Chapter 4

Post-verbal Diao

In this chapter, we will argue there are three types of post-verbal *diao*. At first, the functions that *diao* performs in situation type will be investigated. Then, we would like to reveal that *diao* has three different meanings. At last, we will demonstrate *diao* has not only different meanings but also different syntactic status.

4.1 The Functions of Diao in Situation Type

Referring to the studies on RVCs, some linguists such as Szeto (1988), Ross (1990), Tenny (1994), Yong (1997), and Kang (1999) have pointed out that resultative complements bear the ability to add an endpoint or a goal to RVCs, which guarantees every RVC is telic or delimited. In our case of *diao*, this assumption is also applicable as the instances below show. As we mentioned in 3.3, if a verb is telic, it will not go well with the adverb *butingde* ‘nonstop’; if it is atelic, it will. Hence, we adopt *butingde* to test the telicity feature of each situation type.

(25) a. Ta dai le.
    he stun LE
    ‘He was stunned.’

    b. Ta dai-diao le.
    he stun-DIAO LE
    ‘He was stunned.’

    c. *Ta butingde dai-diao le.
    he nonstop stun-DIAO LE

The verb *dai* ‘to be stunned’ in (25a) is a state, which is compatible with post-verbal
diao to form a compound like dai-diao in (25b). The addition of diao indicates the initial endpoint of the state of dai. Even if it does not specify the exact starting point of the state, it spells out when that state becomes salient enough. This is the reason why butingde, an atelic adverb, is not allowed to appear with a state+diao compound as shown in (25c).

(26) a. Ta chi shuiguo.
    he eat fruit
    ‘He ate fruit.’

    b. Ta butingde chi shuiguo.
    he nonstop eat fruit
    ‘He continuously ate fruit.’

    c. Ta chi-diao shuiguo.
    he eat-DIAO fruit
    ‘He ate up the fruit.’

    d. *Ta butingde chi-diao shuiguo.
    he nonstop eat-DIAO fruit

Chi shuiguo ‘to eat fruit’ in (26a) is an activity with an atelic nature, so it can go with butingde in (26b). Activities go well with post-verbal diao as (26c) displays. The addition of diao denotes the final endpoint of activities, hence activity+diao compounds have a telic nature rather than an atelic one. That is why in (26d) the appearance of butingde is forbidden.

(27) a. Ta tuo waitao.
    he peel coat
    ‘He took off his coat.’
b. * Ta butingde tuo waitao.
   he nonstop peel coat

c. Ta tuo-diao waitao.
   he peel-DIAO coat
   ‘He took off his coat.’

d. * Ta butingde tuo-diao waitao.
   he nonstop peel-DIAO coat

e. Ta tuo waitao tuo le liang fenzhong.
   he peel coat peel LE two minute
   ‘It took him two minutes to take off his coat.’

f. Ta tuo-diao waitao liang fengzhong le.
   he peel-DIAO coat two minute LE
   ‘It has been two minutes since he took off his coat.’

_Tuo waitao_ ‘to take off the coat’ in (27a) is an accomplishment, which is intrinsically telic because it consists of a process and a final endpoint. Needless to say, it cannot go well with _butingde_ as (27b) presents. Post-verbal _diao_ can be added to accomplishments like (27c), and the telicity feature of accomplishment+_diao_ compounds remains telic. The conflict between _butingde_ and accomplishment+_diao_ compounds is illustrated in (27d). It seems _diao_ is redundant for accomplishments since they themselves also possess a final endpoint. Yet this is not true, _diao_ still brings some effect: it intensifies the final endpoint of accomplishment+_diao_ compounds. For example, the durative adverbial _liang fenzhong_ ‘two minutes’ in (27e) indicates the time the agent spent taking off his coat, while in (27f) the adverbial indicates the time passing by after the coat is taken off.
(28) a. Ta zhuang wo de hou che deng.
   he bump I POSS rear car lamp
   ‘He bumped against my rear car lamp.’

b. Ta butingde zhuang wo de hou che deng.
   he nonstop bump I POSS rear car lamp
   ‘He continuously bump against my rear car lamp.’

c. Ta zhuang-diao wo de hou che deng.
   he bump-DIAO I POSS rear car lamp
   ‘He bumped off my rear car lamp.’

d. * Ta butingde zhuang-diao wo de hou che deng.
   he nonstop bump-DIAO I POSS rear car lamp

The verb *zhuang* ‘to bump’ in (28a) is a typical semelfactive bearing an atelic property, which allows it to co-occur with *butingde* as (28b) shows. Semelfactives permit the existence of *diao* to constitute semelfactive+*diao* compounds like *zhuang-diao* in (28c). *Diao* presents the outcome of a semelfactive, that is, a semelfactive+*diao* compound has a final endpoint and thus is telic. It is reasonable that a telic compound is incompatible with *butingde* as (28d) demonstrates.

