

A Critical Review of “V + Dào” Construction in Mandarin

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Abstract

As a prototypical verb complex in Mandarin, “V + Dào” construction experiences a wide debate across semantics, morphology, syntactics, pragmatics, and grammaticalization as well. This paper presents a critical review of “V + Dào” construction with its own specificity, mainly including its part of speech, syntactic position, and verb-complement classifications from these various approaches, aiming to provide preliminary exploration and investigation for the study of verb complex and its event integration process in the future.

Keywords

“V + Dào” Construction, Critical Review, Verb Complex, Mandarin

1. Introduction

“V + Dào” construction has been pervasively discussed by a large number of Chinese linguists from different perspectives (Chao, 1968; Lyu, 1980; Zhu, 1982; Liu, 1998; Hu & Fan, 1995; Ding, 1999; Liang, 2005; Zeng, 2009; Wu, 2010; Luo, 2015; Shen, 2015b; Yu & Li, 2018; etc.). However, the analyses of “V + Dào” construction are often controversial in many aspects. For instance, the word class of “Dào” in “V + Dào” construction, the syntactic position of “Dào” in “V + Dào” construction and the verb-complement classification of “V + Dào” construction, so on and so forth. See example [1] and [2].

[1] 他回到了家乡。

tā huí dào le jiāxiāng

he return arrive Asp hometown

He returned to hometown.

(Lyu, 1980: p. 151)

[2] 我今天收到了一封信。

wǒ jīntiān shōudào le yīfēng xìn
 I today receive arrive Asp a letter
 Today I received a letter.

(Lyu, 1980: p. 152)

As matter of fact, the word class of “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction has been under debate for decades. “到(arrive)” in [1] can be regarded as a directional verb (Chao, 1968; Lyu, 1980; Zhu, 1982; Huang, 1984; Hu & Fan 1995; Liu, 1998; Zeng, 2005, 2009; etc.), or a preposition (Chen, 1996; Huang & Liao, 2002; Luo, 2015; Shen, 2015a; etc.). Some linguists claim that “到(arrive)” in [2] should be taken as an auxiliary (Li, 1958; Fang, 1980, 1981; etc.) or an aspect marker (Yu, 1954; Lin, 1957; Zhang, 1980; etc.).

As for the discussion on the position of “Dào”, “V + Dào” constructions as in example [1] and [2] are often regarded as a whole unit by a majority of linguists (Lyu, 1979; Zhu, 1982; Zhang, 1980; Hu & Fan, 1995; Liu, 1998; etc.), but some linguists suggest taking the “V + Dào” construction in example [12] as two divided units of “V” and “Dào” (Li, 1982; Chen, 1996; Ding, 1999; Shen, 2015b; etc.).

The verb-complement classification of the “V + Dào” construction is also disputable. “V + Dào” constructions as in example [1] and [2] are treated as the verb-directional constructions by many scholars (Chao, 1968; Lyu, 1980; Liu, 1998; Liang, 2005; Wu, 2010; etc.). However, some linguists contend that the “V + Dào” construction as in example [2] should be taken as a verb-phase construction (Chao, 1968; Liang, 2005, 2007; Wu, 2010; etc.), or as a verb-resultative construction (Wang, Jiao, & Pang, 1987).

These disagreements in the studies of “V + Dào” construction are still currently confusing. Since the “V + Dào” construction is a typical verb complex in Chinese, this study attempts to provide a critical analysis of “V + Dào” construction from various approaches, such as semantics, morphology, syntactics, pragmatics and grammaticalization.

2. The Semantic Approach to “V + Dào” Construction

The meaning of the “V + Dào” construction is in accordance with the meaning of its postpositional component “X”¹. Based on the classification of “X”, Lyu (1980: pp. 151-152) proposes four semantic domains of the “V + Dào” construction.

Spatial domain: When “X” relates to locations, the meaning of the “V + Dào” construction indicates that persons or things arrive somewhere, in correspondence with the action represented by “V”. In example [3], I arrive at the village with his sending me there.

[3] 他一直把我送到村口。

(Lyu, 1980: p. 152)

tā yī zhí bǎ wǒ sòng dào cūn kǒu
 he continuously BA me send arrive the village
 He continuously sends me **to** the village.

