

L1 English Speakers' Learning of Mandarin RVCs: Focusing on L1 Influence in L2 Acquisition^{*}

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Abstract

This study examines how native English speakers' L1 may influence their L2 acquisition of Mandarin resultative verb compounds (RVCs) from two perspectives – language transfer and conceptual transfer. Forty native speakers of English (the experimental groups) and twenty native speakers of Mandarin (the control group) participated in the study. A questionnaire survey consisting of a grammaticality judgment task and a sentence interpretation task was administered. The general finding was that the L2 learners' knowledge of Mandarin RVCs was not native-like and was influenced by their native language. Specifically, the results of this study support the moderate version of the contrastive analysis hypothesis and show that language transfer happens structurally and semantically; more importantly, the results indicate that conceptual transfer occurs in the L2 learning of RVCs and support Tai's (2003) proposal that the result part of an action-result event is less salient to English speakers than to Mandarin speakers.

Keywords: Mandarin RVCs, L2 acquisition, language transfer, conceptual transfer, English

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1. Introduction

Mandarin is a language full of different types of compounds, a rather important one of which is resultative verb compounds (RVCs²). RVCs are compounds composed of two verbs encoding events consisting of an action/process and a result (Li and Thompson 1981:55), e.g., *xue-hui* ‘study-understand’ in (1a) and *gai-hao* ‘build-good’ in (2a). Such action/process-result events are encoded in different grammatical patterns in English, as shown in (1b) and (2b), which are the English counterparts of (1a) and (2a).

- | | | | | |
|--------|------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|---------------|
| (1) a. | Mali | xue-hui-le | | xiangqi. |
| | Mary | study-understand-LE | | Chinese.chess |
| | b. Mary learned (to play) Chinese chess. | | | |
| (2) a. | Lisi | gai-hao | cheku | le. |
| | Lisi | build-good | garage | LE |
| | b. Lisi built the garage. | | | |

The Mandarin RVCs and their English counterparts above both denote action/process-result events; however, they are different in the specification of the result or completion of the event. In Mandarin, the result is explicitly specified with the second morpheme of the RVC, e.g., *hui* in *xue-hui* and *hao* in *gai-hao*, while in English, the result is inherently and implicitly expressed in the meaning of the verb, such as *learn* in (1b) and *build* in (2b) (Smith 1997; Talmy 2000).

On the basis of the cross-linguistic variation in expressing the result, Tai (2003:301) suggests that the result part of an action-result event would be less salient to English speakers than to Mandarin speakers. This implies that lacking a clear ‘result-marking system’ in English verbs may make the learning of Mandarin RVCs a difficult task to native speakers of English, which is supported by Chen’s (2004) findings based on a corpus study. Chen found that English-speaking learners may have difficulty using the RVC *nian-wan* ‘read-finish,’ as indicated in the underlined part in

² Abbreviations: RVC = resultative verb compound; Sta-R = State-Result; Act-R = Activity-Result; Sem-R = Semelfactive-Result; PROG = progressive marker; LE = perfective/ inchoative marker; ZHE = durative marker; CL = classifier; NEG = negative morpheme; GJ task = grammaticality judgment task; SI task = sentence interpretation task.

(3), from Chen (2004:93).

(3) *Na-ge	erzi	nian	quanbu	na-ben shu,
that-CL	son	read	whole	that-CL book
keshi	haishi	kan	bu	dong.
but	still	read	NEG	understand
'Although the son read the whole book, he still could not understand it.'				

L1 English speakers' learning of Mandarin RVCs may be further complicated by RVCs' incompatibility with the progressive marker *zhengzai* and aspectual verbs *kaishi* 'start' and *tingzhi* 'stop,' which only co-occur with processes or states (Ma 2005). The Mandarin examples in (4a), (5a) and (6a) are ungrammatical while their counterparts in English are acceptable, as shown in (4b), (5b) and (6b).

(4) a. *Mali	zhengzai	xue-hui	xiangqi.
Mary	PROG	study-understand	Chinese.chess
b. Mary is learning Chinese chess.			
(5) a. *Mali	kaishi	xue-hui	xiangqi.
Mary	start	study-understand	Chinese.chess
b. Mary started learning Chinese chess.			
(6) a. *Mali	tingzhi	xue-hui	xiangqi
Mary	stop	study-understand	Chinese.chess
b. Mary stopped learning Chinese chess.			

The reason, according to Chief (2007:108), is that only the result phase and not the process phase of the event denoted by an RVC is accessible for aspectual modification. Tai (1984, 2003) also suggests that RVCs denote only the result aspect and not the action aspect in their aspectual meaning, though their first element can either denote a durative action/process, such as *xue* 'study,' or an instantaneous but iterative action, such as *da* 'hit'. Hence, the result part is considered the semantic focus of the RVC sentence (Yong 1997; Tai 2003).

Although Mandarin RVCs are generally considered corresponding to VPs denoting accomplishment events such as *learn Chinese chess* in English (Chen 1988;

Smith 1997; Y. Li 2005; Chief 2007), the cross-linguistic comparisons above suggest that Mandarin RVCs are not completely equivalent to English accomplishment VPs. English speakers learning Mandarin as a second or foreign language may have difficulty grasping the semantic essence of the RVC and have trouble understanding the incompatibility between the RVC and the progressive marker *zhengzai* and aspectual verbs *kaishi* ‘start’ and *tingzhi* ‘stop’. In addition, previous studies on the L2 acquisition of RVCs have only shown that learners have a tendency to misuse this construction due to the lack of a similar structure in their L1 (e.g., Guo 2003; Chen 2004), or the analysis of L2 learners’ difficulty with this construction was only based on the complexity of RVCs themselves (e.g., Zhu 2014). No research has been conducted to further explore where the learner’s difficulty lies or to investigate whether the learner has a knowledge of the linguistic properties of RVCs. Motivated by these cross-linguistic differences and the inadequacies of previous studies, this study aims to explore the L2 acquisition of Mandarin RVCs by native English speakers with a focus on L1 influence in L2 acquisition. The two specific purposes are stated below.

L1 influence can be examined from two theoretical perspectives – language transfer and linguistic relativity (or conceptual transfer). Language transfer is concerned with L2 learning effects resulting from cross-linguistic differences in structure. The first purpose of this study is to find out whether language transfer happens and what kind (if any) in native English speakers’ learning of Mandarin RVCs. The second purpose concerns the interplay between language and thought or conceptual transfer. We intend to investigate whether it is like what Tai (2003:301) suggests that the result part of an action-result event is less salient to English speakers, and hence English-speaking learners would attend more to the action part denoted by the first component of an RVC when learning Mandarin as a second language.

This paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, we present the two theoretical perspectives concerning L1 influence in L2 acquisition. The classification and linguistic characteristics of Mandarin RVCs are discussed in Section 3 along with a cross-linguistic comparison between Mandarin RVCs and their possible English counterparts. The methodology of the present study is presented in Section 4 and the results and findings are discussed in Section 5, which is followed by the concluding

remarks in Section 6.

2. Theoretical Perspectives of L1 Influence in L2 Acquisition

The learners' first language plays a very important role in second language acquisition. Two theoretical perspectives of L1 influence in L2 acquisition are of concern in this study, namely, language transfer and conceptual transfer.

Language transfer is concerned with L2 learning effects resulting from cross-linguistic differences in structure. Supporters of the contrastive analysis hypothesis (e.g., Fries 1945; Lado 1957; Stockwell et al. 1965) claim that cross-linguistic differences in structure may cause difficulties to L2 learning (i.e., negative transfer) whereas similarities can facilitate L2 learning (i.e., positive transfer) and that the difficulty that L2 learners may encounter can be predicted by studying the differences between the learner's L1 and L2. This is the strong version of the contrastive analysis hypothesis (Wardhaugh 1970). Different from the strong version, a moderate version proposed by Oller and Ziahosseiny (1970:186) claims that "wherever patterns are minimally distinct in form or meaning in one or more systems, confusion may result." Brown (1987:162) also suggests that "interference can actually be greater when items to be learned are more similar to existing items than when items are entirely new and unrelated to existing items." In addition, proponents of language transfer hold that in language development, less proficient learners are more likely to depend on L1 transfer than proficient learners (e.g., Kellerman 1984; Faerch and Kasper 1987; Odlin 1989). As Faerch and Kasper (1987) explain, language transfer is a problem-solving strategy with which the learner deals with L2 learning problems when relevant target rules or structures are not available or temporarily inaccessible.

