ASPECTUAL CLASSES IN CHINESE AND THEIR OPERABILITY FOR TEACHING

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INTRODUCTION

How to classify verbs according to their semantic properties, esp. their intrinsic temporal properties?

> verb classes, situation types, event types, Aktionsart: traditionally called "lexical aspect"

For Mandarin Chinese, several proposals, among which:

> Teng (1975): tri-partition of verbs into STATES, ACTIONS and PROCESSES

> Tai (1984): ACTIVITIES, STATES and RESULTS

> Smith (1991/1997), building on Vendler (1957), in an attempt at defining UNIVERSAL EVENT TYPES, posits STATES, ACTIVITIES, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, ACHIEVEMENTS, and SEMELFACTIVES

INTRODUCTION

Despite Teng's and Tai's demonstration that only three classes are necessary to account for lexical and grammatical aspect combinations in Chinese, Vendler-related proposals seem to be by far the most popular among linguists working on Chinese verbs and event types since the 1990s.

However, there also have been novel proposals, such as:

- Bittner's (2013) four aspectual types, or

- Lin's (2004a/b) compositional analysis involving only two basic event types

WHAT I AM GOING TO TALK ABOUT

1. IS THERE SUCH A THING AS UNIVERSAL EVENT TYPES?

2. HOW LEXICAL IS "LEXICAL ASPECT" IN MANDARIN CHINESE?

3. IS IT POSSIBLE TO DISENTANGLE LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL ASPECT IN MANDARIN CHINESE?

4. A COMPOSITIONAL PROPOSAL FOR EVENT TYPES IN CHINESE

5. HOW IS THIS GOING TO HELP US TEACH CHINESE?

I. IS THERE SUCH A THING AS UNIVERSAL EVENT TYPES? (1)

"Given special properties in the Mandarin aspectual system, we are not prepared to find that they have the effect of preventing the expression of the basic event types. Indeed, if we do find that Mandarin fails to distinguish the event types, we might wish to reconsider the claim that they represent fundamental cognitive distinctions." (Smith 1990:2)

Table 1. Smith's (1991/7) 5 event types, or « situations »

Situation type	Dynamic	Durative	Telic
State	-		-
Activity	+	+	-
Accomplishment	+	+	+
Achievement	+	-	+
Semelfactive	+	-	-

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS UNIVERSAL EVENT TYPES? (2)

Table 2. Correspondences for the five event types in Mandarin Chinese in Smith's (1991/1997) work

Event type	Example given by Smith	nb
Activies (Ex. 56a-c, Smith 1997: 285)	他推了车了 ta tui-le che le 3SG push-PFV car SFP He pushed the cart	(1)
	我学法文 wo xue fawen 1SG study French I studied French. Note that, as it stands, this sentence is incomplete. There is no reason to translate it as a past tense sentence.	(2)
	他走了在公园 ta zou-le zai gongyuan 3SG walk-PFV at park He walked in the park. Note that this sentence is incorrect. The PP, being stative, should precede the verb.	(3)

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS UNIVERSAL EVENT TYPES? (3)

Event type	Example given by Smith	nb
Accomplishments (Ex. 62a-c, Smith 1997: 287-8)	他们吃饱了 tamen chibao-le 3PL eat-full-PFV They ate their fill.	(4)
	他们造了一所房子 tamen zao-le yi suo fangzi 3PL build-PFV one CL house They built a house.	(5)
	玛丽走去了学校 Mali zou-qu-le xuexiao Mary walk-go-PFV school Mary walked to school.	(6)

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS UNIVERSAL EVENT TYPES? (4)

Event type	Example given by Smith	nb
Achievements (Ex. 69a-b, Smith 1997: 291)	张三死了 Zhangsan si-le Zhangsan die-PFV Zhangsan died.	(7)
	我碰见了你的弟弟 wo peng-jian-le ni-de didi 1SG meet-see-PFV 2SG-POSS little_brother I encountered your little brother.	(8)
Semelfactives (Ex. 68, Smith 1997: 290)	张三咳嗽了 Zhangsan kesou-le Zhangsan cough-PFV Zhangsan coughed.	(9)

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS UNIVERSAL EVENT TYPES? (5)

