

教育部人文社会科学重点研究基地
北京外国语大学中国外语教育研究中心·学术著作系列

论元结构新论

**A NEW PERSPECTIVE
ON ARGUMENT STRUCTURES**

王立弟 著



外语教学与研究出版社
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

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北京 BEIJING

(京)新登字 155 号

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

论元结构新论(英文本)/王立弟著. —北京:外语教学与研究出版社, 2003

ISBN 7-5600-3923-5

I. 论… II. 王… III. 语法结构—研究—英文 IV. H04

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2003)第 111805 号

论元结构新论 (英文本)

王立弟 著

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责任编辑: 陈 忠

出版发行: 外语教学与研究出版社

社 址: 北京市西三环北路 19 号 (100089)

网 址: <http://www.fltrp.com>

印 刷: 北京市鑫霸印务有限公司

开 本: 850×1168 1/32

印 张: 5.75

版 次: 2003 年 9 月第 1 版 2003 年 9 月第 1 次印刷

书 号: ISBN 7-5600-3923-5/G·1950

定 价: 8.90 元

* * *

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总 序

中国外语教育研究中心决定将其专/兼职研究员近几年的个人科研成果及课题成果组成学术著作系列，由外语教学与研究出版社（外研社）出版。外研社社长李朋义同志请我讲讲这套系列学术专著的来龙去脉以及其性质、特点，为丛书做个总序。

我先简要介绍一下中国外语教育研究中心的基本情况。北京外国语大学中国外语教育研究中心成立于2000年3月。学校投入百万余元装修了近300平米的办公用房和图书资料室，累计购买了数十台计算机和其他各种科研设备。当年7月，中心通过了教育部专家组的检查验收，9月教育部正式下文，批准中心为全国高校人文社会科学100个重点研究基地之一。

中心的研究人员构成主要是北外外国语言研究所、英语学院、高级翻译学院和应用英语学院的多名教授、副教授，中心同时还聘请了本校日本语研究中心和俄语学院的两位教授，北京大学、社科院语言所、解放军外国语学院、华南理工大学、南京大学等单位的几位教授为兼职研究员。大部分研究员具有博士学位，其中有几位是剑桥大学、香港中文大学和其他国外知名大学毕业的博士。研究人员实行流动管理，带科研项目进入中心，完成项目后可以离开，有新的项目可以延聘。专职和兼职研究员各保持在8-10人左右。

该中心的总体任务是，除语言基础研究外，还系统研究中国外语教育中的各种问题：从外语政策、规划到发展策略，从外语教育理论到教育实践，从教材编写到课程设置，从课堂教学到测试评估，从中小学外语教学到高校的专业外语和公共外语教学。中心的发展目标是建成外语教育的科研攻关基地，外语研究人才的培养基地（硕士生、博士生和博士后），资料图书和信息交流基地，为有关部门提供相关咨询的基地。中心力图成为全国第一的外语教育问题研究机构。

目前，中心承担一项国家社会科学基金项目 and 六项教育部的重大项目，与加拿大合作开展一项国际研究，其中包括中国高校外语教学改革现状与发展策略研究、英汉平行语料库的创建与应用研究、英语能力测试的理论研究和试题开发、高校英语教师教育与发展研究、二语习得理论研究、网络技术在外语教育中的应用、英语学习词典的研编等。这些项目，有的已经发表；

有的已经完成,成果不久即可问世;有的将写出咨询报告。目前中心招收硕士研究生40余名,博士生20余名,博士后1名。这些学生在校期间必须参加中心的部分研究工作,必须有论文发表;博士生和博士后的研究成果必须达到出版水平。

从建立之日起,中心就与外研社有着密切的合作关系。外研社给予中心大力支持,中心通过外研社的研究发展中心为社里提供咨询服务、项目策划、作者联系、稿件终审等。3年来,中心协助外研社举办了多期大学英语教师的暑期培训班(共约3万人),中心研究员每期都提供几个学术报告,同时也对教师进行问卷调查和小组访谈,双方都收到良好效果。更值得一提的是,中心与外研社合作,设立“中国英语教育研究基金”,外研社提供30万元科研经费,每年都组织课题的招标活动,课题内容与中心重大项目相联系,中心负责审查批准立项的项目,培训主持人,最后对报告进行终审等。项目的研究报告将与中心的主题报告同集出版。同时,中心与外研社达成协议,中心的一切科研成果,由外研社独家出版。