(29) a. Ta wang le shangtong.
   he forget LE pain
   ‘He forgot the pain.’

b. * Ta butingde wang le shangtong.
   he nonstop forget LE pain

c. Ta wang-diao shangtong.
   he forget-DIAO pain
   ‘He forgot the pain.’
The verb *wang* ‘to forget’ in (29a) is an achievement which is by nature telic, and thus cannot go with *butingde* like (29b) exhibits. Achievements can be followed by *diao* to construct *achievement+diao* compounds like *wang-diao* in (29c). The addition of *diao* has no influence on *achievement+diao* compounds, and they remain telic. The telic property prohibits them from appearing with *butingde* as (29d) reveals.

Smith (1997) has pointed out that there are two kinds of endpoint: one is initial endpoint, and the other is final endpoint. From the discussion above, we learn that *diao* can express both of these two endpoints. In other words, we may propose there are two types of *diao*: one denotes an initial endpoint when co-occurring with states, and the other denotes a final endpoint when co-occurring with events.

To conclude, two types of *diao* can be distinguished according to their different functions in situation type. The first type of *diao* provides a final endpoint for semelfactives, activities, accomplishments and achievements; the second type of *diao* provides an initial endpoint for states. Table 2 is a summary of this conclusion.

Table 2: Two types of *diao* in situation type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Function</td>
<td>Final endpoint</td>
<td>Initial endpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatible situation types</td>
<td>Semelfactives, Activities, Accomplishments, and Achievements</td>
<td>States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 The Semantic Content of Post-verbal Diao

Although none of Mandarin Chinese dictionaries specify the meaning of post-verbal *diao*, it does not imply post-verbal *diao* does not have its own meanings. Pu (2000) suggests its meaning as *xiaoshi* ‘to disappear’, and Chen (2003) believes *likai* ‘away’ is its meaning. From our points of view, since *diao* can be divided into two types based on its functions in situation type, it may have more than one single meaning. We will list sentences containing each type of *diao*, and try to infer the meanings of *diao* from them.

(30) Ta zhuang-diao wo de hou che deng.
    he bump-DIAO I POSS rear car lamp
    ‘He bumped off my rear car lamp.’

(31) Ta chi-diao shuiguo.
    he eat-DIAO fruit
    ‘He ate up the fruit.’

(32) Ta tuo-diao waitao.
    he peel-DIAO coat
    ‘He took off his coat.’

(33) Ta wang-diao shangtong.
    he forget-DIAO pain
    ‘He forgot the pain.’

It is the first type of *diao* which presents final endpoint that goes with a semelfactive (i.e. *zhuang*) to form a compound in (30). From this sentence, we can easily learn that the meaning of *diao* is ‘to be removed’. More specifically, *diao* refers to ‘to be removed in a downward direction.’ When a car lamp is bumped fiercely and
then removed from the car, it would be detached from the car in a downward direction. The *diao* which goes with an activity (i.e. *chí*) in (31), an accomplishment (i.e. *tuo*) in (32), and an achievement (i.e. *wang*) in (33) though is also of the first type presenting final endpoint, its meaning seems different from that in (30). We think the meaning of *diao* in (31), (32), and (33) is ‘to be removed’ without encoding any direction. In (31), *diao* expresses a situation that something is removed from the world. If the fruit is eaten, it would not exist in the world any more. In (32), the situation that *diao* describes is something being removed from the agent temporarily. When a coat is taken off, though it leaves the body of its owner, it still exists in the world. In (33), what *diao* portrays is something being removed from one’s mind, which is an abstract psychological state. If someone forgets one thing, that thing is removed from him psychologically.

When tied with a state (i.e. *dài*) as (34) shows, *diao* is another type which presents initial endpoint.