Apart from cross-linguistic transfer in form or structure, L1 effects on L2 learning can be examined from the perspective of conceptual transfer (Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008), developed from Whorf's (1956:221) hypothesis of linguistic relativity, which states, "[U]sers of markedly different grammars are pointed by their grammars toward different types of observations and different evaluations of externally similar acts of observation." According to Whorf's linguistic relativity, speakers of different languages may conceptualize reality differently and form different worldviews. An increasing number of studies (e.g., Bloom 1981, 1984; Liu

1985; Lucy 1992; Boroditsky 2001; Casasanto 2008; Athanasopoulos and Bylund 2013) have revealed that variations in thought patterns are related to structural differences in languages. Several L2 acquisition studies (e.g., Slobin 1996; Malt et al. 2003; Pavlenko and Driagina 2007; Han and Cadierno 2010; Pae 2012; Bylund and Athanasopoulos 2014) have shown that conceptual categories acquired through the learner's first language affect their learning of another language. This kind of L1-mediated concept transfer is called conceptual transfer (Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008:120).

3. Mandarin RVCs

Mandarin RVCs are generally considered corresponding to VPs denoting accomplishment events in English (Chen 1988; Smith 1997; Y. Li 2005; Chief 2007) based on an aspectual situation type classification. In this section, we review the aspectual classification of verb types based on Smith (1997) in Section 3.1, discuss the characteristics of Mandarin RVCs in Section 3.2, and present a comparison between Mandarin RVCs and English aspectual situation types in Section 3.3.

3.1 Situation Types in Smith (1997)

Vendler's (1957, 1967) classification of eventuality into four types, namely state, activity, achievement and accomplishment, is one of the earliest and most widely accepted classifications. Smith (1997) terms these types 'situation types' and further adds semelfactives to Vendler's four types. She then uses three temporal features, static, durative, and telic, to distinguish the five situation types, as explained below.

States are static, durative and atelic, such as *own a book* and *know the girl*. Activities are dynamic, durative, atelic processes without a natural endpoint, such as *walk* and *sing*. Accomplishments are dynamic, durative, telic events consisting of a process and a natural endpoint or a change of state, such as *bake a cake* and *eat an apple*. Achievements are dynamic, instantaneous single-stage telic events involving a change of state, such as *die* and *win the race*. Semelfactives are also dynamic, instantaneous single-stage events, but differ from achievements in that they do not involve any change of state, such as *knock* and *kick*.

3.2 Characteristics of Mandarin RVCs

Mandarin RVCs are composed of two verbal elements, the second of which indicates the result of the action or process expressed by the first (Chao 1968:435; Li and Thompson 1981:54-55; He 1992:114; Chen 2008:22; Basciano 2010:251, 275). Some RVCs are transitive and some intransitive (Y. Li 1990; Cheng and Huang 1994; Huang et al. 2010; Basciano 2010), but only transitive RVCs are included in this study.

Mandarin RVCs are productive and can be freely created as long as the semantic relationship between the two components makes sense to the speaker and the context (e.g., Chao 1968; Li and Thompson 1981; Shi 2003; Chen 2008). However, not all verbs in Mandarin can be components of the RVC. In Section 3.2.1, we discuss candidates that may serve as the components of the RVC and classify RVCs into three categories according to the aspectual properties of the two verbal components, and in 3.2.2, the semantic focus and grammatical features of RVCs are examined.

3.2.1 RVC Classification

In this study, we consider verbs classifiable into aspectual classes, following Verkuyl (1993), Rothstein (2008), Peck et al. (2013), among others. We adopt Smith's (1997) five-way classification of aspectuality and divide RVCs into three types based on the aspectual classes of the two RVC components.

The first component (V_1) of the RVC is usually an activity verb and in some cases, a stative verb (Cheng and Huang 1994; Chen 2008; Basciano 2010). In terms of Smith's (1997) classification, only verbs of activities, states and semelfactives can function as V_1 of the RVC for they do not include a result or a final endpoint as part of their meaning. For example, the semelfactive *da* 'hit,' activity *ting* 'listen,' and state *re* 'hot' can combine with the result morphemes *si* 'die,' *dong* 'understand,' and *hun* 'faint,' respectively, to form the RVCs *da-si* 'to cause one to be dead by beating him/her,' *ting-dong* 'to listen to something and understand it,' and *re-hun* 'to become faint because of the hot weather'.

The second element (V_2) of the RVC is a verb or an adjectival stative verb denoting a state or a change of state to signify the result of the action/process conveyed by V_1 . *Hong* 'red' and *ya* 'hoarse' in the RVCs *qi-hong* 'paint-red' and

han-ya ‘shout-hoarse’ are two examples. According to Ma and Lu (1997), 958 out of the 1078 adjectives in a dictionary may serve as the second component of the RVC. On the other hand, the number of verbs eligible for V_2 is small and most of them are achievement verbs such as *dao* ‘arrive,’ *dong* ‘understand,’ *si* ‘die,’ *diao* ‘fall,’ and *duan* ‘break’ (Zhang 1999).

Based on the aspectual classes of V_1 and V_2 , we divide Mandarin RVCs into three types, namely Activity-Result, Semelfactive-Result and State-Result, elaborated below.

Activity-Result (Act-R) RVCs are composed of an activity verb and a result morpheme to denote an action-result semantic relation, such as *du-dong* ‘read-understand’ in (7).

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|-----------|
| (7) Zhangsan | du-dong-le | na-pian | wenzhang. |
| Zhangsan | read-understand-LE | that-CL | article |
| ‘Zhangsan read and understood the article.’ | | | |

A Semelfactive-Result (Sem-R) RVC is formed with a semelfactive verb and a result morpheme, such as *ti-dao* ‘kick-fallen’ in (8).

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|--------|---------|
| (8) Xiaoming | ti-dao-le | yi-ge | pingzi. |
| Xiaoming | kick-fallen-LE | one-CL | bottle |
| ‘Xiaoming kicked over a bottle.’ | | | |

State-Result (Sta-R) RVCs are made up of a stative verb (V_1) and a result morpheme (V_2). The stative verb can either be an ordinary stative verb, such as *tang* ‘lie’ in *tang-huai* ‘lie-broken,’ or an adjective, such as *re* ‘hot’ in *re-hun* ‘hot-faint’. What the RVC expresses is: The state denoted by V_1 causes the state denoted by V_2 to occur. For example, *tang-huai* in (9) expresses that the state that the bed is broken is caused by John lying on it, and *leng-si* in (10) indicates that the old man’s death is a result of the freezing weather.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|---------|
| (9) Yuehan | tang-huai-le | zhe-zhang | chuang. |
| John | lie-broken-LE | this-CL | bed |
| ‘John lay on this bed, and this bed got broken as a result.’ | | | |

- (10) Hanlengde tianqi **leng-si-le** na-ge laoren.
 freezing weather cold-dead-LE that-CL old.man
 'That old man couldn't stand the freezing weather, and he died as a result.'

