Chapter 3
The Preceding Verbs

Although post-verbal *diao* co-occurs with verbs all the time, not every verb can go with it to constitute a well-formed compound, namely, only some kinds of verbs can be preceding verbs in V-*diao* compounds. Therefore, it is essential to figure out what kind of verbs may go well with *diao*. The transitivity and the situation type of verbs are the criteria we choose to detect suitable verbs to co-occur with *diao*.

3.1 Transitive Verbs

Transitivity, a traditional syntactic criterion of verbs, concerns the ability in taking noun phrases as direct objects. If a verb has this ability, it is transitive, otherwise it is intransitive. In Chen (2003), six types of transitive verbs are claimed to usually co-occur with post-verbal *diao*: *chuzhi dongci* [disposal verbs], *haosun dongci* [consuming verbs], *fenli dongci* [separating verbs], *rengzhi dongci* [throwing verbs], *geiyu dongci* [giving verbs], and *xinli dongci* [psyche verbs]. However, according to the data we collect, it is obvious that the qualifying transitive verbs for V-*diao* compounds are more than the ones mentioned by Chen. With some modifications of Chen (2003), ten kinds of transitive verbs that can be the preceding verbs in V-*diao* compounds are listed in the following.

(a) Cutting verbs: verbs that depict the actions taken with a knife, e.g. *kan* ‘to hack’, *ge* ‘to cut’, *pi* ‘to split’, *xiao* ‘to peel’, *duo* ‘to chop’, *qie* ‘to slice’, etc.

(b) Giving verbs: verbs that involve outward transaction actions from the speaker’s view, e.g. *mai* ‘to sell’, *song* ‘to give’, *pei* ‘to compensate’, etc.

(c) Psyche verbs: verbs that show people’s psychological state, e.g. *wang* ‘to forget’, *hulue* ‘to neglect’, etc.
(d) Throwing verbs: verbs that describe the actions making things away from the speaker, e.g. *diu* ‘to toss’, *reng* ‘to cast’, *shuai* ‘to fling’, *dao* ‘to dump’, etc.

(e) Consuming verbs: verbs that relate to the actions leading to the attrition of money, time, or objects, e.g. *hua* ‘to spend’, *hao* ‘to dawdle’, *hun* ‘to fool around’, *shui* ‘to sleep’, *chi* ‘to eat’, *he* ‘to drink’, *langfei* ‘to waste’, etc.

(f) Separating verbs: verbs that portray the actions causing one object apart from the other one, e.g. *li* ‘to divorce’, *chai* ‘to take apart’, *si* ‘to tear’, *ba* ‘to pull out’, *tuo* ‘to take off’, etc.

(g) Hitting verbs: verbs that refer to the actions bringing one object to contact with the other one with violence, e.g. *da* ‘to beat’, *ti* ‘to kick’, *zhuang* ‘to collide’, *qiao* ‘to knock’, etc.

(h) Killing verbs: verbs that indicate the actions intentionally making someone dead or destroying something, e.g. *sha* ‘to kill’, *gan* ‘to kill’, *zuo* ‘to kill’, *hui* ‘to ruin’, *hong* ‘to bombard’, *zha* ‘to bomb’, *xiaomie* ‘to eliminate’, etc.

(i) Deleting verbs: verbs that denote the actions about erasing something or canceling the original plans, e.g. *shan* ‘to delete’, *chu* ‘to take out’, *ca* ‘to erase’, *tu* ‘to write over’, *gai* ‘to correct’, *huan* ‘to change’, *tui* ‘to return’, etc.

(j) Clearing verbs: verbs that express the actions letting dirty things off something, e.g. *pai* ‘to pat’, *xi* ‘to wash’, *chui* ‘to blow’, *dou* ‘to shake’, *fu* ‘to whisk’, *qing* ‘to clean’, *chong* ‘to flush’, etc.

