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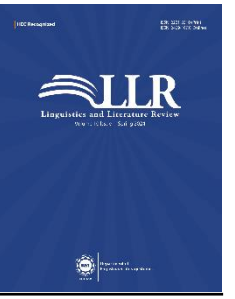

A Cognitive Grammar Approach to a Complex Verb Construction in Mandarin Chinese "V-O-V *de* X"

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A Cognitive Grammar Approach to a Complex Verb Construction in Mandarin Chinese "V-O-V *de* X"

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Abstract

This study investigates the semantic categories of the Mandarin Chinese "VOV*de*X" construction based on 2,410 corpus instances collected from the BCC and CCL corpora. Adopting a corpus-based Cognitive Grammar approach, it examines the semantic relationship between the verb-object sequence (VO) and the verb-complement sequence (V*de*X). The findings reveal three major semantic types: descriptive, commentary, and causative. In the descriptive type, V*de*X characterizes a state or condition associated with the event expressed by VO. In the commentary type, V*de*X conveys the speaker's evaluative judgment of the event. In the causative type, V*de*X denotes a result brought about by the action encoded in VO. These findings demonstrate that the construction forms a systematic semantic network and highlights the role of subjectivity in meaning construction. The research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of Mandarin Chinese verb-copying constructions.

Keywords: VOV*de*X construction, semantic categories, corpus-based analysis, Mandarin Chinese grammar, descriptive–commentary–causative types

Introduction

The focus of this study is on the "VOV*de*X" construction in mandarin Chinese (where *de* stands for "得") based on a corpus-based data, which is a common term in spoken and written Chinese. The "VOV*de*X" construction has two verbs, the second time being a repetition of the first, making it a unique construction. For example:

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(1) 你 母亲 教育 你 教育 得 很成功。(BCC)
nǐ mǔ qīn jiào yù nǐ jiào yù de hěn chéng gong.
you mother educate you educate DE very successful
'Your mother educated you very successfully.'

(2) □ □ □ □ □□ □□□□ (BCC)
kàn shū kàn de yǎn jīng dōu suān le.
read-book read DE eyes all sore PFV

The two expressions *nǐ mǔqīn jiàoyù nǐ jiàoyù de hěn chénggōng* ("your mother educated you very successfully") and *kàn shū kàn de yǎnjīng dōu suān le* ("reading books made my eyes sour"), as shown in Examples (1) and (2), consist of two identical verbs ("V"), an object ("O"), an auxiliary particle *de*, and a complement ("X"). In this construction, the variables "V", "O" and "X" represent other lexical elements while the constant grammatical element "de" remains unchanged. The two instances of the verb are the same, but may be distinguished as V1 and V2 if needed. The first verb + the object is a verb-object structure (VO) and the second verb + the complement is a V-de-X structure. It is a well-known pattern in Mandarin Chinese known as verb-copying construction (Cheng, 2008; Tai, 1999).

In this context, the examples can be abstracted as the VOV*de*X construction, which is an important sub-type of Mandarin verb-copying constructions. In previous analyses, verb-copying constructions have been found to be syntactic, semantic and discourse-oriented (Li & Thompson, 1981; Ross et al., 2024). Structurally, the building has been investigated regarding verb copying, movement and the linkage between the two verb positions (Li, 2019; Nunes, 2004). The functional and cognitive aspects of the construction are a result of the interplay between event structure, complement interpretation, and information organization (Goldberg, 1995; Hoffmann, 2022).

Several analysts have suggested different types of Mandarin verb-copying constructions. Some studies highlight the syntactic properties, such as the syntactic relationship between V^1, V^2 and the complement, while others focus on the semantic properties, especially the semantic orientation and interpretation of the complement (Cheng, 2008; Tai, 1999). Thus, a systematic analysis taking into account the syntactic form and semantic function is needed to take a deeper look into the internal organization of the

VOV*de*X construction.

Moreover, the meanings of the different patterns of the VOV*de*X construction are not separated as different categories, but rather they are related by a common structural schema. In construction grammar, grammatical constructions consist of form + meaning, and can acquire multiple, interconnected senses via processes like metaphorical extension and semantic association (Goldberg, 1995; Lakoff, 1987). Thus, the purpose of this study is to ground an investigation of the VOV*de*X construction in the corpus methodology in order to look into the semantic categories and polysemy relationships between the VO component and V*de*X component of the construction. The work is designed to systematically describe the syntactic structures, semantic differences and extensions of the Mandarin verb-copying constructions based on real corpus analysis.

Literature Review

Research Overview of the "VOV*de*X" Construction

According to previous analyses of Mandarin verb-copying constructions, the "VOV*de*X" construction is generally regarded as a subtype of verb-copying constructions in Mandarin, Chinese. Although verb-copying sentences have received considerable attention in Chinese linguistics, studies specifically focusing on the "VOV*de*X" construction remain relatively limited. Existing research has primarily examined its syntactic characteristics, semantic properties, and diachronic development, while its cognitive-semantic motivations and usage patterns in authentic language data have received comparatively less attention (Cheng, 2008; Tai, 1999).