3.2.2 Semantic Focus and Grammatical Properties of Mandarin RVCs

Literature on the analysis of Mandarin RVCs is abundant (Chao 1968; Li and Thompson 1981; Tai 1984; He 1992; Cheng and Huang 1994; Liu et al. 2001; Tai 2003; Huang et al. 2010, among others). A widely discussed issue is which verb heads the RVC (e.g., Tai 1984; Y. Li 1990; Cheng and Huang 1994; Yong 1997; Tai 2003; Chief 2007; C. Li 2008). Most syntactic studies suggest that V_1 is the head of the compound while most semantic studies suggest that V_2 is the head. As different researchers use different criteria in deciding on the head of the RVC (C. Li 2008:742), and as what is of concern in this study is the semantic property of the RVC, in the following we review related studies to show that V_2 is semantically more prominent than V_1 .

According to Tai (1984:295), "a resultative verb compound in Chinese consists of two parts, the first indicating a presupposed activity and the second an asserted result." Tai suggests that a Mandarin RVC includes only the result aspect in its aspectual meaning. Chief (2007) also argues that only V_2 is available for aspectual modification. Moreover, L. Li (1984), He (1992), Yong (1997) and Tai (2003) all propose that the result component (i.e., V_2) is the semantic head or focus of the RVC. Their proposal can be evidenced from the following points.

First, Mandarin RVCs cannot co-occur with the progressive marker *zai* or *zhengzai* (Tai 1984; Smith 1997), nor are they compatible with the durative aspect marker *zhe* (Yong 1997; Xiao and McEnery 2004). V_1 in the RVC *du-dong* 'read-understand' is an activity verb and can co-occur with the progressive (*zheng*)*zai* or the durative *zhe*; however, the RVC cannot, as shown in (11) and (12). This indicates that RVCs are more like achievements (Yong 1997) and do not encode the action aspect nor have continuous forms. That is, the result aspect is the semantic focus of RVCs (Tai 1984).

- (11) a. Ta (zheng)zai du na-pian wenzhang.
 he PROG read that-CL article
 ‘He is reading that article.’
 b. *Ta (zheng)zai du-dong na-pian wenzhang.
 he PROG read-understand that-CL article
 ‘He is reading that article in order to understand it.’
 (12) *Ta du-dong zhe na-pian wenzhang.
 he read-understand ZHE that-CL article

Second, Tai (1984) points out that when the RVC is modified by the adverb *jihu* ‘almost,’ only the result reading is available, which remains unchanged when *jihu* is replaced with its synonym *chayidianr* ‘almost,’ as shown in (13). The English counterpart of (13), an accomplishment, has both the action reading and the result reading, as shown in (14). On the other hand, English achievements have the result reading only, such as (15). This indicates that Mandarin RVCs are more like English achievements in that only the result element can be modified by *jihu/chayidianr* and hence is the semantic focus.

- (13) Zhangsan jihu/chayidianr hua-wan-le yi-fu hua.
 Zhangsan almost paint-finish-LE one-CL painting
 ‘Zhangsan almost finished painting a picture.’
 (Result: Zhangsan did begin working on the picture but had not quite finished it.)
 (14) John almost painted a picture.
 (Action: John had the intention of painting a picture but he didn’t start doing it.
 (Result: John did begin working on the picture but had not quite finished it.)
 (15) John almost won the race.
 (Result: John was running to win the race but he never actually won the race.)

Third, Tai (1984) also notices that when the RVC is negated, the scope of negation only includes the result; for example, (16) entails that Zhangsan did start studying Chinese but he didn't successfully acquire the language.

- (16) Zhangsan mei xue-hui Zhongwen.
 Zhangsan NEG study-know Chinese
 'Zhangsan studied but didn't acquire Chinese.' (Tai 1984:293)

In sum, the proposal that V_2 is the semantic focus of the Mandarin RVC is supported by the three pieces of evidence: (i) RVCs are incompatible with the progressive marker (*zheng*)*zai* or with the durative marker *zhe*, (ii) only the result reading is available when they are modified by *jihu/chayidianr* 'almost,' and (iii) when negated, the scope of negation only includes the result part.

That the result part of RVCs is the semantic focus not only makes them incompatible with the progressive aspect marker *zhengzai*, as shown in (11b) above, but the inceptive verb *kaishi* 'begin/start' and the terminative verb *tingzhi* 'stop' also cannot co-occur with them. The ill-formedness of (17), (18) and (19) below indicate that all three types of RVCs discussed in 3.2.1 are incompatible with *kaishi* and *tingzhi*, both of which select a process or a state as its complement, according to Ma (2005).

- (17) *Lisi kaishi/tingzhi du-dong na-ben shu. (Act-R)
 Lisi start/stop read-understand that-CL book
 '*Lisi started/stopped finishing reading the book.'
- (18) *Xiaoming kaishi/tingzhi ti-po tade beizi. (Sem-R)
 Xiaoming start/stop kick-broken his cup
 '*Xiaoming started/stopped breaking his cup by kicking it.'
- (19) *Zhangsan kaishi/tingzhi zuo-huai na-zhang yizi. (Sta-R)
 Zhangsan start/stop sit-broken that-CL chair
 '*Zhangsan started/stopped breaking the chair by sitting on it.'

3.3 Mandarin RVCs and their English Counterparts

The major purpose of this study is to examine L1 effects on L2 learners' learning of Mandarin RVCs. A cross-linguistic comparison is hence needed. Some scholars (Chen 1988; Smith 1997; Y. Li 2005; Chief 2007) consider Mandarin RVCs accomplishments. However, the review above suggests that RVCs are more like achievements in that their result part is the semantic focus and the action/process part is not available for aspectual modification. In addition, among our three types of RVCs (Sta-R, Act-R, and Sem-R), the first component of the Sta-R RVC is a stative verb. Hence, it is necessary to clarify the similarities and differences between Mandarin RVCs and English states, accomplishments and achievements, which is discussed in Section 3.3.1. Although the structure of Mandarin RVCs is different from that of English resultatives, they are semantically similar in that both consist of two parts – an activity and a result or change of state brought about by the activity (Basciano 2010). Hence, it is necessary to review the characteristics of English resultatives, which is done in 3.3.2.

3.3.1 Mandarin RVCs vs. English States, Accomplishments and Achievements

In this section, we examine English states, accomplishments and achievements to see whether they possess the characteristics that Mandarin RVCs have by testing whether they are compatible with the progressive and with the aspectual verbs *begin/start* and *stop*, and inspect which component constitutes the semantic focus of the three English event types, respectively, by testing with the adverb *almost*.

The typical imperfective aspect in English is the progressive and it is only compatible with non-stative events (Smith 1997). States in English cannot co-occur with the progressive, as shown in (20). On the other hand, English accomplishments are telic durative events with internal stages and are compatible with the progressive (Smith 1997), as shown in (21). But English achievements are semantically instantaneous and therefore do not normally co-occur with the progressive, as in (22a). Some achievements in English appear to be compatible with the progressive, such as (22b); however, the imperfective here focuses on the preliminary stage of the achievement, a process that only serves to enable the event to take place and is not part of the event, and not on the internal stage of the event itself (Smith 1997).

- (20) *Kim was knowing the answer. (State; Smith 1997:40)
- (21) Martin was walking to school. (Accomplishment; Smith 1997:65)
- (22) a. *John was noticing Tina at the party. (Achievement)
- b. The team was winning the race. (Achievement)

Inceptive and terminative verbs *begin/start* and *stop* are compatible with durative events and do not go with events that involve instantaneity (Smith 1997:41). That is, English accomplishments can co-occur with *begin/start* and *stop* while achievements cannot, as shown in (23a)-(23c). The inceptive and terminative verbs are not compatible with states either since those verbs “involve a change of state” (Smith 1997:47), which states do not have, as shown in (24).

- (23) a. Sam began/stopped walking to school. (Accomplishment; Smith 1997:45)
- b. ??The balloon started to burst. (Achievement; Smith 1997:42)
- c. *The bomb stopped exploding. (Achievement; Smith 1997:42)
- (24) *Mary began/stopped being sick.