Temporal domain: When “X” pertains to temporal expressions, the “V + Dào” construction means the continuation of an action expressed by “V” to a particu-
¹“X” stands as the postpositional component of the “V + Dào” construction. It can be represented by nouns, clauses or be omitted.

lar point of time. Example [4] describes a scene where the wind keeps blowing till two o'clock in the afternoon before it stops.

[4] 大风刮**到**下午两点才停止。 (Lyu, 1980: p. 152)

dà fēng guā dào xià wǔ liǎng diǎn cái tíng zhǐ

strong wind blow arrive afternoon two o'clock just stop

The strong wind does not blow **until** two o'clock in the afternoon.

Resultant domain: When “X” is represented by patients or objects in the semantic structure of a sentence, the meaning of the “V + Dào” construction refers to the result of an action or an action’s purpose that has been achieved. In example [5], “说到(what I said)” indicates that the utterance is spoken by a speaker at the subject position (i.e. I), and the words can be regarded as the result of the action expressed by the verb “说(say)”. “做到(achieve)” means what I’m saying is sure to be achieved in the future purposefully.

[5] 我说**到**一定**做**到。 (Lyu, 1980: p. 151)

wǒ shuō dào yī dìng zuò dào

I say arrive must do arrive

I must **achieve** what I **said**.

Degree Domain: When “X” is concerned with degrees or quantities, the “V + Dào” construction depicts the development of an action or a quality accruing to some extent. Example [6] describes the progress of the matter, which has been developed to the extent of a very serious situation.

[6] 事情已经发展**到**十分严重的地步。 (Lyu, 1980: p. 152)

shì qíng yǐ jīng fā zhǎn dào shí fēn yán zhòng de dì bù

matter already develop arrive very serious situation

The matter has been developed **to** a very serious situation.

However, Liu (1998) claims that the spatial domain of the “V + Dào” construction expresses a directional meaning in general, regarding the temporal domain and degree domain as the metaphorical meaning of the directional meaning of the “V + Dào” construction. In addition, Liu (1998) considers that the resultant domain is in parallel with the spatial domain, which expresses a resultative meaning of the “V + Dào” construction. However, Fan (1995) contends that “Dào” in the resultant domain has no semantic relationship with agents and patients, for it only describes the aspect of the action represented by the verb “V”. Fan (1995: p. 341) also proposes that “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction varies from a lexicalized word with a directional meaning to a grammaticalized word with an aspectual meaning of an action, which can be indicated in the hierarchical order of “spatial domain < temporal domain < degree domain < resultant order”.

In a nutshell, the meaning of the “V + Dào” construction varies from a lexicalized word to a grammaticalized word, depending on the meaning of “X” in four semantic domains—spatial domain, temporal domain, resultant domain and degree domain, and the semantic variation of the “V + Dào” construction in different domains also influences the lexical classification of “Dào” in the “V +

Dào” construction.

3. The Lexical Approach to “V + Dào” Construction

In the lexical approach of the “V + Dào” construction, we will mainly discuss the word class of “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction. When “Dào” is used independently, it is regularly considered as a verb in general (Ni, 2002), or to be more specific, a directional verb (Lyu, 1980; Liu, 1998). When “Dào” appears in the “V + Dào” construction, its word class will change in different semantic contexts.

According to the reviews of Zhang (2003), Cao (2010), Li (2007) and Li (2010), the word class of “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction can be considered as a preposition, a verb, an auxiliary, and a word formation marker or an aspect marker.

Firstly, “Dào” can function as a preposition in the “V + Dào” construction. In Hu’s early researches (Hu, 1981: p. 296), “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction is subordinate to the verb “V”, such as in the case of “走到了目的地(has walked to the destination)”, but the word class of “Dào” can be still regarded as a preposition. He illustrates that “V” and “Dào” is an integrated unit, which is identical to a verb per se. This viewpoint is supported by Chen (1996), Zhu (1985), Fan (2001), Huang & Liao (2002), Luo (2015), and Shen (2015b). However, Huang & Liao (2002), and Shen (2015b) suggest that the preposition “Dào” should be analyzed together with “X” as a whole unit.