In terms of grammaticalization, Kuteva et al. (2019) holds that the "VOV*de*C" construction has experienced great changes in syntactic composition, syntactic functions and the semantic orientation of complements. The changes are considered to be part of a grammaticalization process that is still in progress, which is explained through processes such as analogy and analogical extension. What this account tells us about the history of the construction is of great value, but it is predominantly concerned with structural change, and not so much with the way in which the construction is thought and used in actual speech.

Other studies have explored the similarities and differences between the "VOV*de*C" and "V*de*OC" constructions at the syntactic, semantic and

pragmatic levels. In examples such as one study reported that the alternation between these two patterns is analyzed and it is proposed that the alternation is limited by the semantic properties of predicates, in particular ditransitive verbs and psychological verbs. The study also notes that the position of the object is usually taken by noun phrases, such as common nouns, proper nouns and personal pronouns. There is, however, a line of research which focuses on the formal distribution of alternations and sees them as less motivated by the semantic network and cognitive mechanisms involved (Cheng, 2008; Goldberg, 1995).

Pedagogical applications have also been developed as a result of research. Some studies have investigated the problem that Chinese FLL students encounter in learning the "VOV*de*C" and the "V*de*OC" sentences, and suggests the corresponding teaching strategies. Pedagogical research has noted the difficulties encountered by learners in these constructions, but they tend to focus on the description of the grammatical rules and few investigate the psychological-semantic aspects which can enable learners to comprehend the construction meaningfully (Ellis, 2008; Tyler, 2012).

In general, the previous research has significantly contributed to the knowledge on the structural features, grammaticalization processes, and didactic uses of the construction "VOV*de*X". However, there are a number of research gaps that remain. First, there are not many studies that systematically investigate the semantic properties of the construction on the basis of a large corpus. Second, there is limited research examining the motivation for different semantic functions of the construction. Thirdly, speakers' construal of the construction has not been given enough consideration for determining the meaning of the construction. The gaps revealed the necessity of investigating the "VOV*de*X" construction by using the corpus-based cognitive grammatical approach as the main object of the present study.

Research Overview of Verb-copying Sentences

Structural Approach to Verb-copying Sentences

The structural approach is one of the earliest efforts at explaining the grammatical characteristics of verb copying sentences. Sentence analysis within structural linguistics is usually done by Immediate Constituent (IC) analysis, which is a hierarchical analysis of constituents. This method suggests that there is only a direct relationship at each level of analysis

between two immediate constituents. This is a process of breaking down a sentence in a step by step manner to arrive at the ultimate constituents.

However, verb-copying sentences are very difficult for the traditional IC analysis. Consider the sentence *kàn shū kàn de yǎn jīng dōu suān le* ('Reading makes my eyes sore'). In this kind of structures, the repeated verb is used in two syntactic relationships, that of verb-object (*kàn shū*) and verb-complement (*kàn de yǎn jīng dōu suān le*), which is a complex syntax that may not be neatly described by a fixed hierarchical structure of constituents. This makes it difficult to determine a satisfactory division of the constituents, on the theoretical level.

While structural analysis can give a description of the formal organization of verb-copying sentences it is limited in its explanatory power. The emphasis is on surface structural relationship, with little consideration given to the reasons for verb repetition, or to the semantic relationship between the repeated verb and the complement structure, that is, to what the speaker understands. As a result, structural linguistics has helped to identify formal patterns, but has not been as successful in understanding the cognitive and functional rationale for verb-copying constructions.

The disadvantages of this approach have prompted researchers to look for alternative theories, such as generative, functional and cognitive theories, which not only describe the structural structure of verb copying sentences, but also account for the processes involved in their construction and comprehension.

Generative Grammar: Verb-copying Sentences

The development and syntactic characteristics of verb-copying constructions have been extensively investigated within the framework of generative grammar. Within this tradition, researchers have attempted to explain verb-copying phenomena through formal syntactic principles, including phrase structure constraints, case assignment, movement operations, and feature-based derivations. Various theoretical accounts have been proposed to explain the generation and derivation of these constructions, including analyses based on Chinese phrase structure, argument structure, and minimalist syntax (Cheng, 2008; Huang, 1998; Nunes, 2004; Paul, 2002; Tai, 1999).

The verb-copy constructions were originally considered to be due to the limitations on phrase structure configuration. It was thought that the verb

copying was a result of structural needs in the syntactic representation of Mandarin clauses in this approach. Nevertheless, some later studies found that there were many more kinds of verb-copying patterns in Mandarin than phrase structure-based accounts can account for, including the various semantic interpretations and discourse functions (Paul, 2002; Tai, 1999). The observations indicate that purely configurational approaches are not enough to account for the relationship between syntactic form and functional meaning.