这套学术著作系列包括四种科研成果形式。首先是中心承担的重大科研项目的成果,或者以专著形式,或者以系列论文形式,总之是围绕一个课题而展开的。这种研究的优点是:全部为实证研究,是有组织、有计划、规模较大的调查研究;全部是有学术意义的课题,有极大的探索性;这类成果也包括给教育主管部门的咨询报告,为决策者出谋划策。其次就是专/兼职研究员们自选课题的科研成果。这些项目虽然没有在科研主管部门立项,但都是研究员们最感兴趣的课题,有的是多年积累沉淀的最后结晶,有的是把当年的博士论文继续修改、完善,使之与当今研究接轨的成果。第三类是,我们自己培养的博士生和博士后的成果,修改之后,通过评审,达到出版水平,也被纳入这个系列。第四类是学术会议论文集。中心每年举行一次学术研讨会,通过评审的优秀论文由中心编辑加工并加上适当的评介后结集出版。因此,这套系列专著的内容将十分广阔丰富,既有理论性很强的成果,也有突出实用性的成果,形式多样。我们的学术著作丛书是个开放的系列,首批已经成形的有9种,但随着中心研究工作的深入和发展,将会有更多有价值的专著问世。

我非常高兴地向读者推荐这套学术著作系列,我相信它会对语言研究者、外语教育研究者、外语教师、语言学硕士生和博士生及对我国外语教学有兴趣者,都有一定的参考价值。

我谨代表中国外语教育研究中心向外研社表示诚挚的谢意。

刘润清

2003年3月于北京

内容提要

在当代形式主义语言学的研究中最先讨论论元问题的是 Gruber (1965) 和 Fillmore (1968)。此后, 在 Chomsky (1981) 提出的生成语法理论中论元被纳入到其中的一个子语法系统——题元理论 (Theta Theory), 其重要性自不待言。然而, 对于题元关系的本质这一问题, 却一直众说纷纭 (见 Dowty 1991)。本书的观点认为论元是由其在述语的事体结构 (event structure) 中的结构关系决定的。述语的事体结构是对述语动词在词汇层面上复杂内部结构的解析。事体结构体现出述语动词与不同论元具有不同的结构关系。这种关系制约论元在句法层面上的表现和在语义层面上的解释。

本书采用了 Hale 和 Keyser (1991, 1992, 1993) 提出的词汇关系结构 (LRS) 理论。这一理论认为论元在事体结构中占据的位置是依照 X-杠理论, 格理论等普遍的语法原理从述语中心词中投射出来的结点, 并且通过中心词移位 (head-to-head movement) 和兼并 (incorporation) 等语法规则衍生出同一述语的不同论元结构。我们重点研究那些具有复杂事体结构的使役性述语动词及其论元结构的变化, 旨在确立述语中心词和不同论元的结构关系, 并且通过这种关系来分析论元的变化。与此同时, 我们建立一套解释直接域内论元, 间接域内论元和域外论元的规则, 这些规则是述语中心词与论元的结构关系在语义层面上的体现。

本书的第一章介绍研究采用的理论和方法。在这一章里, 我们还简要论述事体结构这一概念的演进和已往研究事体结构所提出的不同理论模型。第二章和第三章探讨汉语动结式复合动词的论元结构及其变化。我们用兼并和中心词移位来说明不同论元结构的衍生过程, 并且指出制约英语动结式句子结构的所谓“直接宾语限制条件” (DOR) 在汉语的相同句子结构中亦起作用。在第四章里, 我们检讨那些具备域内论元换位的述语结构, 重点讨论英语和汉语中包含移位词论元和方位词论元换位 (locatum/location alternation) 的述语结构, 并试图以此确立间接论元在事体结构中的作用。第五章通过检验域外论元对解释句子状语的限定来说明域外论元在事体结构中的不可分割性。换言之, 我们认为使役性动词所表述的是包括域外论元在内的单一事体结构。