Accomplishments in English include an action and a result semantically, and both components are available for aspectual modification while achievements consist of the result aspect only (Tai 1984; Chief 2007). As already shown in Section 3.2.2, English accomplishments are ambiguous in the test with the adverb *almost* in that they have an action interpretation and a result interpretation; in contrast, achievements have only the result interpretation when modified by *almost*. States in English, on the other hand, are not compatible with *almost*, as shown in (25).

- (25) *I was almost angry.

The discussion in Section 3.2 indicates that the semantic focus of the Mandarin RVC is the result aspect. What is the semantic focus of the three event types in English then? English states do not incorporate a result part; accordingly, it does not have a result as its focus. The achievement in English incorporates only the result aspect and that is its semantic focus. However, an English accomplishment involves an action aspect and a result aspect and is ambiguous when modified by *almost*. The semantic focus of English accomplishments may thus be the action and result

parts both or the action part only because the result in English accomplishments is inherently and covertly expressed in the meaning of the verb, such as *learn* and *kill* (Smith 1997; Talmy 2000) and hence the action part is more semantically prominent (cf. Tai 2003).

The similarities and differences between Mandarin RVCs and English states, accomplishments and achievements are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Similarities and Differences between Mandarin RVCs and English States, Accomplishments and Achievements

	Mandarin RVC	English State	English Accomplishment	English Achievement
consisting of both an action/state and a result	Yes	No	Yes	No
incompatible with the imperfective aspect and the aspectual verbs <i>begin/kaishi</i> and <i>stop/tingzhi</i>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
only the result interpretation available when co-occurring with <i>chayidianr/almost</i>	Yes	NA	No	Yes
the result part is the only semantic focus	Yes	NA	No	Yes

3.3.2 Some Characteristics of English Resultatives

Resultative constructions in English are similar to Mandarin RVCs in that they “denote a complex event composed of an activity subevent and a result subevent” (Basciano 2010:251). For example, (26) denotes a complex event consisting of the wiping activity and the table being clean as the result.

(26) John wiped the table clean.

However, English resultatives are not as productive as Mandarin RVCs. One of the most widely noted constraints on English resultative constructions (Simpson 1983; Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1994, 1995; Basciano 2010) is a syntactic constraint “requiring the resultative phrase to be predicated of a d-structure object” (Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1994:59), termed ‘Direct Object Restriction (DOR)’ by Levin and

Rappaport Hovav (1995:33-34). Based on this constraint, (27a) is ungrammatical because the resultative phrase *hoarse* is predicated of the surface subject which is also the d-structure subject. In (27b) and (27c), the resultative phrases are predicated of the direct objects, though the one in (27b) is a fake reflexive object, and the resultative phrase in (27d) is predicated of the surface subject which in fact is the d-structure object; consequently, all three sentences are acceptable.

- (27) a. *We yelled hoarse.
 b. We yelled ourselves hoarse.
 c. The dog barked them awake.
 d. The bag broke open.

In contrast to the fact that subject-oriented results in English are rare, Mandarin Chinese allows the result to be predicated of the subject (e.g., Cheng and Huang 1994; Basciano 2010). Examples (28) and (29) are from J. Li (1994). The RVC *pao-lei* in (28) is intransitive and the result *lei* 'tired' is predicated of the subject. In (29), the result *lei* in the RVC *qi-lei* can be predicated of the subject or the object (the more salient reading).

- (28) Zhangsan pao-lei le.
 Zhangsan run-tired LE
 'Zhangsan was tired as a result of his running.'
- (29) Zhangsan qi-lei-le ma le.
 Zhangsan ride-tired-LE horse LE
 'Zhangsan was tired as a result of his riding the horse.'
 'The horse was tired as a result of Zhangsan's riding it.'

4. The Experiment

This section is dedicated to the experimental design of the present study. The participants of the experiment are introduced in Section 4.1. The instrument used for data collection along with how it was used is presented in Section 4.2.

4.1 The Participants

A total of 40 adult native speakers of English learning Mandarin at the Mandarin Training Center (MTC) of National Taiwan Normal University participated in this experiment. At the time of the experiment, all the participants attended Mandarin classes regularly – two hours a day, 10 hours per week with Mandarin-speaking teachers. Based on their performance on the MTC placement test, the 40 subjects were evenly divided into two proficiency groups – mid and high. The mean length of the mid group's Chinese learning time is 1.73 years ($SD = 0.50$) and that of the high group, 3.5 years ($SD = 1.09$). Twenty native speakers of Mandarin who were undergraduates at one of the universities in Taipei were also recruited to establish a base line of information or norm to be compared with the performance of the two English-speaking groups.

The L2 learners in the mid group were from the High-Beginner, Low-Intermediate and Intermediate classes of MTC and those in the high group were from High-Intermediate, Low-Advanced and High-Advanced classes. The target structure of this study – the Mandarin RVC – is introduced in Lesson 21 of *Practical Audio-Visual Chinese I* (old edition) or Lesson 9 in *Practical Audio-Visual Chinese II* (new edition). To ensure the participants' awareness of the target structure, only those who had finished studying the volume of the textbook containing the introduction of the RVC construction at the time of testing were qualified to be the participants.

4.2 The Instrument of Data Collection

This study takes the quantitative approach and uses objective tasks to investigate the L2 acquisition of Mandarin RVCs by native English speakers. A grammaticality judgment task (GJ task) and a sentence interpretation task (SI task), introduced in Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 respectively, were employed to collect the data for the current research.

Although the meaning and function of the RVC construction were introduced in the learners' textbook, the book provided very few RVC examples and failed to mention the various types of RVCs. To ensure the learners' familiarity with the questions in the tasks, all the component morphemes of the RVCs and lexical items used in the two tasks were from the part of the textbook that all the learners had

studied. Before the survey was formally undertaken, a pilot study was conducted and questionable sentences were then discarded or modified.

4.2.1 Grammaticality Judgment (GJ) Task

The grammaticality judgment task was used to find out if the learners' knowledge of RVCs varied with the three RVC types (Act-R, Sem-R and Sta-R RVCs) when co-occurring with the three grammatical patterns – the progressive *zhengzai*, the inceptive verb *kaishi* 'begin' and the terminative verb *tingzhi* 'stop'. Specifically, through their answers to the questions in this task, we would be able to determine whether the learners would resort to their linguistic knowledge of English, their first language, when doing the task.

There were 18 test items in the GJ task, derived from a combination of each of the three RVC types with the progressive *zhengzai*, the inceptive *kaishi* and the terminative *tingzhi* two times respectively, resulting in 6 Act-R RVC sentences, 6 Sem-R RVC sentences and 6 Sta-R RVC sentences. These 18 test items and 6 distracters were randomly ordered when the test was administered. In addition, all the sentences were written in Mandarin characters; *pinyin* was also provided to indicate the pronunciation of the Chinese characters and to avoid possible misjudgment due to the learners' failure to recognize the Chinese characters. Three example sentences of Act-R RVC are given in (30). The 18 test sentences are listed in the appendix.

- (30) a. 他正在讀懂那篇文章。

Ta zhengzai dudong napian wenzhang.

- b. 哥哥開始喝光那杯水。

Gege kaishi heguang nabei shui.

- c. 因為工作太忙，林小姐只好停止學會中文。

Yinwei gongzuo taimang, Li xiaojie zhihao tingzhi xuehui zhongwen.

The participants were asked to make grammaticality judgment of each test item. For sentences that were marked ill-formed, the subjects were required to underline the part of the sentence that they considered problematic. By so doing, we could assure that the judgments made were not based on something beyond the researchers' concern.

