**Title:** Acquisition of Descriptive Verbal Complement in Chinese by English Speakers

**Significance:** This study investigates adult English speakers acquisition of the Chinese descriptive verbal complement (DVC) “□ + adj” at early stage of language learning. It shows that 1) both L1 transfer and subsequent restructuring of interlanguage occur in the learning process and 2) the syntactic properties of DVC are acquired earlier than its semantics. The study provides (partial) support for the full transfer/full access hypothesis (Schwartz & Sprouse 1996) and the modularity effects in interlanguage grammars (Montrul 2000).

**Theoretical background:** Schwartz & Sprouse (1996) argued that L1 grammar is the initial state of SLA and that the interlanguage grammar instantiates properties of L1 until it cannot accommodate the L2 input and subsequent UG constrained restructuring takes place. Montrul (2000) claimed that modularity of grammar can be reflected in L2 acquisition and that restructuring of interlanguage in one domain may be earlier than in others. This probably is because L1 does not act as a block in the initial state or because different modules restructure at different times.

**Research procedure:** To investigate Chinese beginners knowledge of the syntactic and semantic properties of the DVC structure, two tests consisting of 15 multiple-choice questions were presented to 15 Second-Semester Chinese learners at University of XXX at the beginning of the semester when they learned DVC, then at the end of the semester after they learned the adverbial particle □. Each question consists of a context in English and five choices in Chinese.

**Major findings:** 1) L2 learners are sensitive to the syntactic properties of DVC but delayed in the acquisition of its semantic features. 2) L2 learners transfer the semantics of the adverbial modifiers in L1, which are syntactically different from Chinese DVC but semantically relevant, to DVC structure. 3) L2 learners restructure the semantics of DVC at a later stage after learning the adverbial modifiers introduced by the adverbial particle □, which are closer to L1 adverbial modifiers both in syntax and semantics.

**Reference:**