Event type	Example given by Smith	nb
Statives (Ex. 73a-c, Smith 1997: 292)	没有空气人就不可能存在 mei-you kongqi ren jiu bu keneng cunzai NEG.PFV-have air man just NEG possible exist One cannot exist without air.	(10)
	他们知道了什么叫科学 tamen zhidao-le shenme jiao kexue 3PL know-PFV what call science They have learnt what is called a science. This sentence is crucially not stative (see discussion).	(11)
	玛丽很高兴 Mali hen gaoxing Mary very happy Mary is very happy.	(12)

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS UNIVERSAL EVENT TYPES? (6)

Notwithstanding our disagreement on some of Smith's examples (as to their grammaticality (see (2), (3)), or as to their event type (11)), it could seem that Mandarin Chinese indeed has the same "event types" that were postulated for English, and considered universal by Smith on the basis of 8 languages (including Chinese).

However, although such a classification is often taken for granted by linguists working on various questions regarding semantic properties of verbs in Chinese, we would like to point a few problems with what we could call an "event type translation" approach.

II. HOW LEXICAL IS LEXICAL ASPECT? INSIGHTS FROM CHINESE (1)

Whereas Vendler's original paper "Verbs and times" (1957) aimed to classify verbs in English, it is a well discussed problem that this classification is not concerned only with the verb, since all examples of Accomplishments are VPs with a quantified object

Accordingly, Smith deals with "situations" (hence "situational aspect"), realized through "verb constellations" (verbs and their arguments).

Hence the well-known contrasts:

(13)   a. to write (Activity, atelic)

        b. to write a book (Accomplishment, telic)

        c. to write books (Activity, atelic)

HOW LEXICAL IS LEXICAL ASPECT? INSIGHTS FROM CHINESE (2)

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN CHINESE

Examples of Accomplishments and Achievements given by Smith (1997) are often realized as Verb-Resultative compounds (see examples (4) and (8) above).

Resultatives in VR compounds are called "phase complements" by Chao (1968: 466), and "express the phase of an action on the first verb rather than some result in the action or goal".

Klein's (1994, 2013) concept of "phase", was shown to be especially relevant to Chinese (Klein et al. 2000), and can also be applied to resultative-verb compounds

In Lin's (2004b:102) terms, "With a small number of exceptions, there are no monomorphemic verbs in Mandarin that are telic—no monomorphemic verb necessarily encodes a result, an end state, or the attainment of a goal."

>> Most monomorphemic verbs in Mandarin Chinese have only one "phase" : they are homogeneous in Vendler's terms.

HOW LEXICAL IS LEXICAL ASPECT? INSIGHTS FROM CHINESE (3)

Thus, Activitiy verbs in Chinese do not encode an end state, unless a resultative or directional complement is added to these verbs, which in fact adds a distinct "phase" to the event, lexically defined by the complement. Adding a Resultative or Directional complement gives rise to an Accomplishment-type event.

By contrast, in English, Activity-Accomplishment pairs involve the same verb, and quantified objects are needed to specify the endpoint (to run > to run a mile). However, not all accomplishments in English are 2-phase predicates.

Thus, in Mandarin Chinese, the relationship between Activities and Accomplishments is « grammaticized ». It is not only a matter of lexicon.

HOW LEXICAL IS LEXICAL ASPECT? INSIGHTS FROM CHINESE (4)

Table 3. Activity-Accomplishment pairs

吃（饭）	eat	Activity/1-phase	吃饱（饭）	eat one's full	Accomplishment/2-phase
闹	be noisy	Activity/1-phase	闹翻	make a fuss	Accomplishment/2-phase
推	push	Activity/1-phase	推倒	turn over (by pushing)	Accomplishment/2-phase
想（办法）	think (of a solution)	Activity/1-phase	想出（办法）	find a solution (by thinking)	Accomplishment/2-phase

HOW LEXICAL IS LEXICAL ASPECT? INSIGHTS FROM CHINESE (5)

This way of expressing Accomplishements is very iconic, since the first verbal morpheme denotes the durative part of the event, while the second points to the culminating point or boundary.

Smith (1990) discusses the contribution of RVCs to telicity, but she fails to distinguish between resultative complements added to Activity verbs and resultative complements added to State verbs.

Since State verbs are not dynamic, when combined to resultative or directional complements, they are interpreted as punctual events (change-of-state, or instantaneous transition form phase 1 to phase 2).