Secondly, most Chinese linguists take “Dào” as a verb in the “V + Dào” construction (Chao, 1968; Lyu, 1980; Zhu, 1982; Huang, 1984; Hu & Fan, 1995; Ding, 1999; Zeng, 2005, 2009; etc.). It’s claimed that “Dào” is originally a verb and it is still used as a verb in the “V + Dào” construction, and Ding (1999) proposes that “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction is a secondary verb to “V”. “Dào” can also be taken as a directional verb when its postpositional “X” pertains to a locative noun (Chao, 1968; Lyu, 1980; Huang, 1984; Zeng, 2005, 2009; etc.). Fan (1995) explains that “Dào”, as an independent verb, can be separated from the “V” in the “V + Dào” construction. As a result, the separated “V” phrase and “Dào” phrase can be used together as a serial verb construction. For instance, the separated “V” phrase “帶他(bring him)” and the separated “Dào” phrase “到外面去(to outside)” in example [7]a is a serial verb construction. When the accusative object “him” is raised to the initial position of the sentence by BA construction in [7]b, “帶到(take to)” works as a compound verb, in which “Dào” remains the verb status in [7]a.

[7] a. 帶他到外面去。

dài tā dào wài miàn qù

take him arrive outside go

Take him outside.

b. 把他帶到外面去。

bǎ tā dài dào wài miàn qù

BA he take arrive outside go

Take him outside.

(Fan, 1995: p. 347)

Thirdly, Li (1958) regards “Dào” as an auxiliary in the “V + Dào” construction. He considers the “V + Dào” construction as a compound verb, in which “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction is used as an auxiliary, for “Dào” here is subordinate to “V”. Fang (1980, 1981) supports Li’s viewpoints and suggests naming the auxiliary as a “dynamic auxiliary”². He illustrates that “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction has lost its original intonation, and accordingly it loses its independence in the flow of speech. Therefore, “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction is neither a complement nor a preposition, but a dependent grammatical unit in syntax, only displaying a grammatical meaning (Fang, 1980, 1981). However, Fan (1995) resists that “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction is not fully grammaticalized, for some lexical meaning still remains when used in the “V + Dào” construction.

Finally, “Dào” can also be taken as a word formation marker or an aspect marker in the “V + Dào” construction. Yu (1954: p. 48) proposes a concept of “词尾(suffix)” in Chinese and she considers the directional complement as a word formation marker of the suffix. Zhang (1980) explains that “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction has lost the function of the preposition and acquired the status of word formation marker. He offers three reasons for considering “Dào” as a word formation marker: the preposition cannot be followed by an aspect marker such as “了”, but “Dào” can; and an aspect marker such as “了” can only be added at the end of the “V + Dào” construction, but not in the middle between “V” and “Dào”; the speech flow is paused at the end of the “V + Dào” construction but not in the middle between “V” and “Dào” (Zhang, 1980: p. 81). Fan (1995: p. 347) contends that “Dào”, to some extent, seems like an aspect marker, however, when the result of the verb is emphasized, “Dào” does not lose its intonation in the “V + Dào” construction and still sustains some lexical meaning. For this reason, he suggests that “Dào” is still in the process of grammaticalization, evolving from a directional verb to an aspect marker (Fan, 1995: p. 347).

In sum, different lexical claims of “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction also pertain to the syntactic properties of the “V + Dào” construction.

4. The Syntactic Approach to “V + Dào” Construction

As mentioned in the beginning of the introduction, when “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction is taken as a directional verb or a preposition, “Dào” is supposed to be analyzed together with its postpositional component “X” as an integrated unit. In most circumstances, especially when “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction is considered as an auxiliary or an aspect marker, “Dào” is suggested to be analyzed together with “V” as an integrated unit. These two suggestions relate to the independent usage of “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction,

²“Dynamic auxiliary” means the action’s process (such as appearing, proceeding or finishing) or thing’s stasis (such as concentrating, fixing or changing) (Fang, 1981: pp. 50-55).

which leads to two syntactic controversies of the “V + Dào” construction. One relates to the syntactic position of “Dào” in “V + Dào + X” construction, and the other pertains to the syntactic classification of the “V + Dào” construction. Example [8] to [10] indicate the different independent degrees of “Dào” in “V + Dào + X” construction.

[8] 他回到了家乡。

tā huí dào le jiāxiāng

He return arrive ASP hometown

He returned **to** hometown.

(Lyu, 1980: p. 152)

[9] 爬到山顶上。

pá dào shān dǐng shàng

climb arrive mountain top up

Climbing **to** the top of the mountain.

