Aspect Shift in the Model of English Eventual Prominent Projection

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Abstract

Aspect shift is an important reason for flexibility of syntactic structure. Present researches mainly focus on the relationship between syntactic structures and aspectual shift. From the perspective of cognitive prominence, aspect shift results from inconsistency of headed subevent between lexical and syntactic aspect for the change of aspectual prominence. Aspectual prominence is not only under the constraint of lexical conceptual structure, but it is also affected by syntactic and pragmatic context. By analyzing the aspect shift of progressive, it is found that the lexical aspectual structure of different verbs leads to prominent effect, which in turn affects aspect shift, so the syntactic or pragmatic context which aspect shift needs to have is closely related to the lexical aspectual structure.

Key words: Event; Prominence; Aspect shift; Lexical aspect

INTRODUCTION

The syntactic argument structure can be seen as the result of the projection of verb's event structure (Hale and Keyser, 1993; Arche, 2006, p.40). Based on the semantic category of event aspect, Vendler (1967) divided verbs into four types: states, activities, results, and accomplishments. Each type of verb can project a corresponding syntactic structure led by aspect category. However, some verbs exhibit diverse aspectual phenomena in syntax, and this phenomenon of multiple uses of such verbs is considered aspect shift (Zucchi, 1998, p.350). For example,

(1) a. John ran for an hour.
b. John ran in an hour.

In (1a), 'ran' exhibits the continuity characteristic of an action event, while in (1b), 'ran' reflects the terminative characteristic of a result event. However, the phenomenon of aspect shift is neither arbitrary nor universal. In the same syntactic environment as (1), some verbs cannot undergo aspect shift. For example,

(2) *a. John pushed a cart in ten minutes.
 b. John pushed a cart for ten minutes. (Rothstein, 2004, p.30)

Moreover, aspect shift of certain verbs can sometimes occur, but sometimes it cannot. For example,

(3) a. *John is resembling his father.
b. John is resembling his father more and more as each day goes by. (Rothstein, 2004, p.350)

Although scholars have long noted the above-mentioned phenomena of aspect shift, up to now, they have mainly attributed these event aspect shifts to two reasons: one is the influence of syntactic morphology and some adverbial phrases (Rothstein, 2004, p.350); the other is the pragmatic context factors leading to the generation of shift (Dolling, 2014, p.193). These explanations are mainly an inductive description and syntactic collocation of the aspect shift phenomena, while neglecting the internal structure shift mechanism of lexical aspect and the cognitive factors of language users. Therefore, they can only explain to a certain extent the semantic aspect categories of verbs and the collocation requirements of morphology, but they do not theoretically explain why this kind of collocation or morphological

requirements only apply to part of the vocabulary, thus the generalization of event aspect shift is not strong. In order to better account for some problems existing in aspect shift and analyze their causes, we introduced the concept of cognitive salience into the projection of event aspect, and proposed a prominent projection-controlled model of aspect shift, aiming to combine lexical aspect with syntactic aspect to explain the aspect shift phenomenon. Within the framework of eventual salience, three issues are discussed: the essence of aspectual shift, the constrains of aspect shift, and the projection effects produced by aspect shift.

1. ASPECT SHIFT AND PROMINENT PROJECTION

1.1 Aspect and eventual development

Aspect shift refers to the change in aspectual category that occurs during the projection process of an event, resulting in multiple interpretations for a verb when it is projected into a sentence. But how does this shift process occur? It is necessary to understand the relationship between aspect and eventual development.

Every verb contains its inherent conceptual structure, which is also an event structure from a temporal perspective. This event structure is first reflected within the lexicon, existing in the form of lexical aspect (Smith, 1991, p.2). Just as the traditional relationship between theta roles and arguments, the mapping between cognitive thematic structure and syntactic argument structure is controlled by the features of the aspect (Baker, 1997). Thus, the relationship between verbs and sentences can also be seen as the projection of event structures. For each lexical aspect, there is a main event reflecting the syntactic features of that lexical aspect. To this end, Vendler's proposed four categories of events reflect the characteristics of events from different angles of event development. In terms of the relation between syntax and semantics, the event categories of lexical aspect are merely an abstract existence; they must be manifested within syntax, where the display of an eventual aspect can be regarded as syntactic aspect. During the projection process of a lexical aspect, various internal syntactic and external pragmatic factors intervene, so the eventual structure changes during the projection process.