4.2.2 Sentence Interpretation (SI) Task

The sentence interpretation (SI) task was designed based on Tai's (2003) proposal that the result part of an action-result event would be less salient to English speakers than to Mandarin speakers and the major purpose was to test whether conceptual transfer occurred. The task was composed of 12 test items along with 6 distracters. The 12 test items were divided into two parts: 6 of them were simple RVC sentences and the other 6 contained both an RVC and the adverb *chayidianr* 'almost,' which the L2 learners were more familiar with than *jihu* 'almost'. The participants were required to read each RVC sentence carefully and then choose the one that best expressed the main idea of the sentence from the three given options – the action reading, the result reading and an irrelevant interpretation of the target structure. Like the GJ task, all the test sentences were written in Mandarin characters along with *pinyin* and the three options were written in English to avoid misjudgments resulting from the failure to understand Mandarin.

In this task, if the action aspect was more salient to the L2 learners than the result aspect, they would be expected to select the action reading as their answer. If the learners understood that Mandarin RVCs encode the result aspect only, they would select the result reading. Example (31) is one of the items used in the SI task. All the 12 items in this task are given in the appendix.

(31) 林先生差一點兒躺壞那張床。

Lin xiansheng chayidianr tanghuai nazhang chuang.

(A) Mr. Lin was about to lie on that bed, but he somehow changed his mind and did nothing at all.

(B) Mr. Lin lay on that bed, so that bed was broken.

(C) Mr. Lin lay on that bed, but that bed was not broken after his lying on it.

5. Results and Discussion

In this section, we present the results of the survey in Section 5.1 and discuss the findings with respect to the two research purposes in Section 5.2 and 5.3 – L1 language transfer in the L2 acquisition of RVCs is examined in 5.2 and the issue of the interplay between language and thought is addressed in 5.3.

5.1 Results

In this section, we present the results of the GJ task and then those of the SI task.

The GJ task consisted of 18 items divided into three groups according to the three RVC types. Each type of RVC co-occurred with the progressive marker *zhengzai*, the inceptive verb *kaishi* and the terminative verb *tingzhi* two times, in all, a total of 6 items for each RVC type. In the task, all the test sentences were ungrammatical since RVCs are incompatible with the progressive marker *zhengzai* nor can they go with the inceptive verb *kaishi* or the terminative verb *tingzhi*. In the survey, each test item marked with an 'X' for its ungrammaticality with the problematic part correctly underlined was given one point. No point was given to the test item marked with an 'O' nor to one marked with an 'X' without the problematic part being underlined. So the highest mean score for each RVC type is 6 and the total score is 18. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Scores of Correct Responses to the Three RVC Types in the GJ Task

	Act-R RVC		Sem-R RVC		Sta-R RVC	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Mid	2.85	1.785	1.70	1.380	3.45	1.504
High	4.10	1.334	2.90	1.714	4.00	1.298
Control	5.55	0.686	5.40	0.821	5.85	0.489

A mixed ANOVA analysis was conducted and it revealed that there was a significant group-type interaction effect ($F_{(4,114)}=3.709$, $MSE=.806$, $p<.01$). The answers to the three RVC types were significantly different ($F_{(2,114)}=24.515$, $MSE=.806$, $p<.001$), and a significant difference was also found among the three groups' responses ($F_{(2,57)}=38.854$, $MSE=3.434$, $p<.001$). A simple main effect analysis was then conducted and the result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: GJ Task – Simple Main Effects Analysis

		SS	df	MS	F		Post hoc tests
Group	Act-R	73.033	2	36.517	16.1102	$p<.001$	C>M, C>H, H>M
	Sem-R	142.533	2	71.267	26.7218	$p<.001$	C>M, C>H, H>M
	Sta-R	63.233	2	31.617	13.9485	$p<.001$	C>M, C>H
	Error	387.6	171	2.2667			
Type	Mid	31.633	2	15.817	19.6241	$p<.001$	Act>Sem, Sta>Sem
	High	17.733	2	8.867	11.0012	$p<.001$	Act>Sem, Sta>Sem
	Control	2.1	2	1.05	1.30273	$p>.05$	
	Error	91.867	114	0.806			

As shown in Table 3, in terms of Act-R and Sem-R RVCs, a significant difference was found among the three groups: The post hoc tests revealed that the control group did significantly better than the two experimental groups and the high L2 group did better than the mid group. In terms of Sta-R RVCs, there was also a significant difference among the three groups. The control group did better than the two experimental groups but no significant difference was found between the two experimental groups. Table 3 also shows that the mid group's responses to the three RVC types were significantly different, and so were the high group's. The post hoc tests revealed that there was a significant difference between the L2 learners' responses to Act-R and Sem-R RVCs and between their responses to Sta-R and Sem-R RVCs, but no significant difference was found between the learners' responses to Act-R and Sta-R RVCs.

As for the SI task, there were 12 questions in the task, divided into two groups – six contained the 'almost' adverb *chayidianr* and the other six did not, as mentioned in Section 4, and the questions were designed to investigate whether the result part of an action-result event was less salient to the L2 learners than it was to the L1 speakers.

Presented in Table 4 are the frequencies of the participants' result interpretation responses to the questions without *chayidianr*, and in Table 5, the participants' result responses to those with *chayidianr*. The six test items in each part were further divided into three groups according to the RVC types, 2 for each type. Hence, in each

participant group, the highest possible frequency of the result interpretation response for each RVC type would be 40 (2 questions \times 20 people).

Table 4: Result Interpretation Frequencies of RVCs without *Chayidianr* 'Almost' in the SI Task

	L2			L1 (Control)
	Mid	High	total	
Act-R RVC	17 (42.5%)	28 (70%)	45 (56.25%)	40 (100%)
Sem-R RVCs	19 (47.5%)	21 (52.5%)	40 (50%)	38 (95%)
Sta-R RVCs	36 (90%)	36 (90%)	72 (90%)	37 (92.5%)

Table 5: Result Interpretation Frequencies of RVCs with *Chayidianr* 'Almost' in the SI Task

	L2			L1 (Control)
	Mid	High	total	
Act-R RVC	26 (65%)	32 (80%)	58 (72.5%)	40 (100%)
Sem-R RVC	24 (60%)	30 (75%)	54 (67.5%)	40 (100%)
Sta-R RVC	22 (55%)	31 (77.5%)	53 (66.25%)	40 (100%)

The frequency totals displayed in Table 4 indicate that the performances of the L2 learners and the Chinese controls on Sta-R RVCs were nearly equivalent (L1: 92.5%; L2: 90%). A Chi-square analysis revealed that the result responses obtained from the experimental groups were not statistically different from those from the control group ($\chi^2=.624$, $p=.732$). However, with respect to Act-R RVCs and Sem-R RVCs, the experimental groups exhibited a significantly lower frequency of the result interpretation response than the control group ($\chi^2=40.481$, $p=.000***$ for the Act-R RVC; $\chi^2=29.237$, $p=.000***$ for the Sem-R RVC), implying that the L2 learners attended less to the result of the event as compared with the L1 speakers. But no significant difference was found between the two experimental groups with respect to each of the three RVC types at $p<.01$.

