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管 博◎著

A Study of Verb-Particle Combinations in CLEC  
—A Cognitive Linguistic Perspective

中国学习者语料库中的  
动品组合研究  
——认知语言学视角



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## 前 言

词语组合可能是语言学及应用语言学领域内研究最多的课题之一。语言学者们从词汇学、语义学、语料库语言学、语用学、心理语言学、文体学等诸多角度对其都进行过广泛的理论研究,各种研究中又分别突出词语组合的不同层面,所用术语纷繁复杂,研究方法不一而足。然而,虽然学者们的视角千差万别,他们却一致认为词语组合能力是本族语者语言能力的重要组成部分。有鉴于此,我国英语教学迫切需要关注并促进英语学习者语言组合能力的发展。这就需要了解英语词语组合如何并在多大程度上对学习者造成了习得上的困难。

不幸的是,大多数先前的理论研究都侧重于词语组合本身的语义句法层面,并从这些角度考虑外语/二语习得者学习英语词语组合中存在的困难(如语义透明度、组合搭配限制和文体特殊性等造成的习得困难)。受其影响,大部分二语习得领域内对语言组合的研究都更关注于描述学习者在这几方面的词语组合能力及组合行为。相比之下,英语词语组合中与外语/二语习得者母语相关的层面却很少得到认真、系统的研究。虽然学者们普遍承认并经常在错误分析中提到母语影响是组合使用错误的主要原因,但大多只是把母语影响泛泛地描述为二语和母语的差异(或缺少具体的对等组合),一个对学习者错误的方便的解释。很少有研究从对比的角度出发,系统地研究跨语言差异及其对学习者造成的习得困难。因此,为了更好地了解英语词语组合对中国学习者造成的习得困难,我们需要从学习者的视角出发,对比研究汉英组合方式的差异,并实证考查这些差异对中国学习者词语组合行为的影响。

本书以宏事件和动词—小品词组合为具体研究对象,从认知语言学的角度来分析汉英表征同一概念(宏事件)时的词语组合方式的差异,并在此基础上考查学习者语料库中的动词—小品词组合,旨在

从更深层次探索跨语言差异及其对外语学习者习得词语组合造成的困难并为中国学习者词语组合的学习和教学提供一种新思路。

本书共五部分。第一部分为第一章,引言。第二部分为词语组合和动词—小品词组合研究综述,由第二、第三章组成。第三部分包括第四、第五章。第四章探讨了词语组合跨语言差异的性质,从认知语言学的角度出发分三个层次分析了形式—概念(宏事件)联系间的跨语言差异,建立了跨语言宏事件表征对比分析的框架。第五章在该框架基础上,从英汉构架事件词汇化模式的总体类型学特征及宏事件的常见表现形式(英语中常为动词—小品词组合)、英汉时、体的表现形式、动词的意义包蕴、现代汉语的特征、附加语所表达的意象图式等方面比较了汉英宏事件表征的差异。第四部分包括第六、第七章。该部分以第三部分为框架和理论基础,用中介语对比分析和错误分析的方法分析了语料库中的动词—小品词组合,实证研究汉英宏事件表征的差异对学习者使用动词—小品词的影响。第六章介绍数据来源、方法及研究的步骤。第七章报道并分析结果。最后一部分,第八章,讨论了研究结果对教学、理论研究及词语组合研究方法论的启示及研究的未来方向。

本书从一个较新的视角——认知语言学的视角出发,较系统深入地对比了汉英在表征宏事件上所存在的词语组合方式上的差异,较全面地研究了这些差异对我国学习者使用该类组合的影响,是词语组合研究领域的新探索和新尝试,期望其发现对于教师词语组合的教学实践、教材的编写以及研究者词语组合的研究方法论都有所启示。

著 者

2012年9月

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# Part I

## Introduction

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### Chapter 1 Introduction

#### 1.1 Rationale for the study

Word combination is perhaps one of the most heavily-explored phenomena in the fields of linguistics and applied linguistics. Researchers working in areas such as lexicology, semantics, corpus linguistics, pragmatics, psycholinguistics, stylistics have studied it from various theoretical perspectives, foregrounding different dimensions to word combination. It is generally agreed among the researchers, whatever their theoretical standpoint, that native speaker linguistic competence has a large and significant word-combinational component (Widdowson, 1989; Howarth, 1998).