One of the influential explanations is based on the concept of Case Theory. Based on this view, the need for Case assignment and for licensing nominal arguments in Mandarin verbal constructions (Li, 1990; Huang, 1988) are correlated with verb copying. While Case-based analyses successfully explain some of the structural properties of verb-copying constructions, they tend to be formal grammatical relations based and do not offer a lot in terms of understanding the semantic motivation and pragmatic function of verb duplication.

The next to come from the Minimalist Programme is the Copy Theory of Movement. Cheng (2008) investigates Mandarin verb copying within the framework of the movement operations that cause it and the pronunciation of the copied elements, building on the theoretical proposal of Lasnik, (2002) and the mechanism of sideward movement outlined by Nunes, (2001, 2004) and Cheng (2008). The same method has been used to account for the verb-copying system for resultative complements and compound predicates (Kuo, 2015). They, however, offer good explanations of the formal derivation of verb copying constructions, but not much explanation of the nature of the discourse contexts that predispose speakers to choose verb copying and the meaning of the various patterns.

Functional and cognitive analyses differ from purely syntactic ones in that they focus on the fact that structures involving verbs and copying are linked to certain functions of the discourse, information structures and the semantic relationship between the verbal elements. On a more cognitive-functional level, constructions are far from just formal syntactic structures, but conventionalized pairings of form and meaning guided by the conceptualization of language use (Goldberg, 1995; Langacker, 2008). The analysis of verb-copying constructions presented here is based on the assumption that the meaning of such constructions needs to be understood in terms of both structural organization and speakers' mental representation

of events.

In recent studies of verb copying constructions, minimalist approaches such as feature copying, phase-based derivation, and labeling theory have been used to investigate the constructions. The proposal of feature-copying mechanisms has been offered in order to explain the surface occurrence of repeated verbal elements in the context of Distributed Morphology and the Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 2008; Chomsky & Noam, 2013). Moreover, labeling methods have led to new accounts of movement and structural relations in complex syntactic structures (Chomsky & Noam, 2013). The studies have helped greatly in the development of a formal explanation of verb-copying phenomena, specifically the relationship between movement, structural representation and pronunciation of the duplicated elements.

To sum up, the formal mechanisms which underlie verb-copying constructions have been significantly furthered by generative approaches, especially in the areas of syntactic derivation, movement operations, Case assignment, and structural constraints. Semantic categorization, cognitive motivation, and usage-based interpretation have received comparatively less attention in these approaches, which have been mostly devoted to the formal generation of the construction. Thus, while generative grammar offers useful devices for elucidating the structural properties of verb-copying constructions, cognitive and construction-based methods are needed to describe how these constructions are conceptualized, categorized and applied in natural contexts of language use (Bybee, 2010; Goldberg, 1995; Langacker, 2008).

Functional Grammar: Verb-copying Sentences

In contrast to the structural approach and generative approach that are mainly of formal syntactic organization and derivation, the functional approach focuses on the communicative functions and discourse motivations of verb-copying sentences. Within this framework, researchers aim to gain insight into the reasons why certain speakers prefer verb-copying constructions and how such constructions are used to package information and express meaning.

From this perspective, Tai, (1999) suggests that "VP^1" is used as a baseline to highlight the supernormality or resulting state of "VP^2" in verb-copying sentences. The analysis will show the function of verb-copying in creating a semantic connection between an action and its effect. However,

Goldberg, (1995) disputes this, claiming that there are some sentences in which the resultant meaning is unexpected or surprising and cannot be derived from the syntactic structure of the construction itself. Rather, these meanings arise from the interaction of the various constituents of the sentence. Likewise, Langacker (2008) introduces the idea of 'adjacency decomposition' that the verb copying sentences reflect the speakers' decomposition of an event into several semantic components.

Verb-copying constructions have been analyzed as serving multiple communicative and discourse-related functions. They provide a compact means of expressing complex events, package information within a single syntactic construction, and make the relationship between an action and its result or affected participant more explicit (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Lambrecht, 1994). From the perspective of Construction Grammar, variation in the semantic relationship between the two verb phrases and the orientation of the complement can be interpreted as reflecting different form-meaning pairings rather than being determined solely by syntactic structure (Fillmore et al., 1988; Goldberg, 2006). These observations suggest that the interpretation of verb-copying constructions depends on the interaction between grammatical structure, discourse context, and constructional meaning.