In contrast, the frequency totals in Table 5 show that the test questions with the adverb *chayidianr* enjoyed a higher frequency of the result responses than those without the adverb, except in the cases of Sta-R RVCs. On the basis of this result, we can state that the adverb *chayidianr* assisted the learners in making the correct decision on the semantic focus. The Chi-square analysis however showed that the frequency of the experimental groups' result interpretation response was significantly lower than that of the control group's with respect to the three RVC types (ACT-R RVC: $\chi^2 = 13.469$, $p = .000^{**}$; Sem-R RVC: $\chi^2 = 16.596$, $p = .000^{**}$; Sta-R RVC: $\chi^2 = 16.064$, $p = .000^{**}$), implying that the L2 learners' knowledge is not yet native-like. And like in the questions without *chayidianr*, no significant difference was found between the two experimental groups with regard to each of the three RVC types.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 L1 Language Transfer in L2 Acquisition of RVCs

SLA studies suggest that transfer of one linguistic pattern in L2 acquisition happens when there is obvious structural correspondence between the learner's native language and the target language (e.g., Lado 1957; Odlin 1989). As mentioned in Section 3, Smith (1997) and Chief (2007) suggest that Mandarin RVCs are like English accomplishments while Tai (1984, 2003) suggests that they are like English achievements. RVCs and English achievements are similar in that both have the result as their semantic focus, neither of them can co-occur with the progressive marker nor with the inceptive or terminative verb, and only the result reading is available when modified by 'almost' adverbs. English accomplishments, on the other hand, are like Mandarin RVCs in that both consist of an action part and a result part; however, they are different in that English accomplishments are compatible with the progressive marker and the inceptive/terminative verbs, and are ambiguous between the result reading and the action reading when modified by *almost*. If L2 learners appeal to English accomplishments for help when learning the grammatical properties of Act-R and Sem-R RVCs, a negative transfer is likely to happen; on the other hand, a positive transfer will take place if they treat RVCs as achievements. In contrast, Sta-R RVCs in Mandarin have stative verbs as the first constituent of the RVC and the second constituent denotes a result meaning while English states do not encode a result in its meaning; however, they are similar in that neither Mandarin Sta-R RVCs

nor English states can co-occur with the progressive marker or with the inceptive and terminative verbs. Hence, in the GJ task, the L2 learners' performance on Sta-R RVCs was predicted to be better than it would be on Act-R and Sem-R RVCs, because the learners' knowledge of states in their L1 is not likely to interfere and may even facilitate their learning of Sta-R RVCs. The result of the GJ task, shown in Section 5.1, revealed that a significant difference was found between the learners' performances on Sta-R RVCs and Sem-R RVCs, as expected. However, a significant difference was also found between Act-R and Sem-R RVCs, which was not expected. If the learners considered Act-R and Sem-R RVCs as English accomplishments, there should be a negative transfer and if they considered these two types of RVCs as English achievements, there should be a positive transfer. In either case, a significant difference was not expected to appear between their judgments of these two RVC types. This indeed is a puzzle, but if English resultatives are considered, the puzzle may be explained.

Structurally, English resultatives are quite different from Mandarin RVCs but semantically they both convey an action followed by a result (Basciano 2010). Hence, transfer may happen. As reviewed in Section 3.3.2, the resultative phrase in English resultatives must be predicated of the d-structure object, i.e., the 'Direct Object Restriction (DOR)' (Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1994:59). In 5.1, the results of the GJ task showed that there was a significant difference between the learners' responses to sentences of Act-R RVCs and Sem-R RVCs. We find that in three out of the six Act-R RVC test sentences, the second component of the RVC (i.e., the result constituent) is predicated of the subject of the sentence while in all six Sem-R RVC sentences, the result component is predicated of the object, a factor that was not taken into consideration when the experiment was designed. If this is the reason behind the difference between the results of Act-R RVCs and Sem-R RVCs, then L1 transfer did occur. That is, the learners may misjudge the Sem-R RVC sentences grammatical because the result component of the RVC is predicated of the object. On the other hand, they may correctly judge the Act-R RVC sentences in which the result component is predicated of the subject ungrammatical; that is, they may have answered the questions correctly, but for the wrong reason.

One thing worth noting is that in one of the test items, shown in (32) (= (30b)),

the result component *guang* ‘empty’ in the RVC *he-guang* ‘drink-empty’ is predicated of the object.

- (32) *Gege kaishi he-guang na-bei shui.
 older.brother start drink-empty that-CL water

Literally: ‘(My) older brother started drinking the water until it was empty.’

If the reasoning above is correct, the participants should consider (32) acceptable because DOR is not violated. However, 82.5% of the learners thought it ungrammatical. Chen (2004) suggests that L2 learners are more proficient in using examples introduced in the textbook. That is, familiarity plays a role in L2 learning. Besides *he-guang*, examples of Act-R RVCs in the survey like *chi-bao* ‘eat-full,’ *du-dong* ‘read-understand,’ and *xue-hui* ‘study-understand’ were used more often in the textbook as well as in the daily context and were thus more familiar to the learners. Hence, the accuracy rate was higher, about 60% on average. Examples of Sem-R RVCs such as *da-si* ‘hit-dead’ and *kan-duan* ‘cut-broken off’ were also more familiar to the learners and the accuracy rate was about 50%; in contrast, the average accuracy rate on the sentences containing Sem-R RVCs *gua-shang* ‘scratch-hurt,’ *ci-po* ‘poke-broken,’ *qiao-po* ‘knock-broken,’ and *diu-lan* ‘throw-rotten,’ which did not appear in the textbook or in the daily life as often and were supposedly not very familiar to the learners, was only about 32.5%. This confirms the SLA hypothesis that when learners are not familiar with a certain pattern in the target language, they resort to their first language for help (e.g., Faerch and Kasper 1987). That is, the DOR of the English resultative plays a role here. Otherwise, if the participants’ responses to these test items were based on guessing, the average accuracy rate should be around 50%.

The results of the GJ task also revealed that the high L2 group did better than the mid group in terms of Act-R and Sem-R RVCs, but no significant difference was found between the two experimental groups in terms of Sta-R RVCs. This suggests that in the case of language transfer, less proficient learners are more likely to depend on L1 transfer than proficient learners (e.g., Kellerman 1984; Faerch and Kasper 1987; Odlin 1989). But if the target language is different from their first language, negative transfer is less likely to occur (Oller and Ziahosseiny 1970; Brown 1987), which explains why no significant difference was found between the two experimental

groups with respect to Sta-R RVCs.

Now let us examine the learners' performance on the SI task to see if the learners' L1 had any influence on their answers to the questions in this part. As mentioned in Section 4, there were 12 test items in the SI task, divided into two groups according to whether or not the test items contained the 'almost' adverb *chayidianr*. It was also noted that the questions were designed to investigate whether or not the result part of an event is less salient to English-speaking people than to Chinese-speaking people.

The results presented in Section 5.1 suggest that, as previously noted, the learners' responses to the Sta-R RVCs sentences without *chayidianr* were close to the native speakers'. This is perhaps because English states are quite different from Sta-R RVCs in their interpretations and L1 interference didn't occur here, which somehow makes L2 learning easier, like the moderate version of contrastive analysis hypothesis suggests. However, with respect to the items where Sta-R RVCs were modified with *chayidianr*, a significant difference was found between the control group's and the L2 learners' responses, indicating that the L2 learners were not so aware that when a Sta-R RVC is modified with the adverb *chayidianr*, only the result reading is available. One possible explanation is that the learners had difficulty dealing with the situation in which the Sta-R RVC, which presents a state inducing an endpoint, co-occurred with *chayidianr* since its English counterpart *almost* is only allowed to go with verbs denoting events. Hence, when RVCs were modified by *chayidianr*, the L2 learners were forced to interpret the Sta-R RVCs as English accomplishments or resultatives, resulting from aspectual coercion, an operation executed "to prevent a mismatch between the aspect of a verbal expression and the aspectual constraint of its adverbial modifier" (Dölling 2014:190). That is, the Sta-R RVCs modified by *chayidianr* were treated as Act-R or Sem-R RVCs. In other words, the L2 learners were influenced by their L1 knowledge that the adverb *almost* only goes with event verbs. The fact that the L2 learners gave fewer result interpretation responses to these test questions is likely due to this L1 influence.

Compared with those without *chayidianr*, Act-R and Sem-R RVC sentences with *chayidianr* enjoyed a higher frequency of result responses, as shown in Table 5 above. On the basis of these results, we consider the adverb *chayidianr* assisted the learners in making correct decisions on the semantic focus of Act-R and Sem-R

RVCs. To figure out whether L1 influence was involved and which L1 pattern was involved, five native speakers of English were consulted. All five of the English speakers revealed that the result interpretation of the *almost* resultative sentence in English was the more intuitive or salient reading. On the other hand, their judgments of English accomplishments with *almost* varied from person to person and from sentence to sentence. For example, all of them considered *He almost painted a picture* had the action reading only; some considered the sentence *He almost destroyed the car* had both the action reading and result reading while to the others, only the result reading was available. Based on the native speakers' judgments, we suggest that the L2 learners were more likely to resort to their L1 knowledge of resultatives for help in doing the SI task with *chayidianr*.