HOW LEXICAL IS LEXICAL ASPECT? INSIGHTS FROM CHINESE (6)

Table 4. State-Achievement pairs

烫	hot	State/1-phase	烫伤	scald	Achievement/2-phase
松	loose	State/1-phase	松掉	loosen	Achievement/2-phase
弯	bent	State/1-phase	弯下	bend down	Achievement/2-phase
咸	salty	State/1-phase	咸死	kill (by saltyness)	Achievement/2-phase

HOW LEXICAL IS LEXICAL ASPECT? INSIGHTS FROM CHINESE (7)

The resultative and directional verb complements belong to a finite class of verbs;

Their association with activity or state verbs is quite free (productive), although there can be idiosyncrasies in the meanings obtained;

Thus, the question of the aspectual nature of resultative verb compounds has to be answered more systematically: they seem to be at the boundary between lexical and grammatical phenomena.

So far, we have established that **a substantial part of Accomplishment and Achievement event types were generated through grammatical rather than lexical processes**.

This raises the question whether lexical and grammatical aspect are quite distinct in Mandarin Chinese.

III. THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL ASPECT IN CHINESE (1)

As early as in Chao's (1965/1968) seminal "Grammar of Spoken Chinese", it was observed that most sentences cannot stand with a bare predicate. It is often argued that the minimal requirement is for verbs to be modified by the "perfective verbal suffix" 了 -le.

For instance, when Smith gives examples of Accomplishments or Achievements, they always involve verbal –le (see ex. (4) to (8)) above)

Many linguists, among which Chao (1968: 668), Li & Thompson (1981: 185), Smith (1990, 1991/1997), Klein et al. (2000) etc. describe -le as one of the four **grammatical aspect** markers of Mandarin Chinese, its value being 'perfective'.

But is verbal -le merely a perfective aspect marker?

THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL ASPECT IN CHINESE (2)

Room for doubt…

Smith and Erbaugh (2009) argue that one of the functions of perfective -*le* is to set a final boundary to the situation denoted by the verb. But "boundaries" are part of the definition of lexical rather than grammatical aspect. Thus, this claim blurs the lines between grammatical aspect (speaker's viewpoint) and lexical aspect (temporal characteristics of the situation).

Several other propositions point to a more lexical aspectual role of verbal –*le*:

- Teng 1975 points to the role of -*le* as a verb type-changing device.

- Sybesma (1997) convincingly shows that -*le* can be analyzed as a resultative complement (and we saw that these had a verb type-changing effect).

Apart from verbal -*le*, the boundary between grammatical and lexical aspect is also blurred as regards resultative complements, since Smith (1997: 282) claims that "RVCs function in both the viewpoint and the situation components of the aspectual system"

THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL ASPECT IN CHINESE (3)

To sum up, this argument regarding the boundary between lexical (situation) and grammatical (viewpoint) aspect in Mandarin Chinese revolves around the notion of boundaries/telicity, which can be marked in many ways:

No marking	Lexical Accomplishments	造	build	Accomplishment
	Lexical Achievements	赢	win	Achievement
Quantified object		吃一顿饭	eat a meal	Accomplishment
Verbal complement	Resultative complement	跑累	be tired as a result of running	Accomplishment
	Directional complement	买下	buy up	Achievement
Prepositional complement		放在桌子上	put on the table	Achievement
Verbal -le		喝了	drink up	Accomplishment

IV. A COMPOSITIONAL ACCOUNT OF EVENT STRUCTURE IN MANDARIN CHINESE (1)

Remarking on the regularity of the morphological processes that make up event types in Mandarin Chinese, Lin (2004a, 2004b) proposes that Chinese has only two basic event types, namely States and Activities. The other two types are derived in the following way:

(14) Event types according to Lin (2004b: 105)

primitive event types: Activity, State

State + *-le* ➔ Achievement

Activity + Achievement ➔ Accomplishment

A COMPOSITIONAL ACCOUNT OF EVENT STRUCTURE IN MANDARIN CHINESE (2)

Thus, Lin focuses on the verb at the morphological level, including the verbal suffix *-le* in its morphology, but excluding complements of the verb (objects of transitive verbs, quantity complements or prepositional phrases) since they pertain to the syntax.

In this way, lexical aspect is assumedly "grammaticized", and there are few temporal properties that are inherent to single verbs (see Table 1). Crucially, telicity is never inherent (but for a few exceptions).