Another important issue concerns the information structure of verb-copying constructions. Previous studies have proposed different analyses regarding the distribution of information focus, with some treating the verb-complement phrase as the primary focus and others arguing that both the verb-object phrase and the verb-complement phrase contribute to the overall information structure of the sentence. Within functional linguistic theory, information focus is viewed as a dynamic interaction between grammatical form and discourse organization rather than as a fixed structural property (Chafe, 1976; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Lambrecht, 1994). These differing perspectives indicate that the discourse organization and focus structure of verb-copying constructions remain topics of ongoing theoretical discussion.

Functional grammar is superior to structural and generative approaches in that it accounts for the communicative functions, the discourse functions and the information-structural functions of verb-copying constructions. It effectively analyzes the use of these constructions by speakers to emphasize action, structure information and create specific rhetorical effects. Most

functional studies, however, tend to emphasize the discourse function or pragmatic interpretation, and do relatively little to consider the cognitive processes that speakers use in conceptualizing the relationship between the copied verb the object and the complement. This means that while functional grammar helps us to understand the reason why verb-copying constructions are used, it does not provide a complete explanation for the way in which their meaning is cognitively represented and constructed.

Cognitive Approach to Verb-copying Sentences

Cognitive linguistics is more focused than structural, generative, and functional approaches on the structural-functional and conceptual-functional connections among form, conceptualization, and construction of meaning. Cognitive approaches to verb-copying sentences are not primarily concerned with syntactic structures or discourse functions; rather, they seek to explain how speakers mentally represent, conceptualize, and construe events through conventionalized form-meaning pairings (Goldberg, 1995; Langacker, 2008). Studies from this perspective are still relatively scarce, although recent research in cognitive and construction grammar has provided important insights into the relationship between grammatical form, semantic representation, and conceptualization (Evans & Green, 2018; Goldberg, 2006).

A Construction Grammar point of view requires a treatment of the meaning of a linguistic expression that is not based solely on lexical items or syntactic rules, but rather on the interaction between the overall construction and its components (Goldberg, 1995, 2006). This perspective focuses on the interpretability of verb copying constructions, which goes beyond formal explanations, as it involves the overall construction and the semantic properties of its substructures.

In the framework of Cognitive Grammar, verb copying constructions can be understood as a "compound" of "separate" constructional units that are interconnected and share symbols, such that the meaning of the compound is derived from the more basic constructions (Goldberg, 2006; Langacker, 2008). While generative analyses tend to focus on syntactic derivation and movement, cognitive analyses are concerned with how speakers conceptualize events and how the semantic relations between the events are captured by the construction (Evans & Green, 2018; Langacker, 2008).

Moreover, cognitive linguistic studies have indicated that the two patterns of verb copying involve different actions or operations, which, in turn, profile the actions, participants, and states of the verb differently (Langacker, 2008; Talmy, 2000). The connection between syntactic structure and semantic interpretation is therefore understood as the outcome of a number of more general cognitive processes involved in the conceptualization of events, and not as being the result of formal syntactic mechanisms.

Overall, the studies showed that cognitive linguistics method has the potential to explain the connection between form, meaning and conceptualization of verb-copying constructions. Cognitive accounts give a more holistic explanation for the cognitive understanding and interpretation of the events expressed with verb-copying constructions than the structural, generative, and functional approaches that mostly focus on constituent relations, syntactic derivation, and discourse functions, respectively. But the study on the Mandarin verb-copying construction from a cognitive perspective is still limited. The current research literature has been largely devoted to the analysis of individual constructional patterns, but not a systematic semantic classification and an extended semantic network. Furthermore, there are still no large-scale corpus-based studies, and the contribution of subjectivity, construal, and conceptual motivation to the generation of various types of verb-copying constructions is not well-studied (Bybee, 2010; Stefanowitsch & Gries, 2003).

Past cognitive studies have given insight into how individual verb-copying constructions are organized in the semantic network and how they are used, but there are still some key issues regarding the organization of the semantic network of verb-copying constructions, the cognitive motivations for their semantic extensions, and the usage in authentic language that remain unresolved. To tackle these issues, it is necessary to consider a corpus-based cognitive grammatical approach, by combining theory and empirical language data as the main goal of the present study.

Methodology

Corpus

This research is based on the corpus method, which aims to examine the semantic features of the "VOV*de*X" construction in Mandarin Chinese. The corpora mainly used for data collection are two large-scale Chinese corpora:

The Beijing Language and Culture University corpus center (BCC) and the Center for Chinese Linguistics (CCL) corpus. These corpora have been selected for their size, the variety of text types and for their broad coverage of the language of the present day.

The BCC corpus (https://bcc.blcu.edu.cn) has about 15 million words and includes newspapers, literary works, scientific and technical texts, blogs, microblogs and other kinds of texts. BCC is a dynamic corpus that allows to access authentic and contemporary language use in various communicative contexts.

The CCL corpus (http://ccl.pku.edu.cn) has about 700 million Chinese characters, and consists of modern, classical Chinese and bilingual Chinese-English texts. It covers a wide range of genres, such as newspapers, novels, blog posts, literary texts and online discourse, making it useful for studying the patterns of constructions in natural language use.