Note these ten kinds of transitive verbs share a common property: the performance of the action conveyed by these verbs will cause something to be removed. In other words, something will be taken away from the agent who performs the action conveyed by these verbs. If the performance of certain action causes something to be brought to the actor, the verb expressing the action will not be able to occur with *diao*. 
3.2 Intransitive Verbs

Intransitive verbs are the ones which lack the ability in taking noun phrases as their direct objects. Being aware of the heterogeneity of this class of verbs, Perlmutter (1978) proposes the Unaccusative Hypothesis to claim that intransitive verbs are composed of two subclasses: the unaccusative verbs and the unergative verbs, each connected to a different syntactic underlying configuration. Within the Government-Binding framework, an unaccusative verb takes D-structure object, which appears in S-structure as a subject, and an unergative verb takes a D-structure subject and no object. In terms of argument structure, a verb with a direct internal argument is unaccusative, and a verb with an external argument is unergative. Although the Unaccusative Hypothesis claims that the distinction between the unaccusative verbs and the unergative verbs is syntactically represented, it is originally assumed that the distinction is fully semantically determined (Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995). Agentivity is often considered the determining semantic factor. To combine all of the points mentioned above, a new definition for these two classes of intransitive verbs can be given as follows: an unaccusative verb has a non-agentive argument, while an unergative verb has an agentive argument. In other words, an unaccusative verb assigns a theme or patient role to its internal argument, and an unergative verb assigns an agent role to its external argument. Two examples are cited from Radford (1997) to illustrate this statement in the following:

(12) (a) He broke the vase into pieces.
(b) The vase broke into pieces. (unaccusative)
(13) He was lying. (unergative)

Both Gu (1992) and Kang (1999) assert that resultative verb compounds (RVCs) which consist of two verbs, encode a contour of [activity + result]. Because transitive
and unergative verbs denoting activity guarantee V1 contains an Agent, they generally can act as V1. However, the lack of an Agent subject prevents unaccusative verbs to serve as V1. For example:

(14) Ta da-si yi zhi wenzi.
    he beat-die one CL mosquito
    ‘He beat a mosquito to death.’

(15) Ta zou-dao jiaoshi.
    he walk-arrive classroom
    ‘He walked to the classroom.’

(16) * Ta po-kai xiezi.
    he break-open shoe

Da ‘to beat’ in (14) is a transitive verb, zou ‘to walk’ in (15) is an unergative verb, and po ‘to break’ in (16) is an unaccusative verb.6

Since V-diao compounds are regarded as RVCs as well in some previous literature (e.g. Cheng 1989, Li & Thompson 1981, Packard 2000, etc.), we are curious whether the verbs co-occurring with diao have the limitation claimed by Gu (1992) and Kang (1999). Since in section 3.1 we have shown transitive verbs can go with diao, now we will put emphasis on discussing whether unaccusative verbs and unergative verbs can occur with diao. We first put an unaccusative verb with diao; please examine sentence (17).

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6 Following Gu (1992), verbs like pao and zou have both unergative and unaccusative uses. With unergative use, pao means ‘to run’ and zou ‘to walk’; with unaccusative use, pao means ‘to escape’ and zou ‘to leave.’
It is apparent that an unaccusative verb like \textit{liu} ‘to flow’ in (17) can go with \textit{diao} to form a well-formed compound. The unaccusative status of \textit{liu} can be validated from its appearance in a presentational sentence (see sentence (18)), which has been claimed to be an unaccusative diagnostic in the literature (Kang 2001).

\begin{align*}
\text{(17) Shui liu-diao le.} & \quad \text{Water flow-DIAO LE.} \\
& \quad \text{‘Water has flowed away.’}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{(18) Lian shang liu han le.} & \quad \text{face on flow sweat LE} \\
& \quad \text{‘From the face flowed sweat.’}
\end{align*}

Then an unergative verb and \textit{diao} are put together as displayed in (19):

\begin{align*}
\text{(19) Zhe ben shu rang wo xiao-diao da ya.} & \quad \text{this CL book let I laugh-DIAO big tooth} \\
& \quad \text{‘This book made me laugh so hard that my tooth has fallen.’}
\end{align*}