(34) Ta dāi-diao le.
    he stun-DIAO LE
    ‘He was stunned.’

It is apparent that *diao* has a grammatical meaning rather than a lexical meaning in (34). The appearance of *diao* marks nothing more than the inchoative or the salience of the state the verb conveys.

From the discussion above, we have to distinguish a new type of *diao* from the first type. As a result, *diao* can be classified into three types based on its three different semantic content. The first type of *diao* encodes ‘to be removed in a downward direction’; the second type of *diao* signifies ‘to be removed’, which may be
permanent, temporary, or abstract; the third type of *diao* has a grammatical meaning indicating inchoative. Table 3 is a summary of the correspondence between three types of *diao* and their meanings.

Table 3: Three types of *diao* and their semantic content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semantic content</td>
<td>To be removed in a downward direction</td>
<td>To be removed</td>
<td>Inchoative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 The Syntactic Status of Post-verbal *Diao*

To combine what we discuss in 4.1 and 4.2, it reveals that post-verbal *diao* is of three types. *Diao* 1 means ‘to be removed in a downward direction’ and offers a final endpoint for semelfactives. *Diao* 2 means ‘to be removed’ and offers a final endpoint for activities, accomplishments and achievements. *Diao* 3 has a grammatical meaning indicating inchoative and offers an initial endpoint for states. Now we will further argue that three types of *diao* have different syntactic status: *Diao* 1 is a resultative complement, *Diao* 2 is a phase marker, and *Diao* 3 is an aspect marker.

Being the second verb in a V-V compound, a resultative complement is meant to signal the result of the action or process conveyed by its preceding verb. In terms of event structure, which comprises a starting point, a process, and an end point, it indicates the end point. If a V-V compound is transitive, the resultative complement denotes the final state of the object; if a compound is intransitive, it denotes the final state of the subject. For example:
(35) a. Ta ku-shi le shoupa.
   he cry-wet LE handkerchief
   ‘His crying made the handkerchief wet.’

(36) a. Ta ku-lei le.
   he cry-tired LE.
   ‘He was tired from crying.’

As (35a) presents, *ku-shi* ‘cry-dry’ is a transitive compound in which *ku* ‘to cry’ indicates the subject’s action, while *shi* ‘to be wet’ the final state of the object. In an intransitive compound like (36a), because it has no object, both *ku* and *lei* ‘to be tired’ depict the subject. These two sentences also can be expressed with a two-clause pattern (Mei 1994; Kuo 2003).

(35) b. Ta ku, shoupa shi.
   he cry, handkerchief wet
   ‘He cried, and the handkerchief was wet.’

(36) b. Ta ku, ta lei.
   he cry, he tired
   ‘He cried, and he was tired.’

Since a sentence containing a resultative verb compound can be cut into two independent clauses like (35b) and (36b), it is not hard to find that a resultative complement holds a lexical meaning much the same with the meaning it bears when it acts as a full-fledged verb. Their having lexical meaning is the key feature that separates resultative complements from other verbal complements (Szeto 1988; Ross 1990; Yong 1997).

The second feature of resultative complements is the prohibition against the
intervention of any element other than the two potential infixes de ‘can’ and bu ‘cannot’ between the compounds composed of them and their preceding verbs (Li & Thompson 1981; Ross 1990). See the following examples:

(37) a. Ta yao-duan zhe tiao shengzi.  
   he  bite-break this CL rope  
   ‘He bit this rope through.’

   b. Ta yao de duan zhe tiao shengzi.  
   he  bite  can  break this CL rope  
   ‘He can bite this rope through.’

   c. Ta yao bu duan zhe tiao shengzi.  
   he  bite  cannot  break this CL rope  
   ‘He cannot bite this rope through.’

   d.* Ta yao le duan zhe tiao shengzi  
   he  can  LE  break this CL rope

In (37a) yao-duan ‘to bite through’ is a resultative verb compound, and it allows de ‘can’ and bu ‘cannot’ to insert between them to indicate the ability and inability of achieving a result conveyed by the resultative complement duan as (37b) and (37c) present. However, other elements like the aspect marker le in (37d) are not allowed to split them.