Foreword

As a subsystem of grammar, thematic (theta) theory assumes a prominent place in a modularized framework of linguistic theory articulated in Chomsky (1981). However, the nature of the thematic relations has been subject to much debate in linguistic research (Dowty 1991). This study adopts a view that thematic relations borne by the arguments of a predicate can be structurally determined at a syntactically relevant level of lexical representation of the predicate. Theta roles of the arguments are seen as structural projections from the predicate head in accordance with general principles of language such as X-bar Theory and Case Theory and structures involving argument alternations are derived by means of head-to-head movement and incorporation, both of which operate under well-defined principles. The theoretical framework adopted for this study on thematic structures as interface properties of complex predicates is developed by Hale and Keyser (1991, 1992, 1993), who refer to such structural projections as Lexical Relational Structures (LRS).

The present study focuses on the alternating structures of argument realization of complex event predicates in order to determine the structural relations of the different theta roles with the head of the predicate and to derive such argument alternations from structures representing the event type of the predicate. We also develop a set of interpretative constraints on the direct internal argument, the indirect internal argument and the external argument; these interpretive conditions are seen as being determined by the structural properties of the arguments with the head of the predicate in the sentence.

Chapter 1 introduces the theoretical apparatus that we are going to employ for the analysis in the subsequent chapters. We look briefly at the evolution of the notion of event structure and different theoretic models on the analysis of event structure in the literature. We also present the primary evidence for the lexical-syntactic derivation of thematic structures in this chapter. In Chapter 2 and 3, the focus of our study is on the alternative structures of resultative compound predicates in Chinese. We propose that the direct internal argument in the resultative constructions

in Chinese is subject to the same interpretive constraint, namely, the Direct Object Restriction (also known as DOR) as its English counterpart and propose to derive such compound predicates through incorporation and head-to-head movement. In Chapter 4, we examine predicate structures involving alternation of their internal arguments in particular, we look into structures with *locatum location* argument alternations in both English and Chinese in an attempt to determine the *partitive* role of the oblique argument in the event structure representation of the predicate. Finally, we argue in Chapter 5 for a single event view on complex predicates, which treats the external argument as an integral part of the event structure representation of such a predicate through the examination of the restrictive effect of the external argument on the interpretation of adverbials in the sentence.

I went to the City University of Hong Kong in the afternoon (on June 11, 1998), to attend a lecture offered by Professor Carlota S. Smith from the University of Texas at Austin. Exactly one and a half years before that happened, I came across her book *Parameters of Aspect* in the library. I spent a quiet Chinese Lunar New Year holiday reading her book and was fascinated by the discussion of inner aspects in the book. The interest has kept me reading more research literature on issues related to the topic and has led me to probe into the eventuality of complex predicates in my Ph. D. dissertation.

But most of all, my heart-felt thanks go to Dr. Yang Gu, who was my supervisor on my M. Phil. thesis three years ago and is now supervisor of my Ph. D. dissertation. Throughout the years of my study at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, she has untiringly provided guidance and encouragement. She is generous in sharing her ideas and providing the precious time to help tackle the difficulties that arise in the course of my research. With her sense of responsibility and care for her students, she sets a high standard of research excellency and professional integrity for those of us who have benefited to strive for. I would also like to express my thanks to Dr. Thomas Lee in the English Department and Dr. Yuanjian He of the Translation Department at CUHK, both of whom are members of my Dissertation Committee, to Dr. Gladys Tang, Dr. Virginia Yip, Dr. Joseph Boyle and Dr. Joeshp Hong of the Linguistics Program in the Department of English at CUHK and to Dr. Chunyan Ning of Guangdong International Studies University for their willingness to lend support and for the exchange of ideas with them at formal and informal occasions. I am grateful to Professor Manfred Krifka of the University of Texas at Austin for his timely advice and invaluable comments made at the

formulating stage of my dissertation.