Traditionally, aspect is divided into lexical aspect and grammatical aspect, where lexical aspect is the fixed pattern of aspect categories in language vocabulary, and grammatical aspect indicates point of view (Smith, 1991, p.3). Here, syntactic aspect and grammatical aspect are similar, both expressing the language user's point of view, but not entirely the same because grammatical aspect has an explicit grammatical form, while syntactic aspect emphasizes both explicit grammatical forms and implicit representations. Because people's cognition of things has differential prominence, it is impossible for every event's development over time to be fully projected into syntax. As aspect views event structure from a temporal perspective, different eventual aspect can reflect its corresponding projection. Syntactic aspect is essentially the further operation of cognitive prominence on the lexical aspect according to the semantic environment during the syntactic projection process. That is to say, during the event projection process, the projection of the event structure is divided into two levels from a temporal perspective: lexical aspect and syntactic aspect, with the formation of syntax being the product of the combination of lexical aspect and syntactic aspect.

Every event is composed of countless time points. Based on the differences in the nature of these temporal points, events can be interpreted using a three-part approach, namely initiation, process, and result. Corresponding to the three stages of event development, the temporal characteristics of four categories of event can be illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Relationship Between Eventual Development and Eventual Categories

In figure1, it is clearly demonstrated that the four categories of event are related to eventual development, which can help us understand the prominence in the eventual projection.

1.2 Prominence and aspect shift

Every verb's lexical aspect is actually a fixed pattern highlighting a certain category of event, so each lexical aspect means highlighting a main subevent. However, the subevent highlighted in the lexical aspect can be influenced by external factors, and it operates according to the principle of sub-event highlighting projection during the eventual projection process. The event highlighting projection model implies that not every time period of the eventual development will be projected into language and eventual projection is subjective. The lexical aspect contained in the verb itself may not always coincide with the more subjectively natured syntactic aspect. While the lexical aspect highlights the resultant event in the event projection process, this resultant event may be weakened

if the process sub-event is highlighted. Similarly, the lexical aspect that highlights the process can also highlight the resultant state in the syntactic aspect. This change in event highlighting during the syntactic projection process should essentially be seen as aspect shift.

Every event category encoded in the lexical aspect reflects a complete event from different angles, or highlights a certain development stage of the event. For example, "arrive" reflects the completion stage of a movement event, while "run" reflects the process stage of a movement event. The projection process from lexical aspect to syntax is essentially equivalent to the encoding of events through syntactic means, which actually means the process of expressing the attitude of language users towards events. Therefore, the syntactic aspect includes the choice of the development process of events. For example,

(4) a. Mary is running.
b. Mary ran to the house.
(5) a. John arrived.
b. John is arriving.

(4a) emphasizes the process of running, while (4b) focuses on the result of running. (5a) directly reflects the resultant event of the lexical aspect through the syntactic aspect, while (5b) changes the resultant event of the lexical aspect by profiling the process stage instead of the eventual result in the syntactic aspect. From the above examples, it can be seen that each syntactic structure can integrate the event implied by the lexical aspect with the language user's attitude towards the event into one through the syntactic aspect, encoding the event features in the syntactic structure. Between the lexical aspect and the syntactic aspect, the perspective of event expression may not be completely consistent, and this inconsistency is the precondition of eventual aspect shift. In (4b), "to the house" gives the activity event in the "run" lexical aspect a feature of accomplishment, transforming it into a realized event. (5b) shifts the result event in the arrive lexical aspect to the process through -ing. The above two eventual aspect shifts are achieved in a relatively explicit way, but the event in the lexical aspect can also be shown in the syntactic aspect in an implicit way, which is the aspectual coercion mentioned by scholars such as de Swart (1998). For example,