Lin's generalization accounts for the following contrasts:

(15) State + *-le* ➜ Achievement (Lin 2004b, ex. 20)

a. 张三有一大笔钱

Zhangsan	you	yi	da	bi	qian
Zhangsan	have	one	big	CL	money

Zhangsan has a large sum of money.

a. 张三有了一大笔钱

Zhangsan	you-le	yi	da	bi	qian
Zhangsan	have-LE	one	big	CL	money

Zhangsan has acquired a large sum of money.

(16) Activity + Achievement ➜ Accomplishment

a. 这双鞋很破　　(State)

zhe　　　shuang xie　　　hen　　　po

this　　　CL　　　shoe　　　very　　　broken

This pair of shoes is lousy.

b. 这双鞋破了　　(State + *-le*)

zhe　　　shuang xie　　　po-le

this　　　CL　　　shoe　　　broken- LE

This pair of shoes is worn out.

c. 这双鞋穿破了　(Activity + [State+ *-le*])

zhe　　　shuang xie　　　chuan-po-le

this　　　CL　　　shoe　　　wear-broken-LE

This pair of shoes has been worn to tatters.

A COMPOSITIONAL ACCOUNT OF EVENT STRUCTURE IN MANDARIN CHINESE (5)

Lin's proposal unfortunately misses one other generalization, that some Achievements are compositionally built with States + Achievements (recursive), such as 烫伤了 'scald' (see Table 3). Anyway, this can be easily fixed in proposing the following schema:

(17) Compositional event types in Mandarin Chinese (revised)

primitive event types: Activity, State

State + *-le* ➔ Achievement

State + Achievement ➔ Achievement

Activity + Achievement ➔   Accomplishment

V. LANGUAGE TEACHING RELATED QUESTIONS (1)

Discussing of the operability of either of the previously discussed approaches to teaching verb classes in Chinese supposes that one adopt an explicit teaching strategy, developing metalinguistic awareness.

In this case, there still are a number of options to choose from, such as:

- Do we use inductive or deductive strategies?

- Or, more to the point here, do we rely on metalinguistic awareness of other languages?

LANGUAGE TEACHING RELATED QUESTIONS (2)

One may think that a more universalist description of verb types is better for teaching with a cross-linguistic approach, enhancing learners' metalinguistic awareness through comparison between the target language and the languages they already know (be they L1 or otherwise).

> On this account, we would want to favor Smith's approach, equating event types across languages.

On the other hand, a description of verb classes valid only for the Chinese language would be compatible with a teaching approach that does not rely on grammatical knowledge acquired through other languages, but rather, seeks to build an awareness of the internal logic of the target language

> This option would favor descriptions such as Lin's

LANGUAGE TEACHING RELATED QUESTIONS (3)

Thus, in order to explore the operability of event type characterizations that we just reviewed, I will choose two topics.

- The first topic is related to comparison to other languages possibly known by the learners (such as English, French…) and has to do with compatibility between imperfective marking (grammatical aspect) and event types (lexical aspect).

- The second topic is internal to Mandarin Chinese and has to do with event types compatible with the "BA construction" 把字句.

V.I. IMPERFECTIVE ASPECT MARKING (1)

Mandarin Chinese has two different markers for Progressive and Durative Imperfective viewpoints.

- Progressive is marked by a pre-verbal adverb *zai* 在

- Durative is marked by a verbal sufffix *–zhe* 着

Across languages, Progressive aspect is well known to be less compatible with all event types than Perfective aspect is. For instance, in English, when applied to Achievements, the progressive form *be + -ing* is well know to trigger aspectual coercion.

(18)   a. Lisa reached the finish line safely. (Perfective)

          b. Lisa was reaching the finish line when she tripped and fell. (Imperfective)

Aspectual coercion forces the focus to shift from the situation itself to preliminary stages of that situation

IMPERFECTIVE ASPECT MARKING (2)

In Mandarin Chinese, this type of aspectual coercion is not possible. As noted as early as 1975 by Teng, "process verbs" (named after Chafe 1970 and encompassing Accomplishments and Achievements) are not compatible with the imperfective progressive marker *zai*.

(19)   *冰在化

　　　　*bing   zai   hua

　　　　ice   PROG   melt

　　　　(intended : The ice is melting)

IMPERFECTIVE ASPECT MARKING (3)

On theoretical grounds, the compatibility of Imperfective markers such as *zai* and *-zhe* with an verb crucially depends on some semantic feature of the event type.