5.2.2 Interplay between Language and Thought

As reviewed in Section 2, many studies (e.g., Bloom 1981, 1984; Liu 1985; Lucy 1992; Boroditsky 2001; Casasanto 2008; Athanasopoulos and Bylund 2013) have revealed that structural differences in language may result in variations in thought patterns, which may in turn influence L2 learning. This is termed conceptual transfer in Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008). Tai (2003) suggests that the result part of an action-result event would be more salient to Mandarin-speaking people than to English-speaking people based on the cross-linguistic difference between Mandarin and English regarding the expression of the result of an event. If Tai is correct, native English speakers are expected to interpret RVC sentences differently from native speakers of Mandarin in that English speakers would focus on the action part while Mandarin speakers, the result part.

In our questionnaire survey, the SI task was designed to investigate whether the result part of an event was less salient to the L2 learners than to the native speakers. As mentioned in 5.1, the results of the SI task shown in Table 4 indicate that the English learners' and Chinese controls' performances on Sta-R RVCs were nearly equivalent and no significant difference was found between the two groups, suggesting that the L2 learners' perceptual saliency towards the result of a state was similar to the Chinese controls'. This also has the implication that the L2 learners were aware of the property that the result component is the semantic focus of the Sta-R RVC. A

possible reason is that in English, states do not normally co-occur with results and no L1 interference is caused. This difference somehow facilitated the learners' learning the semantic focus of Sta-R RVCs.

As the frequency totals recorded in Table 4 suggest, fewer L2 learners gave the result interpretation to Act-R RVCs and Sem-R RVCs in comparison with Sta-R RVCs. As mentioned in 5.1, the experimental groups exhibited a significantly lower frequency of the result interpretation response than the control group with respect to Act-R and Sem-R RVCs without the adverb *chayidianr*; as for the items with *chayidianr*, the experimental groups exhibited a significantly lower frequency of the result interpretation response than the control group with respect to all three types of RVCs since *chayidianr* may have coerced the learners to interpret the stative verbs in Sta-R RVCs as action verbs, as mentioned above. The result implies that with respect to the event consisting of an action followed by a result, English learners attended less to the result part of the event than to the action part as compared with native Mandarin speakers. Tai's (2003) theoretical claim on the cross-linguistic difference between Mandarin and English speakers in their perceptual saliency of the result part of the action-result event is thus supported by our empirical data.

The result of the SI task showed no significant difference between the two L2 groups with respect to each of the three RVC types no matter whether *chayidianr* was present or not. This indicates that the concept that the result part is the semantic focus of the RVC sentence is still quite difficult for the two L2 groups to acquire.

6. Conclusions

In this section, we first summarize the findings with respect to the two research purposes. Then, we present the theoretical and pedagogical implications of the present study. Finally, we discuss the limitations of this study and propose suggestions for further research.

The present study explores the influence of the learner's L1 in the L2 acquisition of Mandarin RVCs by L1 English speakers with respect to language transfer and conceptual transfer. According to the results of our survey, L1 language transfer appeared in the following places. First, the result of the GJ task revealed that the L2 learners' performance on questions of Sta-R RVCs was likely to be influenced by L1

positive transfer since Sta-R RVC sentences are like English stative sentences in that neither of them co-occurs with the progressive marker, the terminative and inceptive verbs. As for Act-R and Sem-R RVC sentences, the results of the GJ task indicated that familiarity played an important role. If the learners were not familiar with the RVCs, they turned to English resultatives for help because English resultatives are semantically similar to Mandarin RVCs, which suggests L1 semantic influence. Besides, the results of the SI task showed that the L2 learners' interpretations of Sta-R RVC sentences without the adverb *chayidianr* were quite close to the L1 group's for the reason that this type of RVC is quite different from English stative sentences in that the latter does not induce a result or change of state. Thus, no confusion caused by L1 occurred. That is, the learners were aware that Sta-R RVC sentences encode a result while English stative sentences do not. But the learners gave fewer result interpretation responses to Sta-R RVC sentences containing *chayidianr*, indicating that the learners were influenced by their L1 and were coerced to interpret Sta-R RVC sentences as Act-R and Sem-R RVC sentences because *almost*, the counterpart of *chayidianr* in English, only modifies action verbs. In addition, in answering the questions containing the adverb *chayidianr* in the SI task, the English learners gave more result interpretations than in answering the questions without the adverb, suggesting that the 'almost' adverb facilitated them in picking the result interpretation; here, again, the learners relied on English resultatives when making decisions on the interpretation of RVC sentences containing the adverb *chayidianr*.

As for conceptual transfer, the results of the SI task provided empirical evidence that the L2 learners attended less to the result part of the action-result event denoted by Act-R and Sem-R RVCs with or without the adverb *chayidianr*, while the Chinese controls paid more attention to the result part of such events, thus exhibiting conceptual transfer, which supports Tai's (2003) hypothesis that the result part of the action-result event is less salient to English speakers than to Chinese speakers.

In addition to the findings regarding language transfer and conceptual transfer stated above, the findings of this study provide theoretical and pedagogical implications. First, this study showed that in interpreting the Sta-R RVC sentences without the adverb *chayidianr*, the L2 learners attended more to the result than to the state because Sta-R RVC sentences are quite different from stative sentences in

English for the latter does not involve a result part. This finding thus supports the moderate version of the contrastive analysis hypothesis because it is in favor of the proposal that the places where L2 is different from L1 may not seem more difficult to L2 learners. Second, our survey revealed that the L2 learners tended to resort to English resultatives and not to accomplishments or achievements for help in learning Mandarin RVCs. Mandarin RVCs and English accomplishments/achievements are similar in structure but Mandarin RVCs and English resultatives are similar in meaning. That means semantic transfer instead of structural transfer is involved. Third, our study showed that the high group did significantly better in the GJ task than the mid group, but no significant difference was found between the two groups in the SI task. This implies that grammatical properties in a foreign language are easier to learn but foreign concepts are not so easy to acquire. In addition, the findings of many previous studies on the L2 acquisition of RVCs only showed that there was a tendency for learners to misuse the RVC construction due to the lack of a similar structure in their first languages and due to the complexity of this construction in both meaning and function (e.g., Guo 2003; Chen 2004). In other studies, the analysis of L2 learners' difficulty with this construction was only based on the complexity of RVCs themselves (e.g., Zhu 2014). No research had been conducted to further explore where learners' difficulty lies in learning RVCs and to investigate whether learners have the knowledge of the linguistic properties of RVCs. Thus, this study has served to bridge the research gap. Moreover, this study also shows that familiarity plays a very important role in L2 learning of RVCs. Most importantly, the findings of this study suggest that both structurally driven and conceptually driven approaches are needed in the second language teaching classroom, as Hasko (2010:57-58) suggests. It is hoped that the findings can assist language instructors in knowing what to reinforce in teaching this construction in the future.

There are several aspects and various issues for investigating the L2 acquisition of Mandarin RVCs not covered in this study. First, this research adopted a grammaticality judgment task and a sentence interpretation task to tap into L2 learners' grammatical knowledge of RVCs. However, a long term observation or a production task could be used to collect the data needed for a more detailed study of how RVCs are actually used by L2 learners. Second, this study is far from complete

in that we only surveyed L2 learners whose first language is English. L2 learners of different L1 backgrounds can be included to see if the L2 acquisition of Mandarin RVCs varies according to learners' native languages. Finally, in this study, we focused on Mandarin RVCs and English situation types for they both have the subject-verb-object sentence pattern without including in our questionnaire English resultatives, which are semantically similar to RVCs. The result of our survey indicates that the L2 learners also relied on English resultatives to learn Mandarin RVCs in some respects. A more systematic study on the relation between English resultatives and RVC acquisition is thus needed in the future.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

Part I: Grammaticality Judgment Task³

Directions: Please put an “O” in front of the sentences which are Grammatical. Please put an “X” in front of the sentences which are UNGrammatical, and then underline the misused word(s) in each ungrammatical sentence.