(6) a. John broke the chocolate in 1 second.
b. #John broke the chocolate for one hour. (Dolling, 2014, p.190)

Under normal circumstances, "broke the chocolate" refers to an event that can be completed in a very short period of time, as shown in (6a). Because the "broke the chocolate" in (6b) would not normally last for an hour, it seems illogical. However, if there is a shift in the event projection of "broke," making it a frequently recurring event, then it becomes feasible. Therefore, the "broke" in

(6b) subtly transforms into an ongoing process, meeting the contextual requirement of "for one hour." Whether it's the explicit methods used in (4) or (5), or the more implicit approach in (6), the transformation of the eventual aspect indicates a discrepancy between the syntactic features of the sentence structure and the event characteristics within the lexical aspect.

1.3 Shift from lexical to syntactic aspect

Semantic representation belongs to psychological representation, so the temporal development of event structures is a kind of psychological time. The temporal representation of event structures is encoded not only in verbs but also embedded in syntax and in the brains of language users (Jaszczolt, 2009, p.96). When the event structure projects from the lexical aspect to syntax, it will be affected by subjective cognitive factors in psychological representation, and our cognitive differences of the external world will also be reflected. When the verb lexical aspect projects to syntax, for different people, events characterized by linear time are presented in language in different ways or perspectives. The syntactic aspect in the syntactic structure reflects the prominence status of the event through grammatical forms. Even for the same situation, different choices of expression forms will reflect the perspective of the subject's point of view. Therefore, each sentence structure can only highlight and project a certain part of the event. For the same event structure, we cannot highlight its beginning and end simultaneously in syntax. Pustejovsky(1995, p.72)'s central event theory reflects the prominence of each sub-event in the event structure. Each sub-event's projection means the projection from the lexical aspect to the syntactic level.

It is because of the prominence of existence that each lexical aspect contains a main sub-event, which determines the syntactic structure of the word. In the process of event projection, the syntactic aspect also plays a certain role in highlighting the sub-event. They jointly determine the main structure of the sentence. The syntactic projection of the main event not only provides the temporal information of event development but can also further present the speaker's event viewpoint through syntactic form, that is, emphasizing certain part of the event information(Slabakova, 1999, p.285). Therefore, whether in the lexical aspect or in the syntactic aspect, there may be different tendencies to highlight the angle of the same event, and eventual shift reconciles this kind of prominence contradiction between the lexical aspect and the syntactic aspect.

In syntactic structure, changes in verb forms, such as progressive aspect, passive voice, or certain adverbial phrases, are various means to adjust aspectual prominence projection. The progressive aspect is used to highlight the dynamic process of an event's occurrence; the passive voice is used to emphasize the process of the subject's

experience; the 'for'-introduced temporal adverbial phrase is used to emphasize the ongoing development of an event. Even through the same formal means, due to the influence of cognitive prominence, the same lexical aspect can achieve different event transitions in prominence projection. For example,

(7) a. John will enter the icy water in ten minutes.
b. John will enter the bedroom in ten minutes. (Beavers, 2012, p.51)

The lexical aspect of the word "enter" itself represents an instantaneous completed action. However, in (7a), because entering ice water is a painful process, "in ten minutes" is used to emphasize the process of entering. In contrast, (7b) implies that entering a room can normally be done instantaneously, so "in" here should be interpreted as "after", indicating that "John" can complete this event after ten minutes. From this example, it can be seen that due to the different stages highlighted by the action implied by the verb, the interpretation of the same adverbial phrase varies in different syntactic contexts. For the various event aspect shift phenomena mentioned above, it is necessary to systematically discuss the various constraints and factors of event shift.

2. THE CONSTRAINTS FOR ASPECTUAL SHIFT

2.1 Prominence alterations

Prominence leads to aspect shift, but there are prominence constraints on aspect shift. The prominence in the lexical aspect cannot be changed in a random way so verbs fail to arbitrarily generate various syntactic structures, which implies that eventual aspect shift is not unrestricted. It is necessary to understand the various constraints on aspect shift. There are four categories of event aspects, and theoretically, aspect shift occurs among these four categories. For example:

(8) a. *A house built in one month.
b. A house was built in one month.