(Zhu, 1985: p. 54)

[10] 当艾艾长到十五那一年。

dāng Ai Ai zhǎng dào shí wǔ nà yī nián

when Ai Ai grow arrive fifteen that year

When Ai Ai grows **at** her fifteen years old.

(Ding, 1999: p. 59)

“Dào” in example [8] [9] and [10] can be used independently without “V”, for it is acceptable to say “他到了家乡(He arrived at hometown)”, “到山顶上(arrive at the top of the mountain)” and “当艾艾到十五那一年(When Ai Ai is at her fifteen years old)”. Therefore, when “X” is represented by temporal or locative nouns, “Dào” and “X” are supposed to be taken as a whole linguistic unit—“Dào + X”, which is treated as the complement of “V” (Hu, 1981: p. 296; Li, 1982: p. 18; Chen, 1996: p. 59; Ding, 1999: p. 59; Huang & Liao, 2002: pp. 97-98; Shen 2015b: p. 105), and this syntactic property can be patterned as “V + (Dào + X)”.

However, Zhu (1985: p. 54) contends that it is more reasonable to analyze “Dào” together with “V” as an integrated unit. Since “爬到(climb to)” in example [7] can also be said as “爬到了(climbed to)” and “没爬到(have not climbed to)”. He suggests taking “到(arrive)” as the complement of “爬(climb)” and considering “山顶上(the top of the mountain)” as the object of the “爬到(climb to)”. This point of view is supported by a majority of Chinese linguists (Chao, 1968; Lyu, 1980; Zhu, 1982, 1985; Liu, 1998; Zhang, 1980; Hu & Fan, 1995; Zeng, 2005, 2009; Luo, 2015; etc.), and this syntactic property can be patterned as “(V + Dào) + X”.

Therefore, the controversies of the syntactic properties of “V + Dào + X” construction can be summarized as in **Table 1**.

Table 1. The syntactic properties of “V + Dào + X” construction and the supporters.

Syntactic Properties	Supporters
V + (Dào + X)	Hu (1981); Li (1982); Chen (1996); Ding (1999); Huang & Liao (2002); Shen (2015b); etc.
(V + Dào) + X	Chao (1968); Li (1958); Lyu (1980); Zhu (1982, 1985); Zhang (1980); Hu & Fan (1995); Liu (1998); Zeng (2005, 2009); Luo (2015); etc.

Based on Jiang (1982) and Hu & Fan (1995), there are several reasons to regard the “V + Dào” construction as an integrated linguistic unit. 1) “V” and “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction tends to be a “minimal phonological group”, which can be persuasively proved by considerable examples in spoken Chinese; 2) The component “X” is not compulsory to appear, for instance, we can also say “爬到了(have climbed to)” without “山顶上(the top of mountain)”; 3) Similar to other verb-complement constructions, we can add “得(the grammatical marker of *can*)” or “不(the grammatical marker of *cannot*)” between “V” and “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction. Therefore, this study regards the “V + Dào” construction as an integrated unit patterned as “(V + Dào) + X”.

Chao (1968) regards the “V + Dào” construction as a particular syntactic type³. In his opinion, the “V + Dào” construction should better be regarded as a verb-complement construction in syntax (Chao, 1968: p. 350; Zhu, 1982: p. 130). Nevertheless, there are also controversies in the syntactic classification of the “V + Dào” construction.

Lyu (1980: p. 16) proposes the term “verb-directional construction”, and he (ibid: 151) regards the “V + Dào” construction as an instance of verb-directional constructions, which is followed by Liu (1998), Wang (2005), Liang (2005), Wu (2010) and so forth. Chao (1968: p. 465) argues that only some “V + Dào” constructions, whose postpositional components “X” are represented by locative nouns, can be taken as verb-directional constructions.

Chao (1968: pp. 472-479, 465) also discusses that some “V + Dào” constructions should be considered as verb-phase constructions. “Dào”, as a phase complement in certain contexts, expresses “the phase of an action in the first verb rather than some result in the action or goal” (ibid: 446).

[11] 这事情我早料到了。

zhè shì qíng wǒ zǎo liào dào le

this thing I long ago guess arrive Asp.

I guessed **at** this thing long ago.