The BCC+CCL combination allows for the dataset to be linguistically more representative as the data comes from a range of communicative contexts and registers. The majority of examples used in this study were taken from BCC corpus and CCL corpus was used as a supplementary source of examples and cross validation. Manually after data cleaning and data filtering, a total of 2410 valid examples of the "VOV*de*X" construction was obtained for analysis.

Data Collection

The data collection process was done in multiple phases. The first reason is that the pattern "VOV*de*X" is an abstract pattern and directly searching for the pattern in the corpora would produce a lot of irrelevant results due to the multiple variables. The study used a lexically guided search strategy to maximize retrieval accuracy. In this case, the verbs included in the Chinese Verb Usage Dictionary (Meng, 1999) were used as search anchors and the object ("O") and the complement ("X") were variable elements.

By the procedure, they were able to generate searchable constructional patterns, like the one of *kàn…kàn* de (read…read DE); *xiě…xiě* de (write…write DE); and *dǎ…dǎ* de (hit/do…do DE). The use of verbs as fixed search elements was found to be very effective in providing greater precision of corpus retrieval and minimizing irrelevant retrievals. Secondly, all retrieved examples were manually reviewed based on pre-established

criteria.

The following criteria were used to include:

- The example required to follow the form of structural pattern "VOV*de*X".
- The second verb had to be a repetition of the first verb.
- The complement had to be introduced by the marker de (得).
- The example must have been an actual event in natural language usage.

Exclusion criteria were:

- Sentences which partially matched the target structure.
- Sentences with unrelated repetitions of verbs.
- Uncompleted or broken body parts in the word entry.
- Copy instances that are repeated within the corpora.

Some constructions that did not fit the structural and semantic sense of the "VOV*de*X" construction were not included, for example, constructions *chī jiù néng chī dé dào, chī yě de chī dé hé hū zhèng yì, chī dào yě chī de xià, and chī de xià chī de bǎo*. After filtering the data, duplicate instances were removed, leaving 2,410 instances.

Data Coding and Analysis Procedures

After the data collection process, the collected examples were coded according to the syntactic functions and semantic relationship. The coding was done in two stages. Each occurrence was evaluated for the first stage of the task on the basis of its function in the sentence (subject, predicate, object, attribute, head, clause, and sentence-level). Frequency counts were then made to find the distributional features of the construction.

In the second phase the semantic relationship between the component (VO) and (V*de*X) of the verb was examined. Special attention was paid to the role of each of the elements of the overall meaning of the construction. Following several iterations of the analysis of corpus examples, three broad classes of VOV*de*X types emerged: descriptive, commentary, causative, and VOV*de*X constructions.

The principles of the semantic classification were based on the concepts

of Cognitive Grammar such as those of construal, profiling and conceptual relationships between events. To assure uniformity in classification, ambiguous cases were reexamined in the context of the broader linguistic environment.

The analysis combined quantitative corpus evidence with qualitative semantic interpretation, allowing both the distributional patterns and the cognitive-semantic motivations of the construction to be examined systematically.

These cases are further analyzed based on the semantic relationships between the verb-object structure ("VO") and the verb-complement structure ("V*de*X").

(3) 我 读 书 读 得 太少了。(CCL)
wǒ dú shū dú de tài shǎo le.
I read book read DE too little
'I read too little.'

(4) 他 拉 二胡 拉 得 相当好。(BCC)
tā lā èr hú lā de xiāng dāng hǎo.
he plays Erhu play DE very well
'He plays the Erhu very well.'

(5) 抱 小宝宝 抱 得 我腰酸背痛。(BCC)
bào xiǎo bǎo bǎo bào de wǒ yāo suān bèi tòng.
hold little baby hold DE my waist and back sore
'Holding the baby makes my waist and back sore.'

Syntactic Functions of the "VOV*de*X" Construction

There are two syntactic structures of "VOV*de*X" type: "VOV*de*X" and "SVOV*de*X", where "S" denotes the subject. The pattern "SVOV*de*X" emerges in cases where a specific subject is used, for example, in sentences (1), (2), (4) and (5). Subjectless "VOV*de*X" form is employed in the statements in which there is no subject expressed, e.g. examples (3) and (6). These two syntactic structures are quite flexible and can serve as predicates, objects, modifiers, subjects, heads, clauses, or entire sentences. These functions are listed in Table 1 to show how they are being distributed.