1. 張三正在吃飽飯，沒空講話。
Zhangsan zhengzai chibao fan, meikong jianghua.
2. 因為爸爸來了，弟弟只好停止敲破桌上的花瓶。
Yinwei baba laile, didi zhihao tingzhi qiaopo zhuoshang de huaping.
3. 聽完老師的笑話，我們開始笑疼肚子。
Tingwan laoshi de xiaohua, women kaishi xiaoteng duzi.
4. 他正在讀懂那篇文章。
Ta zhengzai dudong napian wenzhang.
5. 不管我怎麼勸他，他就是不願意停止丟爛那個水果。
Buguan wo zeme quan ta, ta jiushi buyuanyi tingzhi diulan nage shuiguo.
6. 哥哥開始喝光那杯水。
Gege kaishi heguang nabei shui.
7. 昨天，小明開始站暈了頭，差一點兒昏倒在地上。
Zuotian, Xiaoming kaishi zhanyunle tou, chayidianr hundao zai dishang.
8. 吃了這些食物後，陳老先生才停止餓昏頭。
Chile zhexie shiwu hou, Chen laoxiansheng cai tingzhi ehun tou.
9. 真糟糕！姊姊正在氣跑哥哥。
Zhenzaogao! Jiejie zhengzai qipao gege.
10. 天啊！弟弟正在刺破那個球。
Tian a! Didi zhengzai cipo nage qiqiu.
11. 因為心情不好，他開始打死那隻貓。
Yinwei xinqing buhao, ta kaishi dasi nazhi mao.

³ In this part, 1, 3, 4, 6, 13, 16 are Act-R RVC sentences, 2, 5, 10, 11, 15, 18 are Sem-R RVC sentences, and 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 17 are Sta-RVC sentences.

12. 寒冷的天氣開始冷死那個老人。
Hanleng de tianqi kaishi lengsi nage laoren.
13. 因為工作太忙，林小姐只好停止學會中文。
Yinwei gongzuo taimang, Lin xiaojie zhihao tingzhi xuehui zhongwen.
14. 哎呀！小弟正在坐壞那張椅子。
Ai ya! Xiaodi zhengzai zuohuai nazhang yizi.
15. 你看！李四正在刮傷老闆的車。
Nikan ! Lisi zhengzai guashang laobande che.
16. 沒火了，瑪莉只好停止烤乾那件衣服。
Meihuole, Mali zhihao tingzhi kaogan najian yifu.
17. 王先生買了一間大房子，終於可以停止住慣小套房了。
Wang xiansheng maile yijian dafangzi, zhongyu keyi tingzhi zhuguan xiaotaofang le.
18. 因為搶不到他的錢，壞人開始砍斷他的腳。
Yinwei qiangbudao tade qian, huairan kaishi kanduan tade jiao.

Part II: Sentence Interpretation Task⁴

Directions: Please choose **THE** option that **expresses the main idea of the sentence**.

- ___ 1. 哥哥推開了門。
Gege tuikaile men.
(A) My brother pushed the door.
(B) The door was opened.
(C) The door was broken.
- ___ 2. 張三坐麻了腳。
Zhangsan zuomale jiao.
(A) Zhangsan sat on the chair.
(B) Zhangsan's feet became numb.
(C) Zhangsan's feet were numb, so he did not sit on the chair.

⁴ In this part, 1, 3, 8, 9 are Act-R RVC sentences, 5, 6, 10, 11 are Sem-R RVC sentences, and 2, 4, 7, 12 are Sta-R RVC sentences.

___3. 姊姊差一點兒寫斷我的筆。

Jiejie chayidianr xieduan wode bi.

- (A) My sister intended to use my pen, but she somehow changed her mind and did nothing at all.
- (B) My sister used my pen to write, so my pen was broken.
- (C) My sister used my pen to write, but my pen was not broken after her using it.

___4. 王小姐餓瘦了身體。

Wang xiaojie eshoule shenti.

- (A) Miss Wang was hungry.
- (B) Miss Wang became thinner.
- (C) Miss Wang felt hungry because she was thin.

___5. 小明差一點兒扔破那個塑膠杯。

Xiaoming chayidianr rengpo nage sujiaobei.

- (A) Xiaoming intended to throw that plastic cup onto the floor, but he somehow changed his mind and did nothing at all.
- (B) Xiaoming threw that plastic cup onto the floor, so that cup was broken.
- (C) Xiaoming threw that plastic cup onto the floor, but that cup was not broken after the throw.

___6. 小孩咳醒了媽媽。

Xiaohai kexingle mama.

- (A) The child coughed.
- (B) The mother was woken up.
- (C) The mother was not worried about the child who coughed.

___7. 林先生差一點兒躺壞那張床。

Lin xiansheng chayidianr tanghuai nazhang chuang.

- (A) Mr. Lin was about to lie on that bed, but he somehow changed his mind and did nothing at all.
- (B) Mr. Lin lay on that bed, so that bed was broken.
- (C) Mr. Lin lay on that bed, but that bed was not broken after his lying on it.

- ___ 8. 他跑丟了一隻鞋。
Ta paodiule yizhi xie.
(A) He went for a run.
(B) He lost one of his shoes.
(C) Someone threw one of his shoes away.
- ___ 9. 老闆差一點兒罵哭李小姐。
Laoban chayidianr maku Li xiaojie.
(A) The boss intended to scold Miss Li, but he somehow changed his mind and did nothing at all.
(B) The boss scolded Miss Li, so Miss Li cried.
(C) The boss scolded Miss Li, but Miss Li didn't cry after being scolded.
- ___ 10. 約翰差一點兒跳壞了地板。
Yuehan chayidianr tiaohuaile diban.
(A) John intended to jump on the floor, but he somehow changed his mind and did nothing at all.
(B) John jumped on the floor, so the floor was broken.
(C) John jumped on the floor, but the floor was not broken after his jumping on it.
- ___ 11. 王五踢倒了那個瓶子。
Wangwu tidaole nage pingzi.
(A) Wangwu kicked that bottle.
(B) That bottle fell down.
(C) Wangwu found it interesting to kick that bottle.
- ___ 12. 奶奶差一點兒站疼了腿。
Nainai chayidianr zhantengle tui.
(A) My grandma intended to stand there, but she somehow changed her mind and did nothing at all.
(B) My grandmother stood there for a long time, so her legs felt hurt.
(C) My grandmother stood there for a long time, but her legs did not feel hurt.

英語母語者習得華語結果式複合動詞之研究： 聚焦第一語言對第二語言習得的影響

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摘要

本研究旨在藉由英語母語者習得華語結果式複合動詞的情形，從語言轉移和概念轉移兩方面，探討一語對二語習得的影響。四十名英語母語人士（實驗組）和二十名華語母語人士（對照組）參與了本研究。本研究以問卷調查方式進行，包含語法判斷和句子詮釋兩部分。我們的發現是：受試者對華語結果式複合動詞的了解仍有待加強，而且其習得在結構、語意和概念上皆受到母語的影響。具體來說，本研究的結果支持對比分析假設較中庸的版本，也證實語言轉移在結構和語意上都會發生；更重要的是，本研究亦發現在華語結果式複合動詞習得時出現母語概念的轉移，此發現支持戴浩一（2003）的說法：與華語母語者相比較，對英語母語者而言，在包含過程及結果的事件中，事件結果不如事件過程突顯。

關鍵詞：華語結果式複合動詞 語言轉移 概念轉移 二語習得 英語