(Chao, 1968: p. 447)

“Dào” in example [11] is a phase complement that only describes the phase of “料(guess)” but not the result of it. Moreover, “Dào” has a neutral tone, suffers a vocalic reduction, and becomes an aspect marker (Chao, 1968: p. 446). For this reason, “料到(guess at)” is a verb-phase construction, and this viewpoint is also held by Liang (2005, 2007), Wu (2010), etc.

Wang, Jiao, & Pang (1987: pp. 80-98) and Wang (2011: p. 226) do not agree with Chao and Lyu, and they contend that the “V + Dào” construction should be better categorized as verb-resultative constructions in general.

These controversies of the “V + Dào” construction’s syntactic classifications can be summarized in **Table 2**.

To recap, the syntactic position and the classifications of the “V + Dào” construction are restricted by its semantic situations, but various syntactic classifications of the “V + Dào” construction share some similar functions in pragmatics.

³Chao (1968: p. 258) considers the syntax as the study of the relations between words, phrases and expressions. Apart from verb-complement constructions, the syntactic types also contain verb-object constructions, verbal expressions in series, etc. (Chao, 1968: xii).

Table 2. The syntactic classifications of the “V + Dào” construction and the supporters.

Classification Types		Supporters
Verb-Complement Construction ⁴		Zhu (1982)
	Verb-directional Construction	Lyu (1980); Liu (1998); Wang (2005); Chao (1968); Liang (2005); Wu (2010); etc.
Verb-Complement Construction	Verb-Phase Construction	Chao (1968); Liang (2005, 2007); Wu (2010); etc.
	Verb-Resultative Construction	Wang, Jiao, & Pang (1987); Wang (2011); etc.

5. The Pragmatic Approach to “V + Dào” Construction

The pragmatic studies of the “V + Dào” construction are mainly concerned with its presupposition and its usage in different regions⁵ (Zhang, 2016).

With regard to the presupposition of a verb-complement construction, Liu (1994) claims that, in the “V + Dào” construction, the semantic focus is transferred to its complement, and the primary verb, as a presupposition trigger, expresses the given information. Wang (1995: p. 145) agrees with Liu’s comments and further illustrates that the background information of verb-complement construction, such as the “V + Dào” construction, is represented by the primary verb. The complement, such as “Dào”, denotes the new information, and it becomes the semantic focus of the verb-complement construction (ibid: 145). Therefore, we can propose that “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction, as a complement of direction, phase or result, represents the new information, making “V” stand as the presupposed, given information.

[12] a. 你拿书了吗?

nǐ ná shū le ma

you get book Asp ma⁶

Do you get the book?

b. 你拿到书了吗?

nǐ ná dào shū le ma

you get arrive book Asp ma

Have you **gotten** the book?

The new information in [12]a is that we do not know whether the listener got the book or not. In [12]b, “你拿书(you get the book)” becomes the given information, and it constitutes the presupposition for the new information expressed by “到(aspect marker)”, without knowing whether the listener has gotten the book or not.

In addition, some linguists study the “V + Dào” construction from its usage in

⁴Verb Complement Structure is a superordinate category which includes directional complement structure, resultative complement structure as well as the phase complement structure.

⁵The regional usage of the “V + Dào” construction relates to its users in different areas of China.

⁶ma means the interrogative mood in Chinese question sentences.

different regions of China. Zhang (2016: pp. 26-28) compares several novels written by the writers in North China and South China, and she reveals that the frequency of “V + Dào” constructions used in South China is more than that in North China. Zhang (2016: pp. 28-29) also demonstrates that the ancient and middle Chinese pronunciation of “Dào” has been perfectly preserved in the dialects of South China. The pronunciation of “Dào” in South China, to some degree, is more frequently expressed than that in North China.

In a nutshell, the synchronic variations of the “V + Dào” construction in semantics, lexis, syntax as well as in pragmatics all pertain to the grammaticalization of the “V + Dào” construction by means of the diachronic evolution.

6. The Grammaticalizational Approach to “V + Dào” Construction

The grammaticalization of the “V + Dào” construction has been thoroughly explored and elucidated. Based on the previous researches (Zhang, 2003; Tao, 2006; Tong, 2006; Chen, 2008; Zeng, 2009; Liu, 2009a; Li, 2010; Luo, 2015; Xing, 2016; etc.), we group the diachronic evolution⁷ from “Dào” to the “V + Dào” construction into three main stages.