Table 1

The Grammatical Roles of the Chinese '(S) VOVdeX' Construction

Syntactic components	Number	Percentage (X/2410)	Examples
As subjects	4	0.2%	原来**读书读得好**是可以赚钱的。 (BCC) In reality, strong academic skills can indeed translate into financial success.
As predicates	1376	57.1%	这个娃娃**弹琴弹得好哦!** (CCL) This kid plays the piano very well.
As objects	253	10.5%	我觉得**演员演得挺好**。 (BCC) I think the actor performed very well.
As attributes	60	2.5%	不过，**写信写得好**的人也就没了写信的必要。 (BCC) Yet a person skilled at writing letters may end up never needing to write them again.
As heads	23	0.9%	江泽民的**讲话讲得很好**。 (CCL) Jiang Zemin's speech was very well.
As clauses	455	18.9%	捧着一杯水，**看她看得目不转睛**。 (BCC) Holding a glass of water, I watched her without looking away.
As sentences	239	9.9%	**写作业写得手酸**。 (BCC) My hands are sore from writing homework.

Of the 2,410 tokens found for the construction "(S) VOV*de*X", 1,376 of them are predicate tokens, which accounts for the highest percentage

(57.1%). Clauses are the next most common category, with 455 having an 18.9% occurrence. Objects are the third-most common function with 253 examples, or 10.5%. Also, it is found as complete sentences 239 times, as attributes 60 times, as heads 23 times, and as subjects 4 times. These are 9.9%, 2.5%, 0.9% and 0.2% of the total number of occurrences, respectively (see Table 1).

Results

Semantic Relations of the "VOV*de*X" Construction

The corpus data show that the semantic relationship between the verb-object structure (VO) and the verb-complement structure (V*de*X) are the main basis for the classification of the VOV*de*X construction. A study of the 2410 corpus examples shows that there are three broad categories of semantic patterns: descriptive, commentary and causative. Examples (6)–(11) illustrate representative examples.

The complement in Example (6) describes a state that is connected to the event represented by VO. In examples (7)–(9) the complement provides an assessment of the event. Examples (10) and (11), on the other hand, illustrate cases where the complement identifies something that is caused by the action expressed by VO.

The observations imply that the interaction between VO and V*de*X is not the same in all occurrences. Instead, the Corpus data shows that there are three different types of semantic relationships which can be used as a basis for the classification presented in this study.

Three Semantic Types of the "VOV*de*X" Construction

Descriptive VOVdeX

In the descriptive type, the V*de*X component characterizes a state, manner, or result associated with the event expressed by VO. Examples (12)–(14) illustrate this pattern. In these instances, the complement provides additional descriptive information about the event without introducing an independent causal outcome or explicit speaker evaluation.

Overall, the descriptive relationship between VO and V*de*X is observed in a substantial portion of the corpus data and represents one of the major semantic patterns of the VOV*de*X construction.

(12) 孩子　听　故事　听　得　入了神 (CCL)
hái zi　tīng　gù shì　tīng　de　rù le shén.
children　listen　story　listen　DE　fascination
'The children were fascinated in listening to the story.'

(13) (人们发现，)
他 调　仪器　调　得　更认真了 (BCC)
tā　tiáo　yí qì　tiáo　de　gèng rèn zhēn le.
he adjusts instrument adjust DE　more seriously
'He adjusted the instrument more seriously.'

(14) (园子似乎还没有发现我，)
可 我 看　她　看　得　很清楚。 (BCC)
kě　wǒ　kàn　tā　kàn　de　hěn qīng chǔ.
but I　see　she　see　DE　very clearly
'But I see her very clearly.'

Commentary VOVdeX

In the commentary type, the V*de*X component conveys an evaluation of the event expressed by VO. Examples (15)–(17) illustrate this semantic pattern. The complement may evaluate the quality, effectiveness, appropriateness, or degree of the event.

Unlike the descriptive type, the complement in these cases does not merely characterize the event but presents an evaluative interpretation of it. This evaluative function constitutes the defining feature of the commentary VOV*de*X construction.

(15) 我　回家　回　得　早。(BCC)
wǒ　huí jiā　huí　de　zǎo.
I　return home　return　DE　early
'I returned home early.'

(16) 你　母亲　教育　你　教育　得 很成功。(BCC)
nǐ　mǔ qīn　jiào yù　nǐ　jiào yù　de　hěn chéng gong.
you mother educate you educate　DE very successful
'Your mother educated you very successfully.'

(17) 她 **劈叉 劈 得 不太好**。 (BCC)
tā pī chà pī de bù tài hǎo.
she does the splits split DE not too good
'She's not very good at doing the splits.'

Causative VOVdeX

In the causative type, the V*de*X component denotes a result that is brought about by the event expressed in VO. Examples (18)–(20) exemplify this pattern. The complement expresses a consequence that follows from the action encoded in the verb-object sequence.

The causative relationship between the two components distinguishes this type from both descriptive and commentary constructions and represents the third major semantic category identified in the corpus.