In view of its importance, there seems to be every reason for EFL teachers to pay attention to the development of such competence in EFL learners. This, of course, requires an understanding of how and to what extent word combinations present difficulties for learners (Howarth, 1998).

Unfortunately, studies in this aspect seem to be few and unbalanced in research orientation.

Most previous theoretical studies focus on L2-related dimensions to word combinations and the problematic areas of word combinations that they are concerned with are L2-related too. Semantic opacity, restriction and stylistic peculiarity of word combinations are the major obstacles for learning identified.

Influenced by the theoretical studies, the majorities of SLA studies on word combinations are concerned with description of learners' combinatory knowledge and combinatory behavior in L2-related dimensions. They have revealed that word combinations are generally problematic for learners and semantic opacity, restriction and stylistic peculiarity of word combinations do cause great trouble for learners in acquisition (e. g. Cowie & Howarth; Howarth, 1998; Nesselhauf, 2003).

By contrast, L1-related dimensions to word combinations are seldom studied seriously and systematically. L1 influence, though commonly acknowledged as one major source for errors and frequently mentioned in the analysis, is only described vaguely as L1-L2 differences or L1-L2 non-congruence (lack of direct lexical equivalence in Bahns, 1993; Nesselhauf, 2003) and seems to be used only as a general and convenient explanation for learners' deviational language behavior. Few studies have systematically analyzed word combinations from a contrastive perspective and investigated deductively the difficulty that cross-linguistic differences in the way words combine cause for learners' acquisition and use of them.

However, as Marton (1977) points out, the notion of word combinations finds its full dimensions only when it is considered contrastively. Besides, decision as to which perspective should be taken to describe a multi-dimensional phenomenon should be made according to whom and what the description is for (Hunston & Francis, 2000). For EFL learners, L1 influence is without doubt one major source of difficulty in acquisition and deviant combinational behavior. A description of word combinational phenomenon from a contrastive and learner-centered perspective rather than L2-centered perspective is likely to be of greater help. Therefore, to get a better understanding of word combinations

and how they cause difficulty for Chinese EFL learners, a theoretical exploration into Chinese-English differences in the way words combine and an empirical investigation of the influence of the differences on learners' acquisition of word combinations is needed. That necessitates the present study.

As linguistic knowledge is basically conceptual structure and semantics is conceptualization (Croft & Cruse, 2004; Langacker, 2004), cross-linguistic differences are in essence conceptual. This means that L1-L2 differences in the way words combine can only be fully understood from a cognitive linguistic perspective. Therefore, the present study attempts to explore cross-linguistic differences in word combinations from a cognitive linguistic perspective and study the difficulties they cause for learners' acquisition of word combinations through analyzing learners' written production.

The focus of the research is restricted to verb-particle combination (VPC hereafter) because it is representative of word combinations in general, comparatively neatly-organized, extremely common and notoriously difficult to acquire.

It is hoped that through the exploratory study of the nature of VPCs and VPCs in learners' written production from a cognitive linguistic perspective, a deeper understanding of the nature of cross-linguistic differences in word combinations and difficulty they pose for learners can be arrived at.

## 1.2 Aims of the study

The present study aims to achieve the following objectives in four aspects:

### *Theoretical :*

- Build a framework of L1-L2 difference in representation of macro-events

- Study the influence of cross-linguistic differences on learners' use of VPCs deductively

*Empirical :*

- Describe both learners' uses of VPCs that are consistent with the NS norm and those that are deviant from the NS norm

- Discover developmental features of learners in the use of VPCs

*Methodological :*

- Compare automatic computer analysis with EHI corpus approach based on large corpus data

*Applied:*

- Provide illuminative research findings which can be integrated in teaching practice (improving teaching methods, material development, etc.)

The major research questions it intends to address are as follows:

1. How specifically Chinese and English differ from each other in representation of macro-events?
2. Are there any differences between Chinese EFL learners and native speakers of English in the use of VPCs?
3. How do Chinese-English differences in representation of macro-events influence Chinese learners' use of VPCs?
4. How does the influence change with the increase of proficiency?