- A verb associated to Durative *-zhe* has to be "continuous" in type;
- To be compatible with Progressive *zai*, the verb has to be durative and dynamic.

 > These 2 markers should be compatible with Activities, Accomplishments and Semelfactives (in their iterative reading < aspectual coercion)

This is indeed the case with Imperfective in English:

(i)   John is running.   [Activity]

(ii)   John is running a mile.   [Accomplishment]

(iii) John is knocking on the door [Semelfactive]

However, Mandarin Chinese exhibits some further restrictions that are not accounted for by these principles.

IMPERFECTIVE ASPECT MARKING (4) - Accomplishments

First of all *zai* is compatible with Activities (20), with lexical/primitive Accomplishments (21), but not with derived/compound Accomplishments (22) (Tai 1984: 292; Smith 1990: 317-318; Chang 2001: 26):

(20)   李四在吃饭

Lisi   zai   chi   fan

Lisi   PROG   eat   rice

Lisi is eating.

(21)   李四在造一所房子

Lisi   zai   zao   yi   suo   fangzi

Lisi   PROG   build   one   CL   house

Lisi is building a house

(22)   *李四在吃完午饭

*Lisi   zai   chi-wan   wufan

Lisi   PROG   eat-finish lunch

(intended : Lisi is finishing his lunch)

Durative *–zhe* is totally incompatible with compound Accomplishments but may be used with lexical ones.

(23)   乐视造车造着造着，怎么卖起了汽车周边呢？（*www.jiemian.com/article/576738.html*）

Yueshi   zao   che   zao-zhe zao-zhe,...

Yueshi   build   car   build-dur build-dur

Yueshi, in the process of building cars,...

Note that in certain contexts, a lexical Accomplishment followed by *-zhe* will take on a manifest stative value :

(24)   湖海中间交接地方，造着一座一座的宫殿 (*https://books.google.fr/books?id=ycU_RLGdLKkC*)

hu   hai   zhongjian   jiaojie   difang   zao-zhe yi   zuo   yi

lake   sea   middle   cross   place   build-dur one   cl   one

zuo   de   gongdian

cl   mod   palace

At the intersection of lake and sea stand palace after palace.

IMPERFECTIVE ASPECT MARKING (6) - Accomplishments

We could describe this semantic shift as aspectual coercion : durative Accomplishment > State.

Even example (23) could be analysed in this light, seing that it has certain constraints, as for instance the lack of overt object (contrast 造车 with 造着 造着).

The fact that "intervals focused with *-zhe* have the [+State] property" is also claimed by Smith (1991: 363). This would mean that *-zhe* operates a sytematic semantic shift (or aspectual coercion) on situations that are not States to begin with.

IMPERFECTIVE ASPECT MARKING (7) - Achievements

As for Achievements, they are, as predicted given their lack of durativity and Teng's remark, totally incompatible with *zai*, be they lexical (monomorphemic or primitive) (25), or derived (compound) (26):

(25)　　*李四在赢彩票

　　　　* Lisi　zai　　ying　　caipiao

　　　　Lisi　　PROG　win　　lottery

(26)　　*李四在烫伤手

　　　　*Lisi　zai　　tang-shang　shou

　　　　Lisi　　PROG　scald-wound　hand

However, durative *–zhe* is not excluded with primitive achievements:

(27)　我当时并不知道分数，我一直以为自己赢着，后来知道其实分数是打平了

（*2016.sina.com.cn/china/2016-08-20/doc-ifxvcsrn8740952.shtml*）

　　...wo　yizhi　　　yiwei　ziji　　ying-zhe...

　　...I　　all_the_time　think　self　　win-DUR...

　　...during all that time, I was under the impression that I was winning...

Here again, it may be argued that the Achievement gains a static quality when suffixed with durative *-zhe*.

IMPERFECTIVE ASPECT MARKING (9)

Summing up, whereas in English, Accomplishments combine freely with Imperfective aspect and Achievements in the Progressive Imperfective undergo a semantic shift (or aspectual coercion) that can be described as "shift of focus to a preliminary stages of the situation", things are different in Chinese.

In Mandarin Chinese, only primitive Accomplishments are compatible with both Progressive markers, while only primitive Achievements are compatible with the durative Progressive marker *-zhe*.