As (19) shows, an unergative verb like \textit{xiao} ‘to laugh’ can co-occur with \textit{diao} to form a V-\textit{diao} compound. Nonetheless, there are only a few unergative verbs that can go well with \textit{diao}, such as \textit{ku} ‘to cry’, \textit{pao} ‘to run’, \textit{zou} ‘to walk’, \textit{fei} ‘to fly’, \textit{tao} ‘to escape’, and \textit{liu} ‘to slip’. Yet the number of unaccusative verbs that can go with \textit{diao} is relatively larger. This finding is not consistent with Gu’s (1992) and Kang’s (1999) research. The reason why \textit{diao} favors unaccusative verbs more than unergative verbs probably has a great deal to do with the meaning of \textit{diao}. The semantic contents of post-verbal \textit{diao} are mainly associated with ‘to be removed’, a concept that people dislike and rarely voluntarily seek. It is natural that unergative verbs which bear
agentive argument are disfavored by *diao*.

### 3.3 The Situation Type of the Preceding Verbs

Situation type is a synonym of Aktionsart, a German word meaning ‘kind of action’. As we know, action is expressed by verbs in languages, so situation type refers to a way of verb classification, focusing on the inherent semantic properties of verbs. Vendler (1967) is an influential work attempting to classify verbs according to their inherent temporal qualities such as dynamism, boundedness, and so on. Based on Vendler’s quartered partition system of verbs (i.e., State, Activity, Accomplishment, and Achievement), Smith (1997) distinguishes five situation types with three semantic features as Table 1 shows:

#### Table 1: Five situation types and their semantic features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations</th>
<th>Dynamic</th>
<th>Durative</th>
<th>Telic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>States</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Non-applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishment</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semelfactive</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(A revised version of Smith 1997: 20)

The three semantic features that distinguish the five situation types are dynamism, duration, and telicity. Dynamism refers to the fundamental concepts of stasis and motion. Situation types that express stasis are static, and the ones that express motion are dynamic. The former is traditionally named as states and the latter events. Duration pertains to the time a situation lasts. If a situation lasts for a period of time, it is durative; if a situation involves virtually no time, then it is instantaneous.
Telicity signifies whether events have a natural endpoint, which may be an initial point or a final point. Events with a natural endpoint are telic, otherwise atelic. In the following, five situation types will be introduced with these three semantic features.

States are steady and homogeneous situations without internal structure, e.g. *huai* ‘broken’, *lan* ‘rotten’, *zang* ‘dirty’, *dai* ‘stunned’, etc. The initial and final endpoints of a state are excluded as part of it. States have the features [Static] and [Durative]. The first feature forbids their co-occurrence with the progressive morpheme *zai* which is a dynamic expression, while the second feature allows them to be compatible with durative adverbials as shown in (20).

(20) a. Shoubiao huai le.
watch broken LE
‘The watch is broken.’

b. * Shoubiao zai huai le.
watch PROG broken LE

c. Shoubiao huai le liang tian le.
watch broken LE two day LE
‘The watch has been broken for two days.’

Activities describe the whole process of a situation without a natural endpoint, e.g. *kan* ‘to hack’, *shui* ‘to sleep’, *jiang* ‘to talk’, *wan* ‘to play’, etc. They have the features [Dynamic], [Durative], and [Atelic]. The first feature allows their co-occurrence with the progressive morpheme *zai*, the second feature allows them to be compatible with durative adverbials, and the third feature allows them to accept the adverb *butingde* ‘nonstop’ as shown in (21).
(21) a. Ta kan shu.
   he hack tree
   ‘He hacked the trees.’

   b. Ta zai kan shu.
   he PROG hack tree
   ‘He is hacking the trees.’

   c. Ta kan shu kan le yi tian.
   he hack tree hack LE one day
   ‘He hacked the trees for a day.’

   d. Ta butingde kan shu.
   he nonstop hack tree
   ‘He hacked the trees continuously.’

Accomplishments are composed of a process and a natural endpoint, e.g. he yi wan tang ‘to eat a bowl of soup’, shao yi sao chuan ‘to burn a boat’, tuo zhe jian yifu ‘to take off this clothes’, chai na dong fangzi ‘to pull down that house’, etc. They have the features [Dynamic], [Durative], and [Telic]. The first feature allows their co-occurrence with the progressive morpheme zai, the second feature allows them to be compatible with durative adverbials, and the third feature forbids them to accept the adverb butingde ‘nonstop’ as shown in (22).