The study is meant to be an integration of quantitative and qualitative analyses in the sense that it involves contrastive analysis of cross-linguistic differences from a cognitive linguistic perspective, statistical analysis of corpus data and error analysis.

### **1.3 Organization of the book**

The book develops in five parts.

Part I of the book includes only Chapter 1, the introduction to the present study. It provides the rationale for the study, specifies the aims of the study and brings up the research questions.

Part II consists of Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. It offers literature review on word combinations and VPCs.

Part III includes Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. It looks into the nature of cross-linguistic differences in word combinations and VPCs from a cognitive linguistic perspective and makes theoretical exploration into Chinese-English differences in representation of macro-events, answering research question No. 1. Chapter 4 illustrates how linguistic representations of macro-events differ across languages due to disparity in conceptualization and provides a cognitive linguistic view of VPCs, that is, VPC is the commonest syntactic realization from of conceptual structure of macro-events in English. It also establishes the framework on which a comparison of Chinese and English in representing macro-events is based. Chapter 5 analyzes Chinese-English differences in representation of macro-events in detail on the basis of the framework laid out in Chapter 4.

Part IV, empirical exploration, includes Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. It investigates the influence of Chinese-English differences in representation of macro-events on Chinese EFL learners' use of VPCs and answers research questions No. 2–4. Chapter 6 introduces data sources, the methodology, and the procedure of the empirical research. Chapter 7 reports the results and analyzes the findings.

Part V, Chapter 8, is the conclusion part. It expands on pedagogical, theoretical and methodological implications of the findings and concludes the book. Limitations and direction for future research are also discussed.

# **Part II**

## **Literature Review**

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### **Chapter 2 Word Combinations**

Word combinations refer to lexical relations on the syntagmatic plane. A multitude of theoretical and empirical studies have been conducted on them. This chapter reviews literature on word combinations, states the necessity for the present study and justifies the narrowing down of the focus of the study to a particular kind of word combinations—VPCs.

Section 2.1 and Section 2.2 review major theoretical and empirical studies on word combinations, introduce dimensions to combinational phenomenon they focus on and perspectives they take, and summarize the major insights they provide into the nature of word combinations and second language learners' acquisition of them.

Section 2.3 identifies the gaps in the literature and points out the need for theoretical research on L1-related dimensions to word combinations and for empirical research on how cross-linguistic differences in the way words combine present difficulty for learners' acquisition of word combinations. It also explains the necessity of exploring the cross-linguistic differences in word combinations from a cognitive linguistic perspective and the reasons for narrowing down the focus of the study to VPCs.

#### **2.1 Dimensions to word combinations**

Word combinations have been studied from the perspectives



of lexicology, semantics, corpus linguistics, language teaching, pragmatics, psycholinguistics, stylistics<sup>①</sup>, and so forth. Studies from different perspective foreground different dimensions to word combinations and describe different scope of phenomenon<sup>②</sup>. This section outlines the major studies done from the major perspectives and the dimensions to word combinations they focus on.

### 2.1.1 Form-meaning composites

Studies from the perspectives of lexicology and semantics mainly focus on word combinations as form-meaning composites. The feature of word combinations which researchers within these fields are mostly concerned with is semantic opacity. The combinational phenomenon most heavily addressed is idiom.

Idioms in the narrow sense are word combinations whose meaning can not be totally derived from putting their components together according to syntactic rules. Studies of idioms arise from both the needs for language description and awareness of learners' difficulty in decoding word sequences even with adequate knowledge of orthographic words and syntactic rules.

A brief review of theoretical studies of idioms (see Table 1) shows that on the one hand, compositeness, institutionalization and semantic opacity are the three most frequently mentioned features of idioms (Fernando, 2000)<sup>③</sup> and idioms in narrow senses are non-compositional. On the other hand, however, it has been gradually realized that form-meaning composites vary in degree of

① Literature review here only deals with synchronic description of word combinations.

② This produces an unruly collection of terms (McCarthy & Schmitt, 1997; Moon, 1997). See Wray (2002: 9) for a summary of various terms used and Nelson (2000) for a chronological review of the major terms used.

③ A few researchers also called those idiosyncrasies of English idioms. However, this is a less common reference of idioms.