It may be argued that there is a semantic shift taking place in Chinese when durative Imperfective *-zhe* combines with both Accomplishments and Achievements. This semantic shift could be characterized as stativisation.

Event Type	Perfective asp.		Progressive imperfective asp.		Durative imperfective asp.	
	Eng	Md Ch	Eng	Md Ch	Eng	Md Ch
State	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗
Activity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Lexical Accomplishement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Derived Accomplishment	✓	✓		✗		✗
Lexical Achievement	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Derived Achievement	✓	✓		✗		✗
Semelfactive	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓

Table 5. Compatibility of grammatical and lexical aspect in English and Mandarin Chinese

IMPERFECTIVE ASPECT MARKING (11)

Event Type	English	Event Type	Mandarin Chinese	
			Progressive	Durative
State	✗	State	n.a.	n.a.
Activity	✗	Activity	✗	stative
Accomplishement	✗	Lexical Accomplishement	✗	stative
		Derived Accomplishment	n.a.	n.a.
Achievement	focus on preliminary stage	Lexical Achievement	n.a.	stative
		Derived Achievement	n.a.	n.a.
Semelfactive	iterative	Semelfactive	iterative	stative

Table 6. Aspectual coercion with Imperfective markers in English and Mandarin Chinese

Looking at these two comparison Tables, it becomes apparent that there is an advantage in distinguishing between the two main types of Accomplishments and Achievements, namely lexical/primitive ones vs. compound/derived ones.

This pleads for a descriptive approach that explicitly states this difference, such as Lin's approach (as compared to Smith's, in which all types of Accomplishments are bundled together, as are Achievements).

Moreover, since aspectual coercion does not work the same in English and Mandarin Chinese, explicit teaching may be necessary in order to prevent errors.

BOUNDEDNESS AND THE « BA CONSTRUCTION » (1)

The "BA construction" is one of the main grammatical difficulties for beginners in Chinese.

There are many properties of the structure that need to be noticed by the learners, one of which being that the BA constructions require a "telic" or "bounded event" (depending on the authors making the claim) as its predicate.

There are different possible configurations for this VP. Thus, in this case too, the notion of "telicity" or "boundedness", which traditionally pertains to lexical aspect (as is seen for instance in Dahl's 1981 definition), is expressed through many different devices, some of them clearly syntactic in nature.

Based on Wang (1945) and Lü (1948), Liu lists the following possibilities:

(28) Structure of the predicate in the BA construction (Liu 1997: 55)

    a. V + resultative verb complement
    b. V + *de* (resultative)
    c. V + retained object

    d. V + perfective marker -*le*
    e. V + PP (dative or locative)
    f. V + quantified phrase

    g. V + *yi* + V (the tentative construction)
    h. V + durative marker -*zhe*
    i. Adv + V

Liu's argument is that one can analyze all the cases listed above as denoting bounded events, constrained by **both their lexical aspect and their grammatical aspect marking**. In this respect, Liu's definition of "boundedness" is not just equivalent to "telicity". He writes :

> I will depart from Dahl's view in two aspects. First, I will extend the notion of boundedness to events and take it to be a property of events as well as a property of situations. To decide if an event is bounded, I consider the entire predicate, including the aspect markers. Secondly, rather than looking whether an event has a potential terminal point or a resultative state, I will determine if an event or a situation is bounded on the basis of whether the terminal point or resultative is treated as part of the meaning of the predicate. (Liu, Op. Cit.: 64)

BOUNDEDNESS AND THE « BA CONSTRUCTION » (4)

Thus, the notion of "boundedness" necessary to account for the BA construction is specific to Mandarin Chinese.

Moreover, no explicit knowledge of verb classes/event types is needed on the part of learners.

Rather, they have to grasp this specific notion of "boundedness", which Liu also links to the "specificity" feature of the "BA NP" in his article.

CONCLUSION

GOALS OF THIS TALK:

- Discuss different proposals regarding event types in Mandarin Chinese and assess their suitability for an insightful description of verbal behavior in Chinese

- Discuss the usefulness of these proposals when dealing with Chinese grammar teaching

OUTCOMES:

- A compositional approach to event types, at the interface of lexicon, morphology and syntax, has been shown to be more insightful than a "universalist" approach

- A detailed knowledge of the workings of event types in Mandarin Chinese has also been shown to be more desirable than a "universalist" approach while teaching two grammar points (progressive marking and the "BA construction")

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