

Acquisition of Resultative Verb Compounds in Written Chinese by Deaf Children

Name Ma Shuya

Affiliation The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract

Resultative constructions (RC) have attracted much research in spoken language acquisition by hearing children (Li 2000, Deng 2010). Less attention has been paid to how such constructions are acquired by signing deaf children. Findings from several deaf children's language acquisition studies have demonstrated that early bimodal bilingual input supports the development of meta-linguistic awareness and cognition of event structures (Hoffmeister, 2000; Morgan, 2005; Rathmann et al. 2007). The present study investigates the acquisition of resultative verb compounds (RVC) in written Chinese by deaf children in Hong Kong, and their hearing peers' data were compared too. The written Chinese data based on the story *Frog, Where Are You* (Mayer, 1969). Among the three main types of Chinese RVCs, completive, state, and directional, our results showed that directional RVCs were the most difficult structure for both hearing and deaf groups. Most errors occur when producing directional RVCs. In the VV compounds of Chinese resultatives, the transitivity error on V1 are found in both deaf and hearing groups. Another typical error is the absence of a locative particles for marking the resultant state. After comparative analysis among Mandarin, Cantonese and HKSL, we predict that the inaccuracy of V1 transitivity is caused by Cantonese input, it was observed in both hearing and deaf groups, no significant difference was found between the two groups (the p -value is .193059 for 2013, .957768 for 2014, not significant at $p < .05$.) The present deaf and hearing pattern shows that V2 is more salient in State-RVC, V1 is easier to be grasped in directional RVC and completive RVC, and this echoes the spoken language acquisition by hearing kids from previous studies in Mandarin (Deng 2010, 2019). We argue that with timely input, deaf children could perform as well as their hearing peers in writing frog story, our finding also support that early input of HKSL increases the number of deaf children's RVC in total, suggesting that bimodal bilingual input could contribute to the development of language developments of deaf children.

Keywords: Resultative Constructions, Hong Kong Sign Language, language acquisition, Written Chinese acquisition

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