(18) 他的左胳膊 **打 防疫针 打 得 有点疼**。 (赵树理《三里湾》)
tā de zuǒ gē bo dǎ fáng yì zhēn dǎ de yǒu diǎn téng.
his left arm inject vaccine inject DE a bit sore
'His left arm feels a bit sore after receiving the vaccination.'

(19) (他不骂妈妈爸爸，)
妈妈 **洗衣服 洗 得 手长泡**…… (张天翼《小账》)
mā ma xǐ yī fú xǐ de shǒu zhǎng pào……
mother wash clothes wash DE get blisters on hands
'My mother got blisters on her hands because of washing the clothes.'

(20) 皇上 **吸 鼻烟 吸 得 鼻子不灵了**。 (莫言/檀香刑)
huáng shang xī bí yān xī de bí zi bù líng le.
Emperor suck snuff suck DE his nose has lost its sensitivity
'The emperor has been snuffing so much that his nose has lost its sensitivity.'

Summary of Semantic Types

The corpus findings indicate that the VOV*de*X construction can be classified into three major semantic categories: descriptive, commentary, and causative. In the descriptive type, V*de*X characterizes a state associated with the event. In the commentary type, V*de*X expresses an evaluation of the event. In the causative type, V*de*X denotes a result caused by the event.

These three semantic relationships collectively account for the major semantic patterns observed in the corpus data and provide the basis for the cognitive analysis presented in the following discussion section.

(21) 幸而　　我们　**看　他们　看　得　很清楚**。(BCC)
xìng ér　wǒ men　kàn　tā men　kàn　de　hěn qīng chǔ.
fortunately, we　see　they　see　DE　very clearly
'Fortunately, we see them very clearly.'

(22) 李杰明　**跳舞　跳　得　好**。(BCC)
lǐ jié míng　tiào wǔ　tiào　de　hǎo.
Li Jieming　dance　jump　DE　good
'Li Jieming dances well.'

(23) **看　书　看　得　眼睛好累**。(BCC)
kàn　shū　kàn　de　yǎn jīng hǎo lèi.
read　book　read　DE　eyes are so tired
'My eyes are so tired from reading.'

Discussion

Cognitive Motivation of the Three Semantic Types

Based on the corpus analysis, it is found that the "VOV*de*X" construction is not a uniform grammatical construction, but rather a semantic network which can be divided into three categories, namely descriptive, commentary and causative construction. These categories can be seen as a different construal of the relationship between the part VO (verb-object) and the part V*de*X (verb-complement) from the perspective of Cognitive Grammar.

The descriptive type is where the V*de*X enriches the event(s) introduced by the VO by specifying its state, manner, or outcome. Rather, the complement does not create a novel event, but rather is an expansion of the original event profile. This is in line with Xu's (2020) suggestion that VOCs develop as the resultative and verb-object constructions are integrated. The descriptive type is thus a process of semantic elaboration, in which speakers add information about an established event.

The commentary type is a semantic extension that is a further step. This complement does not describe the event like descriptive constructions, but assess it. Complements like *hěn chénggōng* (very successful) *zǎo* (early)

and *bù tài hǎo* (not very good) are based not on objective properties of the event in question, but on the judgment of the speaker. These illustrate that the VOV*de*X construction can represent subjective construal, in the sense that the speaker can evaluate the profiled event; they can impose their evaluative interpretation on the profiled event.

The causative type is different from the other two in that the complement indicates a consequence that comes from the event denoted by VO. In these constructions, the relationship between the two components is conceptualized as a cause-effect sequence. The causal event is expressed in the verb-object construction; the resulting state is profiled by the complement. This pattern lends further credence to the hypothesis that speakers structure their experiences in terms of causal chains and that they linguistically represent these conceptual relationships.

Comparison with Previous Studies

The study's results confirm and complement previous analyses of verb-copying constructions. Tai (1999) suggested a difference between causative and non-causative verb copying sentences. The study of causality as one of the semantic dimensions and finding a causative subtype of the "VOV*de*X" construction is proved to be important in the present study. The corpus data, however, indicate that the non-causative constructions are not homogenous semantically. These can be further classified into descriptive and commentary type based on the relation between VO and V*de*X.

Previous constructional analyses have emphasized that the semantic interpretation of complements contributes to the overall meaning of the construction rather than functioning independently (Goldberg, 1995; Langacker, 2008). The present analysis agrees with this semantic approach, but illustrates how the interplay between these two types of verb-object and verb-complement structures offers a fuller basis for classification than only their orientation toward complements. In the current study, the semantic relation between the two components has been used as the main parameter, which makes the organization of the "VOV*de*X" construction more systematic.

The findings are consistent with cognitive linguistic accounts proposing that constructional meaning emerges from the interaction between grammatical form, conceptualization, and speakers' construal of events (Evans & Green, 2018; Goldberg, 1995; Langacker, 2008). This study

builds on the previous cognitive analysis of the compositional mechanisms of verb-copying constructions, providing a corpus-based classification of the type of verbs based on their meaning, and showing how these four different semantic types of verbs relate to different construals of the relationship between VO and V*de*X.

