A PROBE-GOAL APPROACH TO THE MINIMALITY EFFECT IN CHINESE MODIFIER V-*DE* CONSTRUCTION

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ABSTRACT

Mandarin Chinese has a modifier [V-*de* X] construction with a cluster of properties: X is both syntactically and semantically a predicate of the event denoted by V, unique per clause and demonstrably in the complement position of V. Whereas these properties collectively set X apart from postverbal adverbials in European languages, X not only can be interpreted as if it were one of a wide range of adverb classes but also interacts with actual preverbal adverbials of certain types and yields a minimality effect. We present an explanation that makes use of the probe-goal theory of syntactic dependencies and the association of adverb classes *adv* to their corresponding licensing heads H. It will be shown that the morpheme -*de* embodies agreement between *adv* and H. When coupled with a strict Kayne-style clausal structure that Chinese has, this characterization of -*de* helps explain all the properties of the modifier [V-*de* X] construction.

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KEYWORDS
Probe-goal   **M**inimality   **M**odification   **V**-*de*   **A**dverbial

1. INTRODUCTION

      This paper investigates a novel phenomenon in Chinese: An adjectival syntactic predicate X sitting in the complement position of the matrix verb V is interpreted as modifying V and projects a corresponding scope subject to minimality induced by a preverbal adverbial of certain types. The pattern is schematically shown in (1) while the cluster of properties associated with it is listed in (2):

(1) … [$_Y$ … (*adv) … V-*de* X], with Y being the scope of X.
(2) a. -*de* is a bound morpheme obscure both semantically and grammatically (other than the descriptive function of introducing X);
   b. X is popularly taken to describe the manner of V but in fact can accommodate a wide range of "adverb" classes;
   c. X differs from postverbal adverbs in European languages in that
     i. there is unequivocal evidence that X acts as a syntactic predicate,
     ii. there can be no more than one X per clause,
     iii. X is structurally in the complement position of V, and
     iv. other than the mediating -*de*, V and X must be linearly adjacent.

We hope to demonstrate that the phenomenon summarized in (1−2) is most adequately explained with the probe-goal theory of constituent dependencies (Chomsky 2000, 2001; also see Pesetsky and Torrego 2007; Wurmbrand 2011; among others) plus Cinque's (1999) model of adverbs.

      The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 presents the core facts behind (1) and (2a–b) and two representative analyses are critically evaluated with a view to strengthening the plausibility of our analysis. Our own attempt at the problem is given in section 3. Throughout these sections, the multiple traits of X in (2c) will be assumed, leaving their proof to section 4 so as to focus on the central concern of this work.[1] Worth keeping in mind from the start are: (A) Given (2c.iv), either V must be intransitive or the object of V must be moved out so that V and X can be adjacent in V-de X examples; (B) (2c) collectively distinguishes X from a

从目标－探针理论看汉语描写性 V-*de* 结构中的极近效应

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摘要

传统语法中描写性补语结构[V-*de* X]中的 X 有一系列区别于印欧语中动词后副词的特征：X 是谓词性成分，语义上描述事件的特征，这些特征不仅限于表示频率、方式和结果等对应于印欧语言中低位副词的特征，也可指事件施事者特征及对事件的评论等高位副词特征；在句法上 X 是动词 V 的唯一补足语。在此基础上，本文发现此结构中动词前出现 A-*de* 类副词时，A-*de* 类副词只能是比 X 更高位的副词而不能是更低位的副词，本文认为这是极近效应的作用，并用目标－探针理论对这种现象进行了解释：语素 *de* 语义上表修饰，句法上激发修饰语 A/X（探针）与核心词 H（目标）之间一致关系的确立，位于 X 的 C-统治域内的低位副词 A 会阻断 X 搜寻到相对应的核心词 H 因而产生极近效应。

关键词

目标－探针理论 **极**近效应 **修**饰关系 **V**-*de* **状**语