I must also express my appreciation of the English Department at CUHK for offering financial assistance during the last three years of my study at the department and for their administrative support. I am also grateful to the Linguistic Society of America for providing me with a scholarship to attend the Linguistic Summer Institute at Cornell University in the summer of 1997, where I benefited greatly from the lectures and workshops on topics related to my own research. Talks with my associates Chuming Wang, Dongfan Hua, Gang Gu and others have always been a source of inspirations for me in the process of my writing.

Finally, I must mention the support from my family: my parents, my wife and my son for their moral support and for providing a sense of purpose in my life over the years that I have been away from them. Without their support and understanding, I could not have completed this task alone.

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1. Thematic Relations and Event Structure

1.1 Introduction

Progress has been made on the study of thematic structures over the past decade or so, following the success of the Government Binding framework of linguistic theory, which encompasses thematic (theta) theory as a module of grammar (Chomsky 1981).^① One of the intrinsic difficulties of thematic theory as originally formulated in Gruber (1965, 1976), Fillmore (1968) and Jackendoff (1972) is how to constrain the numerous thematic roles (or cases for Fillmore) found in natural language to a sufficiently limited set to prevent the proliferation of theta roles and to capture significant syntactic generalizations. Many studies on thematic structures in the 80s bypass this problem by viewing thematic roles as a system of configurationally defined either in syntax or at the relevant level of lexical representation. For example, the term *external argument* is used to refer to the NP that is outside the maximal projection of the verb and that is assigned its theta-role through predication (Williams 1980), the NP that is assigned its theta role directly from the verb is referred to as the *direct (internal) argument* while the NP whose theta role is assigned by a preposition is referred to as the *indirect (internal) argument* (Marantz 1984). Among researchers who claim that thematic relations are defined at the relevant lexical structures are Zubizarreta (1987) and Rapaport and Levin (1988). Many researchers at the same time claim that the semantically defined role-types are irrelevant to the syntactic behavior of argument

① The theta theory defined by the Theta Criterion states that, 'each NP argument of a predicate is assigned exactly one theta-role, and the same theta-role is not assigned to two NP arguments of the same predicate' (Chomsky 1981:139). The theta theory, thus defined, serves two main purposes in the GB theory: (i) distinguishing *real*, semantically contentful arguments of a predicate from dummy arguments such as the English *it* and *there* in syntax, and (ii) helping to keep track of identity and distinctness of NPs of particular semantic arguments of a predicate during the course of a derivation.

NPs these role-types are supposed to represent (Rappaport and Levin 1988, Grimshaw 1990).^①

Despite the difficulties in defining thematic roles and their dubious characters as syntactic entities, grammatical analyses often make reference to the hierarchical order of thematic roles as the basis for syntactic operations (e. g., Nishigauchi 1984 on control; Belletti and Rizzi 1988 on psycho-verbs and Larson 1988 on double-object construction). Furthermore, a more principled formulation of the relationship between syntactic structure and thematic structure is articulated by Baker (1988). His Uniformity of Theta Assignment Hypothesis (UTAH) claims that 'identical thematic relationships between items are represented by identical structural relationships between those items at the level of d-structure.' Claims on the thematic hierarchy or UTAH can be validated only if thematic roles are well-defined notions. The present study views thematic roles and their relations as being determined by tie syntactically-relevant aspects of the lexical structures of a predicate. Furthermore, we argue the level of lexico-syntactic representation for the internal structures of complex predicates is identified with the event structure of these predicates and the most typical form of event structure is that of a lexical-causative predicate.^②

1.2 Vendlerian classes

The origin of the study on event structure can be traced back to Aristotle, who distinguished between *ékhein* 'state' and *engergeîn* 'activity' in *De Animo* and between the inconclusive *engérgiai* and conclusive *kínēsis* in *Metaphysics*. The Aristotelian classification has had considerable import for the philosophy of action

① Jackendoff's (1983, 1990) conceptual semantics is concerned with thematic roles for their part played in semantic patterns in lexical subcategorization and in syntax. He refers to such structures as lexical-conceptual structure. For him, thematic relations are most importantly notions of conceptual structure.