The lexical aspect of "build" in (8a) includes accomplishment events and cannot project resultative events, generating unaccusative sentence patterns. It can only project resultative events through passive forms. Since aspect shift implies a change in event prominence, only when there is a change of event prominence, can the aspect shift take place. We have to know when the eventual prominence will change in the lexical aspect.

Since the essence of aspect shift is a change in prominence projection from lexical to syntactic aspect, establishing a figure-ground cognitive model is a prerequisite for aspect shift. When eventual projection moves from lexical to syntactic projection, it has a combinatory characteristic (Verkuyl, 1972; Bott, 2010,

p.26), which means that the composition of the event in the lexical aspect will be influenced by the surrounding linguistic environment during projection. In eventual projection, whether it's the lexical aspect or the linguistic environment, as long as it helps to establish the figure-ground cognitive model, it will be involved in the process of eventual projection. However, syntactic structure first depends on the lexical aspect, so changes in aspectual prominence are first constrained by the conceptual structure of the lexicon itself. When the lexical aspect does not provide sufficient prominent prerequisites for eventual aspect shift, it can only rely on other factors, namely the influence of syntax and pragmatics.

2.2 Different prominence between lexical aspect and syntactic aspect

At the lexical conceptual level, the conceptual structure reflects the relationship between events and syntactic arguments. However, for unaccusative verbs with transitive changes, there are two sets of argument structures regarding the same conceptual structure. For example, (Levin and Hovav, 1995, p.108).

A. Intransitive verb: break
Conceptual structure: [[x DO- SOMETHING] CAUSE [y BECOME BROKEN]]
Argument structure: --   <y>
B. Transitive verb: break
Conceptual structure: [[x DO- SOMETHING] CAUSE [y BECOME BROKEN]]
Argument structure: x   <y>

The two argument structures are essentially the highlighted projections of different stages of the same event. The intransitive "break" in (A) highlights the resultant state, while (B) emphasizes the causal relationship between the dynamic process and the result. The different syntactic structures of the word are due to the eventual shift caused by the different highlights between the lexical aspect and the syntactic aspect sub-events. For example,

(9) a. John broke the window.
b. The window was broken by John.

From unaccusative verbs with transitive changes, it can be seen that the highlighted projection in syntax is based on the eventual characteristics of lexical aspect. (9) can evolve into passive sentences through the method of aspect shift. However, an unaccusative verb without transitive changes only has one set of argument structure, which merely includes the conceptual structure of the resultant state, and cannot highlight the dynamic stage of event development, thus it cannot project passive sentences through the method of aspect shift. For example,

(10) a. My book disappeared.
b. *My book was disappeared.

In (10), the lexical aspect of "disappear" does not include the event structure from the beginning to the end, but only the change of the resultant state, which cannot form the prominence of the process. The passive structure is projected through the shift of the eventual aspect. Although every event has a process from the beginning to the end from the angle of time, for words that can use aspect shift, it is first required that their lexical aspect encodes the characteristics of a certain stage of the event, otherwise it is difficult to be prominent in syntax, and can only highlight the stage of the event through shift projection. The syntactic difference between "appear" in (10) and "break" in (9) is the difference of lexical aspect, so aspect shift is first based on the characteristics of lexical aspect. Lexical aspect cannot add events at will, otherwise information prominence errors will occur.

When the lexical aspect provides the necessary event information, it can help cognition to highlight the establishment of a complete figure-ground pattern, then the syntactic aspect can highlight the shift of specific sub-events. For example,

(11) a. John was breaking the window.
b. The window was broken by John.