(22) a. Ta he yi wan tang.
   he drink one bowl soup
   ‘He ate a bowl of soup.’

   b. Ta zai he yi wan tang.
   he PROG drink one bowl soup
   ‘He is eating a bowl of soup.’
c. Ta he yi wan tang he le liang xiaoshi.
he drink one bowl soup drink LE two hour
‘He has eaten a bowl of soup for two hours.’

d. * Ta butingde he yi wan tang.
he nonstop drink one bowl soup

Semelfactives are the situations that take little time and have no natural endpoints, e.g. pai ‘to pat’, qiao ‘to knock’, ti ‘to kick’, zhuang ‘to bump’, etc. They have the features [Dynamic], [Instantaneous], and [Atelic]. The first feature allows their co-occurrence with the progressive morpheme zai, the second feature forbids them to be compatible with durative adverbials unless they occur in repetitive sequences, and the third feature allows them to accept the adverbial butingde ‘nonstop’ as shown in (23).

(23) a. Ta pai le pai yifu shang de huichen.
he pat LE pat clothes on POSS dust.
‘He patted the dust off his clothes.’

b. Ta zai pai yifu shang de huichen.
he PROG pat clothes on POSS dust
‘He is patting the dust off his clothes.’

c. ? Ta pai yifu shang de huichen pai le shi fenzhong.
he pat clothes on POSS dust pat LE ten minute
‘He has patted the dust off his clothes for ten minutes.’

d. Ta butingde pai yifu shang de huichen.
he nonstop pat clothes on POSS dust
‘He patted the dust off his clothes continuously.’
Achievements are the situations that focus on the very moment the change of state takes place, e.g. *si* ‘to die’, *wang* ‘to forget’, *diu* ‘to throw’, *duan* ‘to break’, etc. They have the features [Dynamic], [Instantaneous], and [Telic]. The first feature supposedly allows their co-occurrence with the progressive morpheme *zai*; however, it puts so much emphasis on the second feature [Instantaneous] that a progressive form has no possibility to occur in this situation. The second feature also forbids them to be compatible with durative adverbials, unless the durative adverbials denote the time after the occurrence of the change of state. The third feature forbids them to accept the adverbial *butingde* ‘nonstop’. These syntactic properties of Achievements are shown in (24).

(24) a. Ta si le.
    he die LE
    ‘He died.’

b. * Ta zai si.
    he PROG die

c. Ta si liang nian le.
    he die two year LE
    ‘He has been dead for two years’

d. * Ta butingde si.
    he nonstop die

After introducing the five situation types and their syntactic properties, we will inspect whether post-verbal *diao* can be added to them.
(20) d. Shoubiao huai-diao le. (State +diao)
    watch broken-DIAO LE
    ‘The watch is broken.’

(21) e. Ta kan-diao shu. (Activity +diao)
    he hack-DIAO tree
    ‘He hacked off the trees.’

(22) e. Ta he-diao yi wan tang. (Accomplishment +diao)
    he drink-DIAO one bowl soup
    ‘He ate up a bowl of soup.’

(23) e. Ta pai-diao yifu shang de huichen. (Semelfactive +diao)
    he pat-DIAO clothes on POSS dust.
    ‘He patted the dust off his clothes.’

(24) e. Ta si-diao le. (Achievement +diao)
    he die-DIAO LE
    ‘He died.

From sentence (20d) to (24e), it is clear that verbs of every situation type can go with
diao to compose well-formed V-diao compounds. This result is slightly different from
that in Ross (1990). In her study of RVCs, Ross mentions that verbs of each situation
type can freely function as V1, except Accomplishments. She contributes this to the
claim that Accomplishments in Mandarin Chinese must be compounded verbs, which
is cited from Tai (1984). As a matter of fact, though Mandarin Accomplishments have
a composition nature, their constituents are not necessary two verbs. A verb with a
noun phrase or a prepositional phrase can constitute an Accomplishment, too.
According to our observation, it is the verb+noun phrase-patterned Accomplishments
that can co-occur with post-verbal diao.