1) From the pre-Qin to the late Han Dynasty: In this period, the single verb “Dào” can be found only in some ancient Chinese texts, and “V + Dào” constructions can rarely be found. Meanwhile, “Dào” is used as an independent verb, and sometimes it can follow a locative or a temporal noun. Related examples are selected as follows.

[13] 蹶父孔武，靡国不到。(《诗经》)

juě fù kǒng wǔ, mí guó bú dào. (*The Book of Songs*)

Jue Fu very brave, none countries not **arrive**

Jue Fu is very brave, (he) can **arrive** in any country.

[14] 王来，未到。(《史记》)

wáng lái, wèi dào. (*The Historical Records*)

the king come, not **arrive**

The king is coming, (but he) has not **arrived**.

“Dào”, as an independent verb, can be used independently as in example [14] or follow a locative noun as in example [13]. Occasionally, “Dào” may appear with some temporal nouns, but Liu (2009a: p. 196) only finds two instances in *The Historical Book* and seven instances in *The Han Book*. The conception of space and time only occur spontaneously with the independent usage of “Dào”, which is considered as a property of “spatiotemporal homology” in language (Talmy, 2000: p. 320).

2) From the late Han Dynasty to the Tang and Song Dynasties: the emergence and development of the “V + Dào” construction. During this period, the single

⁷The dynasties in China generally includes Xia (2070-1600BC), Shang (1600-1046BC), Zhou (1046-256BC), Chun Qiu and Zhan Guo (770-221BC), Qin (221-206BC), Han (206BC-220AD), Wei, Jin and Nan Bei Chao (220-581AD), Sui (581-618AD), Tang (619-907AD), Wu Dai (907-960AD), Song (760-1270AD), Yuan (1271-1368AD), Ming (1368-1644AD), Qing (1644-1911).

verb “Dào” began to appear in the serial verb construction or the verb-complement construction.

[15] 孔文举年十岁，随父到洛。(《世说新语》)

Kong Wenju nián shí suì, suí fù dào Luo (*A New Account of the Tales of the World*)

Kong Wenju year ten old, follow father arrive Luo

Kong Wenju is ten years old, and follows his father to Luo.

[16] 愿结良缘於此日，送伊王子到庵园。(《敦煌变文校注》)

yuàn jié liáng yuán yú cǐ rì, sòng yī wáng zǐ dào ān yuán (*Collation of Dunhuang Bianwen*)

hope tie a good marriage at this day, send him prince arrive temple garden

(I) hope to get married at this day, sending the prince to the temple garden.

In the Wei, Jin, Nan Bei Chao Dynasties, the position of the locative noun is different from that in the pre-Qin Dynasty, for it becomes the object of the single verb “Dào”, such as “洛(Luo)” in example [15] and “庵园(temple garden)” in example [18]. In addition, “随父到洛(follow the father and arrive at Luo)” and “送伊王子到庵园(send the prince to the temple garden)” are typical serial verb constructions in Chinese.

[17] 有康、德二僧来到院。(《祖堂集》)

yǒu Kang, De èr sēng lái dào yuán (*Collections of Zu Tang*)

have Kang, De two monks come arrive temple

The two monks, Kang and De, comes to the temple.

In the Tang Dynasty, the verb-directional construction, such as “来到(come to)”, starts to appear. During that time, most instances of “Dào” are directional complements in “V + Dào” constructions (Liu, 2009b: p. 199).

[18] 理会这一件，也看到极处。(《朱子语类》)

lǐ huì zhè yī jiàn, yě kàn dào jí chù (*Language Categories of Zhuzi*)

understanding this one thing, also see arrive extreme place

(When you) understand this thing, (you) can also see the mystery.

In the Song Dynasty, “Dào” occurs together with verbs indicating perception, such as “看到(see)”, which describes the process that things are perceived by the eyes of somebody. Besides, “看到(see)” is a verb-phase construction, for “Dào” does not indicate the result, but the phase of the action “看(see)”. Zeng (2009: p. 84) claims that the Song Dynasty is the pivotal period for the emergence of the “V + Dào” construction.

3) From the Tang and Song Dynasties up to the present: the “V + Dào” construction has become more and more stable, which marks the upsurge of the grammaticalization of “Dào”.