(11a) only highlights the dynamic process through the progressive tense. Since the "break" behavior may be completed instantly, John's repetitive actions are also reflected in the event transition by highlighting the process of the action. Although (11b) also represents the result of the development of events, this result is contained in the relationship between the result and the process. In other words, what the passive sentence highlights is the suffering relationship between "window" and "John" in the event structure. (Tan and Yi, 2016)

The two transformations in (9) and (11) rely on the prominence of sub-events that already exist in the lexical aspect. If one does not employ prominence to shift the event information within the lexical aspect, but instead simply discards it, it becomes difficult to generate a legitimate sentence structure, as shown in (8a). The dynamic process within the lexical aspect of "build" is a fixed semantic part of the conceptual structure and cannot be arbitrarily discarded; otherwise, the event of "build" cannot be constructed. Accordingly, event prominence involves visual transformations throughout the entire event development process and cannot selectively project a single sub-event from the lexical aspect. Therefore, the word "build" cannot project an unaccusative structure. This also shows that the significant lexical aspect differences between transitive verbs and unaccusative verbs with transitive changes lead to differences in aspect shift in syntactic aspects. Similarly, unaccusative verbs with transitive changes have two sets of lexical aspect structures, encompassing both dynamic processes and static resultant states, hence they have two sets of syntactic structures. For those unaccusative verbs that

cannot undergo transitive changes, they only contain resultant states and lack dynamic processes in their lexical aspect, so they cannot be directly converted into transitive verbs with a binary structure within the lexical aspect.

2.3 Factors influencing prominence in the aspect shift

From the above discussion, it can be seen that both the aspect shifts that occur within the lexical aspect and those that occur in syntactic aspect are transformations between existing sub-events. This is because if a certain sub-event does not exist in the lexical aspect, it cannot be highlighted, and therefore no aspectual shift can occur. For stative lexical aspects, due to the lack of a dynamic event development process, they cannot be used with the progressive tense marker -ing, nor can they express imperative or forceful semantics. Activity events have the dynamic characteristic of continuity and can be modified by temporal adverbial phrases led by "for", but not by those led by "in". Resultative verbs primarily change the resultant state of the lexical aspect, which cannot be modified by time adverbial phrases led by "for", but can be modified by those led by "in".

If there is only a single event stage in the lexical aspect, to achieve event prominence, one can only rely on syntactic or pragmatic context to realize aspectual coercion shift. That is to say, besides the internal lexical event shift, eventual shift can also be operated at the syntactic level. Here, we can use the example sentence (3) again to observe this phenomenon.

(12) a. *John is resembling his father.
b. John is resembling his father more and more as each day goes by.

"Resemble" only has a stative aspect in its lexical aspect, so it cannot use the -ing form to highlight the dynamic process in the syntactic aspect of (12a). However, when the syntactic aspect provides a background like "each day goes by", it reflects the development of time, indicating that "resemble" is not in a completely static state. Therefore, (12b) can use the -ing form to highlight the dynamic process, allowing the event to shift from a state to a dynamic process.

Besides the impact of syntax on event shift, pragmatic context can also play a role in the occurrence of event shift. Chinese, which lacks morphological change markers at the syntactic level, best reflects this characteristic. For example,

(13) 鸡吃了。
Ji chi le. (Chinese phonetic transcription)
Chicken eat aspect marker. (Literal meaning)
Chicken has been eaten. Or Chicken has eaten the food. (Meaning)

(14) 张三跑了。
Zhang San Pao le. (Chinese phonetic transcription)
Zhang San run aspect marker. (Literal meaning)

Zhang San has been away by running. Or Zhang San has run. (Meaning)

(13) and (14) both rely entirely on language user to utilize the context to produce changes in event prominence leading to aspect shift because they lack the assistance of adverbial phrases. Chinese " (Eat)" and " (run)" can either focus on the beginning stage of an event or on the result stage of an event. Due to the pragmatic functional diversity of "chicken", it can be either the initiator of the action or the recipient of the action. With the help of the pragmatic cognition of this argument, the transformation of the prominent object in the event structure is realized, thus causing the lexical aspect of " (eat)" to undergo an eventual prominence change. When the beginning stage of the event is highlighted, the "chicken" in (13) becomes the initiator of the action; when the resultant stage of the event is highlighted, the "chicken" becomes the patient of the action. Similarly, when the beginning stage of the event in (14) is highlighted, "Zhang San" actively initiates the action; however, when the resultant stage of the event is highlighted, it indicates the resultant state of "Zhang San" running away. Because (13) and (14) each have two interpretation methods, they are both ergative and unaccusative syntactic patterns. These two types of Chinese sentences further prove that the lexical aspect depends on the prominence projection of the language user to determine the final syntactic structure category.

