings one for the compound. Verbs like *shuo* ‘to speak’, *jiang* ‘to talk’, *shui* ‘to sleep’, *yin* ‘to print’, and so on which has an incremental theme will trigger *diao* to act in this way.