Title of the paper

A Learner Corpus Investigation of CFL Learners’ Lexico-grammatical Development of Result-state Resultative Verb Compounds

Significance of the study

Resultative verb compounds (RVCs) are an important class of compound words in Chinese that serve important grammatical functions in Chinese discourse. As morphological constructions, RVCs are a condensed form of verb compounding, with the first component indicating an action and the second component signaling the result of the action (Chao, 1968; Li and Thompson, 1981; Packard, 2000). As grammatical constructions, RVCs are one of the primary resultative constructions in Chinese that represent argument structure and change of state. This study focuses on result-state resultative verb compounds (result-state RVCs), the most intensively researched resultatives in Chinese linguistics due to their morphological and semantic complexities, and examines CFL learners’ lexico-grammatical development of result-state RVCs.

Theoretical framework/background

CFL learners’ acquisition of result-state RVCs has not been given due attention until recently. In the lexical development of result-state RVCs, research on CFL vocabulary interlanguage errors has identified the types of verb-related errors (Xing, 2003; Zhang, 2008); however, a major drawback of error analysis is that they only focused on incorrect usages but not what learners could produce correctly. The first goal of this study is to investigate learners’ lexical development in terms of the frequency of use, vocabulary range, and compound compositionality, which are important indices of L2 lexical development (Read, 2000; Nation, 2001).

With regard to the grammatical development of result-state RVCs, researchers have only examined the internal structure of RVCs (Qiao, 2008; Yuan and Zhao, 2009). The grammatical function of RVCs at the sentential level has not yet been studied. The second goal of this study is to examine how CFL learners acquire this critical grammatical relationship between event type encoded by the result-state RVCs and aspect conveyed by the perfective aspect marker *le*.

More importantly, scholars have mainly examined CFL learners’ receptive knowledge of result-state RVCs. This study employs a learner corpus analysis to investigate the productive knowledge of result-state RVCs.

Research procedure

The study draws data from a written learner corpus of 728 essays and compares learners to Chinese native speakers. The lexical development of result-state RVCs is investigated
based on frequency of use, compositionality and lexical range, and lexical appropriateness. The grammatical development is examined by analyzing the interaction of result-state RVCs and the perfective aspect marker le.

**Major findings**

Findings show that while the frequency of use, compositionality, and lexical range of result-state RVCs grow with learners’ overall language proficiency, the accuracy of result-state RVCs shows a certain degree of regression among the high intermediate and advanced learners. The data reveal two major challenges associated with acquiring result-state RVCs: mastering the change-of-state event structure encoded by the result-state RVCs, and the highly lexical nature of RVCs and the incremental development of compound knowledge. Pedagogical suggestions are provided as how to teach result-state RVCs.

**References**