② In the present study thematic roles are defined as projected positions on the event structure of predicates. Arguments refer to NPs that occupy these positions in syntax. Adopting the view that base-generated arguments are identified by the thematic positions on the lexical event structure, we sometimes use the term external/internal arguments, etc., to refer to the thematic positions on the event structure for ease of exposition with no intention of mixing up the levels.

and intention, but it has little direct influence on the grammatical thought, where such properties are concerned. The reason is that Aristotle was not especially concerned about linguistics, according to Binnick (1991).

The study of event structure in modern linguistics is associated with works by Ryle (1949), Kenny (1963) and Vendler (1957/1967) on verbal classification. They classified verbs into *states*, *activities*, *accomplishments* and *achievements*; these verb classes are sometimes referred to as the Vendlerian classes in the literature. Bach (1981) distinguishes three types of predicates: *states*, *processes* and *events*. The first two *states* and *processes* correspond to *states* and *activities* in the Vendlerian classes but *events* includes both *achievements* and *accomplishments* in the former. Bach also uses the generic term *eventuality* to refer to fundamental properties that give rise to such classification. The four major classes recognized by most researchers are listed in (1) with illustrative examples:

- (1) States: *know*, *believe*, *have*, *love*, *support*, *stand*, *sit*,
 desire, *want*
 Activities: *run*, *walk*, *sing*, *swim*, *push a cart*, *drive a car*;
 Accomplishment: *build a house*, *paint a picture*, *run a mile*,
 walk to school
 Achievement: *recognize*, *find*, *win*, *notice*, *spot*, *die*, *lose*,
 arrive

As we shall see from discussions that follow, these classes not only reflect conceptually different categories of verbs, but, more importantly, reveal aspects of lexical structure that have syntactic consequences. Many syntactic constructions have been used as diagnostic tests for establishing the different verb classes in the literature (Ryle 1949, Vender 1957/1967, Kenny 1963, and Dowty 1979). We now turn to look at some of these tests that distinguish states from non-states, activities from events and accomplishments from achievements.

1.2.1 States vs. non-states

States generally represent situations that are best described as *static* or *non-dynamic*, while non-stative predicates (activities and accomplishments) represent processes going on in time and are described as *dynamic* (Bergman 1983). The progressive aspect in English denotes an on-going and dynamic process; thus, it is only compatible with activities and accomplishments but not with the non-dynamic nature of states. The sentence in (2a) with an activity predicate and that in (2b)

with an accomplishment predicate represent dynamic processes which can occur in the progressive form, while the stative predicates in (2c) and (2d) in the progressive form are anomalous.

- (2) a. John is pushing a cart.
- b. Bill is drawing a circle.
- c. * John is knowing Bill.
- d. * John is adoring Mary.

A second property that is said to distinguish states from activities and accomplishments is that of *agency* or *volition* (Vendler 1967:105). While activities and accomplishments involve acts of will, states describe situations that are invitational and involuntary. One does not under normal circumstances choose to be *tall* (or *short*): being tall isn't something you do; but one can choose to run or not to run. Different diagnostic tests have been proposed to demonstrate the involitional properties of states as opposed to non-states. For example, stative predicates such as *be tall* in (3a) and *know* in (3b) cannot be used in pseudo-cleft constructions, which highlight intentional participation in a particular event, but non-stative predicates such as *run* in (3c) and *build a house* in (3d) are compatible with pseudo-cleft constructions.

- (3) a. * What John did was be tall.
- b. * What John did was know the answer.
- c. What John did was run.
- d. What John did was build a house.

One can only give orders to others on things that can be intentionally implemented. Therefore, imperative constructions are only compatible with non-stative predicates such as *run* in (4d) or *draw a circle* in (4e); imperative sentences with stative predicates such as *be sick* in (4a), *love Mary* in (4b) or *resemble Bill* in (4c) are ungrammatical.

- (4) a. * Be sick!
- b. * Love Mary!
- c. * Resemble Bill!
- d. Run!
- e. Draw a circle!