Phase markers, though go after verbs as resultative complements do, express the phase rather than the result of the action. Phase here refers to “the type of action described by the preceding verb or the degree to which it is carried out” (Li & Thompson 1981). For instance, there are beginning phase (e.g. qilai ‘to start’), completed phase (e.g. wan ‘to finish’), successive phase (e.g. xiaqu ‘to continue’), and
so on. In terms of event structure, which comprises a starting point, a process, and an end point, it indicates from the process to the end point (Chen 2003). In other words, a phase marker puts emphasis on its preceding verb rather than the final state of the arguments of the compound.

(38) a. Ta kan-dao liang pi ma.
    he see-perceive two CL horse
    ‘He saw (and perceived) two horses.’

In this sentence, the phase marker dao describes the degree of the action denoted by the verb kan ‘to see’ being carried out. This point can be validated by an expression in Mandarin: you kan meiyou dao, which means you see something but you do not perceive it. The presence of the phase marker dao here tends to augment the meaning of its preceding verb rather than to specify the final state of the subject or the object. As a result, (38a) cannot be changed into a two-clause sentence, in which the second element of a V-V compound would present the final state of the object.

(38) b. * Ta kan, liang pi ma dao.
    he see, two CL horse arrive

In a two-clause sentence like (38b), the verb in the second clause must preserve its original meaning like a full-fledged verb. To observe (38a) and (38b) carefully, we find the phase marker dao has the meaning ‘to perceive’ not ‘to arrive’ which is its lexical meaning when it acts as a full-fledged verb.

In spite of the differences mentioned above, phase markers still share some similarities with resultative complements. One of their notable similarities is they both

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7 These phases are listed by Cheng (1997: 48).
allow and only allow the potential infixes *de* and *bu* to insert between their preceding verbs and them.

(39) a. Ta ji-zhu dajia de mingzi.
    he memorize-firm everyone POSS name
    ‘He memorized everyone’s name firmly.’

     b. Ta ji de zhu dajia de mingzi.
    he memorize can firm everyone POSS name
    ‘He can memorize everyone’s name firmly.’

   c. Ta ji bu zhu dajia de mingzi.
    he memorize cannot firm everyone POSS name
    ‘He cannot memorize everyone’s name firmly.’

   d. *Ta ji le zhu dajia de mingzi.
    he memorize LE firm everyone POSS name

As we see in (39a), *ji-zhu* is a [verb+ phase marker] compound. It can be split by potential infix *de* or *bu* to indicate whether the action conveyed by the preceding verb *ji* is carried out to certain extent (see (39b) and (39c)). Moreover, except potential infixes, it does not allow any element such as the aspect marker *le* to intervene between the preceding verb and the phase marker like (39d) displays.

Aspects are the ways speakers view situations: complete or incomplete. The former is called perfective, including telic aspect and experiential aspect, while the latter is called imperfective, including durative aspect, progressive aspect, inchoative aspect, and continuative aspect (Chen 2003). In Mandarin Chinese, these various types of aspect are identified by aspect markers which are affixes usually appearing after verbs or phase markers. For instance, telic aspect is expressed by *le*, experiential
aspect by *guo*, durative aspect by *zhe*, progressive aspect by *zai*, etc. Aspect markers bear so little lexical meaning that they have no possibility to appear in the two-clause sentence pattern as the following shows.

(40) a. Ta xue-guo dewen.
    he learn-ASP German.
    ‘He has ever learned German.’

b. * Ta xue, dewen guo.
    he learn, German ASP

In (40a), *guo* is an experiential aspect marker to indicate the subject has the experience in learning German. Because it has little lexical meaning, it cannot appear in a two-clause sentence like (40b) to be a full-fledged verb that must have a lexical meaning.

Another important feature that aspect markers possess is that they allow no insertion of potential infixes *de* and *bu* between their preceding verbs and them (Mei 1994; Lien 1995; Chen 2003; Kuo 2003).

(40) c. * Ta xue de guo dewen.
    he learn can ASP German

d. * Ta xue bu guo dewen.
    he learn cannot ASP German

If one has ever done something, then he will gain the experience of doing that thing without any efforts. In other words, acquiring experiences is irrelevant to one’s ability. Therefore, it is natural that an experiential aspect marker cannot co-occur with
potential infixes *de* or *bu* as (40c) and (40d) display.