Subjectivity and the Role of □ (de)

One of the significant discoveries relates to the subjectivity of the "VOV*de*X" construction interpretation. In Lyons (1977) and Finegan (1995) then, subjectivity is the speaker's point of view, judgement and attitude about the event. The correlation of subjectivity and the commentary type is especially noticeable in the present corpus (where the complement describes a characteristic of the event that is not objectively demonstrable but rather the speaker's evaluation of it).

From this point of view, de (得) has a role other than just connecting a verb and its complement. It helps the speaker to construct, assess and describe the event. In many cases the complement gives an interpretation that does not come from the lexical meaning of the verb-object construction, but rather depends on the interpretation of the verb. In many cases the complement provides an interpretation that is dependent on the interpretation of the verb (and not its lexical meaning). Therefore, de can be regarded as a significant grammatical level on which the subjectified meaning can be encoded.

The second evidence of the subjectivity of the "VOV*de*X" construction is the fact that it is not only a syntactic structure but also a cognitive and pragmatic means of representing speakers' attitudes towards events and situations.

Theoretical Implications

The present study has several implications for the analysis of Mandarin Chinese verb-copying constructions, and for Cognitive Grammar more broadly. Firstly, the results indicate that the construction "VOV*de*X" cannot be studied with a single uniform structure, but rather as a semantic network. The three types (descriptive, commentary and causative) are related but distinct extensions of meaning, and they are grouped together in the same constructional schema.

Second, the results confirm the Cognitive Grammar notion that

grammatical constructions have meaning as symbolic units where form and meaning are inseparable. The differences in the meaning of the three categories are not only syntactic, but also conceptual, as they can be traced back to different concepts of the relation of events, states, evaluations and results.

Thirdly, the study illustrates the usefulness of corpus-based evidence for constructional study. The analysis of 2,410 authentic examples confirms the classification proposed and shows the patterns of use that can only be obtained from the introspective data.

All the findings in this paper can be summarized as a whole to formulate a more complete picture of the "VOV*de*X" constructions in Mandarin Chinese, and to emphasize the significance of combining corpus data with the Cognitive Grammar data in the research of Mandarin Chinese construction.

Conclusion

The current study has investigated the "VOV*de*X" construction in Mandarin Chinese by corpus-based analysis of 2,410 occurrences of such construction from the BCC and CCL Corpora. This survey has given a systematic description, and a semantic organization, of this under-explored verb-copying construction by taking a look at the semantic relationship between the verb-object structure (VO) and the verb-complement construction (V*de*X).

The results show that the "VOV*de*X" construction could be divided into three main semantic classes: descriptive, commentary and causative. In the descriptive type, the V*de*X component describes the state, manner or condition of the event expressed by VO. V*de*X is the speaker's evaluative judgment of the event, and therefore it is more subjective in the commentary type. V*de*X: result of a direct cause by the action encoded in VO, causative type. The results show that the semantic function of the construction is determined by the interaction of the verb-object and verb-complement units, and not by either of these.

The three categories are construed as cognitive representations, from a Cognitive Grammar point of view, of the relationship between events and their attendant states, evaluations and consequences. The findings corroborate the notion that grammatical constructions are meaningful symbolic units in which form and meaning are tightly connected. More

specifically, the presence of evaluative meanings indicates the significance of subjectivity in the construction of the profiled event in the interpretation of the "VOV*de*X" construction, and that the marker de (得) plays a part in the speaker's construal of the profiled event.

The study also contributes to previous studies on verb-copying constructions and provides a semantic typology of verb-copying constructions using real corpora. The semantics of the relation between VO and V*de*X are analyzed in the present study, and in the literature, this research was restricted to structural forms or complement orientedness.

It should be noted that there are a number of restrictions to consider. First, data from the two corpora is analyzed, which may not represent all the variation of the regional varieties of China and the context. Second, the study focuses predominantly on semantic categorization and is not focused on the diachronic development or psycholinguistic processing. Future studies might include the analysis of the evolution of the "VOV*de*X" construction in history, analysis of its use in other discourse genres, or be experimental, or comparative, in order to examine deeper the role of subjectivity and construal. Overall, the results have helped to shed more light on Mandarin Chinese verb-copying constructions and the potential of using corpus and Cognitive Grammar in studying constructional meaning.

Author Contribution

Liu Jiaxin: conceptualization, methodology , writing,- original draft, writing - review & editing. **Marvi Korai:** conceptualization, methodology, writing- original draft. **Samaira Narejo:** conceptualization, methodology, writing - original draft. **Shakal Khan Korai:** conceptualization, methodology, writing - original draft, writing - review and editing, supervision.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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