Finally, the use of adverbs such as *deliberately*, *desperately* and *carefully* also requires volitional participation of some kind in the situation. Again, stative predicate *know the answer* (5a) cannot be used with such adverbs, but no such restrictions

are imposed on non-stative predicates such as *run* in (5b) and *build* in (5c).

(5) a. *John deliberately knew the answer.

b. John ran desperately.

c. John carefully built a house.

1.2.2 Activities vs. events

Activities contrast with states, on the one hand; they contrast with events (i.e., accomplishments and achievements), on the other. The latter, unlike activities, have a culminative phase and can *finish* as well as merely *stop* or *cease*. One can say either *John stopped painting the picture* or *John finished painting the picture* depending on the circumstances; but one can only say *John stopped running* with activity verbs. It would be quite odd to say *John finished running*, unless John's running is perceived as some kind of racing event. The difference between *finish* and *stop* with an accomplishment sentence is that the sentence *John finished painting the picture* entails that he painted the picture, whereas *John stopped painting the picture* does not entail that he painted it. In other words, the word *finish* takes into account the culminative phase of an accomplishment verb, and only when the act culminates can one describe it as being *finished*, but this is not the case with *stop*. One can stop in the middle of accomplishing some task as in the case of *John stopped painting* or stop doing something that does not entail an inherent end as in the case of *John stopped running*.

The *durative* adverbial *for an hour* is compatible with activity verbs but not with achievement verbs as in (6); whereas the *frame* adverbial *in an hour* goes along well with accomplishment verbs; activity verbs cannot take a frame adverbial as shown in (7).^①

(6) a. John walked for an hour.

b. *John noticed a dollar on the pavement for an hour.

(7) a. John painted a picture in an hour.

b. *John walked in an hour.

Semantically, the verb *spend* is related to the *durative for*-adverbials. Thus, one can spend an hour running, but one cannot spend an hour noticing the dollar on the pavement. The verb *take* on the other hand, is semantically equivalent to the

① Bennett and Partee (1978) distinguish three main classes of adverbials: *Frame* Adverbials, *Durative* Adverbials and *Frequency* Adverbials.

inadverbials, which is compatible with accomplishments but not activities. One can say *it took John two days to paint that picture but not it took John an hour to run*.

Garey (1957) introduces the term *telic* for expressions which have natural culminations, and *atelic*, for those 'which do not have to wait for a goal for their realization.' *Writing* represents an activity and hence constitutes an atelic expressions; *Tom was writing* entails that *Tom wrote*. *Writing a letter* is, however, an accomplishment; *Tom was writing a letter* does not entail that *Tom wrote a letter*. Telicity serves to distinguish events (achievements and accomplishments) from states and activities in that the former necessarily involves a change-of-state or an outcome. However, telicity is not identical with another concept representing completeness, namely, that of *perfectivity*. The activity of running may be perfective or imperfective (*he ran*, *he was running*), but so may be the event of drawing a circle (*he drew a picture*, *he was drawing a circle*). Garey exhibits the independence of the telic/atelic and perfective/imperfective oppositions in French in a table repeated here in (8):

(8)		Imperfective	Perfective
	Telic	<i>Pierre arrivait</i>	<i>Pierre est arrivé</i>
	Atelic	<i>Pierre jouait</i>	<i>Pierre a joué</i>

The telic predicate arriver 'arrive' can occur in either the imperfective form *Pierre arrivait* or in the perfective form *Pierre est arrivé*; so is the atelic predicate jouer 'play': it can occur either in the imperfective form *Pierre jouait* or in the perfective form *Pierre a joué*. Telicity is primarily an inherent property of situations while perfectivity is a verbal category and more restricted. It is, therefore, legitimate to describe a telic situation with an imperfective expression as in *He was crossing the road*, describing the incompleteness of a situation that has an inherent terminus.^①

1.2.3 Accomplishment vs. achievement

Events are divided up into accomplishments and achievements on the basis of whether they contain an activity phase or not. Another way of characterizing them, however, is as either *durative*—taking place over an interval, or *punctual*—

① Verkuyl (1972) is the first to point out that telicity is a property of situations and of the linguistic expressions referring to those situations.