To sum up the discussion above, we learn that resultative complements, phase markers, and aspect markers can be distinguished with two features: the allowance of appearing in a two-clause sentence pattern and the compatibility with potential infixes *de* and *bu*. A resultative complement which has a much verb-like lexical meaning can appear in a two-clause sentence and is compatible with potential infixes. A phase marker which has a less verb-like lexical meaning cannot appear in a two-clause sentence, but it is compatible with potential infixes. An aspect marker which has little lexical meaning cannot appear in a two-clause sentence, nor can it be compatible with potential infixes. Table 4 is a summary of this conclusion.

Table 4: The features of resultative complements, phase markers, and aspect markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic status</th>
<th>Resultative complements</th>
<th>Phase markers</th>
<th>Aspect markers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appearing in a two-clause sentence</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatible with potential infixes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now we will examine the syntactic status of the three types of post-verbal *diao* with the two features, the allowance of appearing in a two-clause sentence pattern and the compatibility with potential infixes *de* and *bu*, which can be used to distinguish resultative complements, phase markers, and aspect markers. In (41), (42), and (43), the (a) sentences are cited from section 4.2 for easy reference, the (b) sentences are two-clause sentences, and the (c) sentences include the two potential infixes *de* and *bu*.

(41) a. Ta zhuang-diao wo de hou che deng.
b. Ta zhuang, wo de hou che deng diao.
   he bump, I POSS rear car lamp DIAO
   ‘He bumped, and my rear car lamp fell off.’

c. Ta zhuang de/bu diao wo de hou che deng.
   he bump can/cannot DIAO I POSS rear car lamp
   ‘He can/cannot bump off my rear car lamp.’

*Diao* in (41a) is the one of the first type, which presents final endpoint and means ‘to be removed in a downward direction’. It can be put in a two-clause sentence as (41b) shows, which proves that it has a strong lexical meaning. It also permits the potential infixes to insert between its preceding verb *zhuang* and itself as (41c) presents. Its allowance of appearing in a two-clause sentence pattern and its compatibility with potential infixes *de* and *bu* reveal that it is a resultative complement.

(42) a. Ta wang-diao shangtong.
   he forget-DIAO pain
   ‘He forgot the pain.’

    b. *Ta wang, shangtong diao.
       he forget, pain DIAO

    c. Ta wang de/bu diao shangtong.
       he forget can/cannot DIAO pain
       ‘He can/cannot forget the pain.’

(42a) includes a second type of *diao*, which presents final endpoint and means ‘to be
removed.’ It is unsuitable to put this *diao in a two-clause sentence as (42b) displays. This situation tells us that the *diao here bears a weak semantic content. However, this *diao coexists with potential infixes well in (42c). Its disallowance of appearing in a two-clause sentence pattern and its compatibility with potential infixes *de and *bu reveal that it is a phase marker.

(43) a. Ta dai-diao le.
    he stun-DIAO LE
    ‘He was stunned.’

    b. *Ta dai, ta diao.
    he stun, he DIAO

    c. *Ta dai de/bu diao le.
    he stun can/cannot DIAO LE

It is the third type of *diao, which presents initial endpoint and bears little lexical meaning that appears in (43a). We find it cannot be put in a two-clause sentence nor can it go well with potential infixes as (43b) and (43c) illustrate separately. Its disallowance of appearing in a two-clause sentence pattern and its incompatibility with potential infixes *de and *bu reveal that it is an aspect marker.

Based on all of the discussion in this chapter, we conclude post-verbal *diao is of three types which have distinctive traits:

Type one: resultative complements that usually co-occur with Semelfactives, present final endpoint, and mean ‘to be removed in a downward direction.’

Type two: phase markers that usually co-occur with Activities, Accomplishments, and Achievements, present final endpoint, and mean ‘to be removed.’
Type three: aspect markers that usually co-occur with States, present initial endpoint, and have a grammatical meaning indicating inchoative. Table 5 is a summary of this conclusion.

Table 5: Three types of diao and their traits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preceding verbs</td>
<td>Semelfactives</td>
<td>Activities, Accomplishments, and Achievements</td>
<td>States</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function</td>
<td>Final endpoint</td>
<td>Final endpoint</td>
<td>Final endpoint</td>
<td>Initial endpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantic content</td>
<td>To be removed in a downward direction</td>
<td>To be removed</td>
<td>Inchoative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntactic status</td>
<td>Resultative complement</td>
<td>Resultative complement</td>
<td>Phase marker</td>
<td>Aspect marker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>