Two kinds of complex deadjectival verbs in Mandarin Chinese

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In this talk we shall deal with two kinds of complex deadjectival verbs in Mandarin Chinese: 1) verbs formed with a phonetically realized light verb (cf. Grimshaw & Mester 1988, Feng 2005, Jie 2008) as the left-hand constituent (V$_1$), e.g. 弄 *nòng* 'make', 加 *jiā* 'add, increase'; 2) verbs formed with the suffix 化 *-huà* '-ize, -ify, -en', a very productive pattern of word formation in this language. See the examples in (1) and (2):

(1) 弄干 *nònggān* 'make + dry = dry'   (2) 硬化 *yìnghuà* 'hard + SUFF = harden'
弄平 *nòngpíng* 'make + flat = flatten'   软化 *ruǎnhuà* 'soft + SUFF = soften'
加宽 *jiākuān* 'increase + wide = widen'   美化 *měihuà* 'beautiful + SUFF = beautify'
加长 *jiācháng* 'increase + large = lengthen'   净化 *jìnghuà* 'clean + SUFF = purify'

We will show that the light verbs in (1) and the suffix 化 *-huà* have different functions and may choose different kinds of adjectival items. In deadjectival verbs like those in (1), the light V$_1$ can be attached only to stage-level adjectives. In Mandarin Chinese, stage-level adjectives can be used as eventive predicates, i.e. as verbs of change of state (3), vs. individual-level adjectives, which can only occur in stative predication (e.g. Xiao & McEnery 2004, Liu 2009).

(3)   a. 水   热 / 冷   了。   b. 碗盘   刚   干，   你   又   要   用   了。
        shuǐ   rè / lěng   le   *wǎnpán gāng gān   nǐ   yòu   yào   yòng le*
        water hot cold ASP   dishes just dry   you again want use   ASP
        'The water got hot / cold.'   'The dishes have just dried and you want to use them again.' (Adapted from Tham 2009:5)

We will argue that stage-level adjectives have both adjectival and verbal features; when used as eventive predicates they behave as degree achievement verbs, expressing a gradual change of state, and can be either atelic or telic (cf. Dowty 1979, Hay, Kennedy & Levin 1999, Kennedy & Levin 2002, Rothstein 2008, among others). Incidentally, we will show that deadjectival verbs can be formed also by adding verbal roots, like 变 *biàn* 'become, change into', e.g. 变白 *biànbái* 'whiten', 变空 *biànkōng* 'empty' (cf. also Steffen Chung 2006).
In English, deadjectival degree achievement verbs are usually alternating in transitivity (e.g. Levin 1993, Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995, Ramchand 2008). The corresponding transitive verbs in Mandarin Chinese are formed by adding a phonetically realized light verb, as shown in (1); 加 *jiā* 'add, increase' can be used only with deadjectival verbs based on open-range adjectives. We will show that, interestingly, 加 *jiā* 'add, increase', besides making the transitive variant of deadjectival verbs based on open-range adjectives, also seems to represent one of the relevant part of the logical representation of degree achievement verbs, i.e. the 'increasing' event (cf. Hay, Kennedy & Levin 1999). Interestingly, Chinese deadjectival verbs denoting an increase in negative properties in their transitive form may take a V$_1$ that marks the direction of the change in degree in the negative direction, e.g. 减 *jiǎn* 'decrease, subtract' and 缩 *suō* 'shrink'.

In contrast, the suffix 化 -huà seems to be able to attach both to stage-level and to individual-level adjectives (2); moreover, this suffix can attach to nominal bases as well, e.g. 现代化 *xiàndàihuà* 'modern times + SUFF = modernize/modernization'.

We will analyse the forms in (1) and (2) using the framework put forth by Ramchand (2008), which consists in a syntactic decomposition of the event structure. One of the assumptions underlying this proposal is that the fundamental building blocks of the eventive meaning are the same for all languages, but the very same syntactic structures can be expressed in different ways depending on the specific language and on the particular lexical items in its inventory. In this system, the event structure can be decomposed into a maximum of three subevents, i.e. the causative subevent (*init*P), the process subevent (*proc*P) and the result subevent (*res*P). Lexical items specify the syntactic relevant information (category label or 'tag') which permit their insertion in the eventive structure and may have multiple category features. Accordingly, we will argue that stage-level adjectives in Mandarin Chinese are characterized by having [proc, A] or [proc, res, A] features. Light verbs like those in (1) are causative [init] heads, which build an extra layer (*init*P) on the top of verbs lacking an [init] specification in their lexical entry, forming their transitive variant. In contrast, the suffix 化 -huà is not an [init] head involved in the process of causative alternation. We assume that it possesses [init, proc] features and that it can form verbs from nouns and adjectives through a process by which the noun or the adjective in the *proc*P complement position is incorporated into the head.

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