3. THE HIERARCHICAL MODEL OF ASPECT SHIFT PROJECTION

3.1 Eventual information in the lexical aspect
From the perspective of prominence theory, the saliency of a figure lies in the contrast provided by its background. That is to say, there must be a certain degree of differentiation between figure and background; only when the figure is distinctly different from the background can it be more easily highlighted. The distinction between the prominent object and the background first requires that the subject must exist within the lexical aspect to have a greater chance of being prominent and undergoing a shift of aspect. Therefore, the richer event development information contained in the lexical aspect, the more options there are for prominence, and the easier it is for aspect shift to occur in syntactic structures. Transitive verbs centered on accomplishment events contain the entire developmental process of an event, from initiation to result, whereas intransitive verbs centered on activity or result events only include the initiation or result stages. Therefore, transitive verbs that simultaneously encompass both the initiation and result states are more likely to undergo aspect shift compared to intransitive verbs.

From the discussion on the conditions for event shift in the previous section, it can be seen that whether it's transitive or intransitive verbs, there are conditions for aspect shift from within the lexical aspect to the external syntactic and pragmatic environment, all of which are constrained by the lexical aspect. Only if there is a target entity within the lexical aspect that needs to be shifted can it be highlighted and thus more easily shifted; otherwise, one can only resort to forced shift with the help of grammatical forms and context. This is why transitive verbs that denote continuous states can naturally use the progressive aspect, while verbs without dynamic process development in their lexical aspect need to incorporate contextual conditions to be acceptable. For example,

(15) a. A bird is flying above the sea.
b. They are building a house now.

(15a) can highlight the dynamic process without any contextual information, because the lexical aspect itself contains the development process of the event, which can be easily shifted. In (15b), although "build a house" indicates the completion of an event, the lexical aspect of "build" itself contains the development process of the event, so it can highlight the process and achieve the shift of the event aspect just by relying on the -ing form. If the lexical aspect lacks the event that needs to be highlighted, then it must rely on syntactic or pragmatic context to complete the shift of the event aspect. That is, when the lexical aspect lacks the target event that needs to be shifted, without the help of context, it is difficult to achieve aspect shift, just like the lexical aspect of "resemble" in (3a) only has a state event, so it is incorrect to say "*John is resembling his father". However, through the change of context, the highlighting environment also changes, and in (3b), the dynamic process is added, making the state of the lexical aspect become the highlighted background.

From the above discussion, it can be seen that the projection of event aspect is mainly under the regulation of cognitive salience. Although the lexical aspect itself guides the salient projection of events, it is subject to the constraints of both internal lexical aspects and external syntactic and pragmatic environments due to subjective factors and the influence of the external syntactic environment. These different constraints actually illustrate that there are differences in the possibility of aspect shift for each verb, so it is necessary to compare the differences between these two types of constraints. Next, we will mainly use the progressive aspect to examine the differences in aspect shift in various environments.

3.2 The hierarchical difference in aspect shift
The lexical aspect is the main origin of event projection, and the event status of the lexical aspect primarily determines the nature of prominence. If we do not consider aspect shift, according to Figure (1) in this text, the temporal nature of the event aspect, the projection of

the main event of the lexical aspect can be summarized as follows:

[x <STATE>]   STATE → STATE
[BECOME [x <STATE>]]   RESULT→ CHANGE OF STATE
[x <ACT>]   ACTIVITY → DYNAMIC PROCESS
[[x< ACT>] CAUSE [BECOME[y<STATE>]]] ACCOMPLISHMENT→
        CAUSING RELATION BETWEEN PROCESS AND RESULT

For these four types of entities, there is no change in the state and activity of the event, which belongs to two simple events, so the lexical aspect will only highlight one event. Although the resultant event is mainly based on the state event, it contains changes in the event. That is to say, it contains both dynamic and static components. The accomplishment event is the most complex, not only including the dynamic process, but also the resultant state. When the profiled event in syntactic aspect can be consistent with the main event in lexical aspect, the lexical aspect is directly projected to the syntactic level, controlling the parameter encoding of sentence event category in the vocabulary, that is to say, different vocabulary has different projection methods when projecting the same event structure. When the event combination in syntax is consistent with the main event in lexical aspect, there will be no shift of event aspect.