[19] 不如快送师兄，送到便来归舍。(《喻世明言》)

bú rú kuài sòng shī xiōng, sòng dào biàn lái guī shě (*Stories Old and New*)

not as good as hurry send the brother, send arrive just come return home

It's better to send the brother in a hurry, sending (him to) arrive and (you) just come back home.

[20] 拘到妖魑。(《西游记》)

jū dào yāo chī (Journey to the West * Chapter 67)

catch arrive monsters

(He) **caught** the monsters.

In the Ming Dynasty, the combination of V and Dao is becoming more and more rigid and stable. For example the relationship between “送(send)” and “到(arrive)”, the verb-directional construction of “送到(send to arrive)” in example [19] is tighter than the serial verb construction of “送伊王子到庵园(send the prince to the temple garden)” in example [16]. Moreover, the verb-resultative construction also appears in this period, such as “拘到(catch)” in example [20].

[21] 在这里睡晌觉梦到“太虚幻境”的事来。(《红楼梦》)

zài zhè lǐ shuì shǒng jiào mèng dào “tài xū huàn jìng” de shì lái (*Dream of Red Chamber*)

at here sleep afternoon nap dream arrive “Tai Xu Fantasyland” thing come

(Baoyu) has an afternoon nap here and **dreamed** the affair of “Tai Xu Fantasyland”.

In the Qing Dynasty, the verb-complement constructions can be found in numerous articles or books. And the “V” in the “V + Dào” construction is not only represented by directional verbs, perceiving verbs or concrete verbs, but also by abstract verbs, such as “梦到(dream)” in example [21].

[22] 掀帘一口啐到外面，一脸欣慰。(《我是你爸爸》)

xiān lián yī kǒu cuì dào wài miàn, yī liǎn xīn wèi (*I am Your Father*)

open curtain one spat arrive outside, a face comfortable

Opening the curtain, (I) spit **to** the outside and felt comfortable.

In Modern Chinese, the expressions of the “V + Dào” construction are still in progress of being extended. Some novel expressions, such as “啐到(spit to)” in example [22], can also be accepted in spoken Chinese. Basically, “啐(spit)”, in essential, is a transitive verb in mandarin. For instance, “啐痰(spit sputum)” means to put the sputum out of the mouth with great energy. However, The new usage of “啐到(spit to)” in example [22] turns the intransitive verb of “啐(spit)” into an intransitive one. This unconventional usage might be emerge from the caused-motion event both with motion and manner encoded in the intransitive usage of “啐(spit)”.

Zeng (2009: p. 84) points out that the diachronic evolution from “Dào” to the “V + Dào” construction forms a continuum of grammaticalization, and its semantic and syntactic properties in each period can still be found in Mandarin Chinese.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, “V + Dào” construction is reviewed as a verb complex from the aspects of synchronic variations (i.e. semantic, lexical, syntactic and pragmatic variations) and its diachronic evolution in terms of grammaticalization. All these approaches are related to each other. For instance, when a “V + Dào” construc-

tion expresses a spatial motion in semantics, “Dào” in the “V + Dào” construction is prone to a directional verb in lexis, and the “V + Dào” construction can be regarded as a verb-directional construction in syntax. In such a situation, “V” can provide “Dào” with the presupposition in pragmatics, and this verb-directional construction can be found in Tang Dynasty. Shi (1999: p. 100) notes that the fusion between the verb and the complement is scalable from a verb compound to a unitary syntactic constituent. Moreover, Luo (2015: p. 26) explains that some instances of “Dào” have already been fused together with “V” as a lexical unit, such as “得到(obtain)”, “遇到(meet)” or “聊到(talk)”, and he claims that a large number of “V + Dào” constructions are in the process of becoming an independent lexical unit.

However, the degrees in the relation between “V” and “Dào” are seldom explored and elucidated from the perspective of event integration. In other words, we are still confused about how the degrees of event integration are revealed between the subevents in “V” and the subevents in “Dào”. Moreover, even though Yu (2021) has explored “V + Dào” construction as the action correlation event within its event integrated process, the principles that constrain the fusion or the external event integration between the subevents in “V” and the subevents in “Dào” are still unsolved in the previous studies of the “V + Dào” construction in Mandarin. In a nutshell, “V + Dào” construction is a verb complex, and the event integration between the subevents in the main verb and the subevents in the satellite is barely noticed by Talmy (2000), which needs more exploration and investigation in the future (Li, 2018).

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The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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