If we take the use of the progressive aspect -ing to project processual events as the main event, then activities containing dynamic processes and completed events can certainly highlight the dynamic process. Result events have the potential to highlight dynamic processes because they contain the change operator [BECOME], for example,

(16) a. John was running.   Activity→Process
b. John is eating an apple.   Accomplishment→Process
c. John was arriving.   Achievement→Process

State-type event verbs can only highlight the dynamic process by relying on the context to provide changes and developments in events. For example,

(17) a. *Paul is being clever.
b. Paul was being clever in selling the car. State→Process (Dolling, 2014, p.216)

Through the syntactic aspect, the process of selling the car in (17b) is emphasized before the -ing form can be used to highlight Paul's intelligence. When the lexical aspect of "clever" in (17a) does not encode a dynamic process, it is not possible to directly highlight the phase of the event process. Based on the analysis of the event characteristics within the lexical aspect mentioned above, if one wants to directly use -ing to highlight a dynamic process without the role of context, it can only be done with activity events and accomplishment events that already contain dynamic processes in the lexical aspect. Verbs that represent stative events in the lexical aspect cannot directly highlight this process. Resultative events, although they can be highlighted, do not have strong dynamics because there is only a change in the result in the lexical aspect, without a dynamic process. If a location where a dynamic process occurs is added to (16), the differences between them can be seen. For example,

(18) a. John was running in the playground.
b. John is eating an apple in the room.
c. *John was arriving at the station.

From (18a), it can be seen that although the suffix -ing highlights the development of the process in syntax, the locative adverbial can only modify the resultant state within the lexical aspect, indicating that the prominence of the dynamic process is constrained by the structure of the lexical aspect. The salience of a figure relies on the contrast with its background, and there must be a certain degree of distinction between them. This distinction can occur both within the lexical aspect and at the syntactic level. Since a sentence is a projection of the lexical aspect, the salience based on difference first occurs within the lexical aspect. Compared to activities and accomplishments, stative and resultative lexical aspects show differences in the manifestation of dynamic processes, which determines the degree of event salience. When the event that needs to be highlighted is absent in the lexical aspect, such as in (17) "be clever" where there is no change in the dynamic process, there is no talk of the difference between dynamic processes and static states. However, (16c) "arrive" can reflect a certain degree of processual change, making the difference between dynamic and static more apparent, and thus making the shift of the dynamic process easier. That is to say, when the differences between events cannot be displayed within the lexical aspect, even if a shift can occur, the degree of prominence is relatively limited. Different lexical aspects affect the salience of events, and the varying degrees of salience lead to different effects of shift. From the essence of salience, eventual aspect shift is the result of a mismatch between the central prominent event in the syntactic aspect of event projection and the central prominent event in the lexical aspect, so the ease of event shift depends on the structure of the lexical aspect. The more the target event to be shifted stands out in the lexical aspect, the easier it is to shift. Conversely, if the target event cannot show distinctiveness from other events within the lexical aspect, it relies more on the context for shift.

CONCLUSION

From the perspective of event prominence projection, we can see that event alternation is not merely constrained by context but is a phenomenon of event projection co-

constrained by lexical aspect itself, syntax, and pragmatic context. It is precisely because different lexical aspects exhibit varying degrees of prominence that the event alternations of different verbs are not identical. When the lexical aspect lacks a target event for alternation, it becomes difficult for the verb to achieve aspectual alternation, thus the prominence projection avoids over-generation of aspectual alternations in verbs. At the same time, the differences in prominence of lexical aspects also lead to inconsistencies in the primary events projected syntactically during aspectual alternations, hence the syntactic or pragmatic contexts required by verbs are not entirely the same.

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