

XII. RESULTATIVE VERBS; TRAVELING

- A.1. The "resultative verb" construction (RV) is widely used in Chinese, and since it has no parallel in English, a new groove for it needs to be carved into the mind of the native-English-speaking student. The *concept* of resultative verb compounds is introduced in all basic Chinese language textbooks, but it takes quite a bit of "immersion" for the various manifestations to gradually "soak in." Since the RV is one of the most important features of colloquial Chinese, one mark of a native or near-native speaker of Chinese is the ability to use RV's spontaneously.

The RV consists of a leading verb and a "resultative ending" (RVE): RV=V+RVE

There are four forms of the RV:

Basic (usage includes commands and requests): V+RVE

请拿回来 要洗干净 能学会

Actual (have reached the resultant state): V+ RVE 了

学会了 做好了 洗干净了

Positive capability (called "potential" in some textbooks): V 得 RVE

买得到 吃得饱 你一定学得会

Negative capability: V 不 RVE

买不到 吃不饱 太难了，我学不会

Among the many uses of the RV is in 把 sentences (cf. XI.5.b.)

Some characteristics of the RV:

- a) It's a very succinct way to express the idea of *attempting to do something and the result*. Expressions that convey the same ideas in English are more wordy.
- b) The RVE often provides information on why something can't be accomplished.
买不起 can't buy because it's too expensive
买不到 / 买不着 can't buy because it's unavailable
买不得 can't buy because of some (legal) restrictions (e.g. under-aged person trying to buy liquor)
- c) While most RVE's indicate the "result" of the main verb, quite often, the so-called RVE does not indicate "result" per se, but is something else that uses the structure of the RV. We will see examples of this in the list of RVE's under 5.

2. Not all four forms exist for each RV, for the following reasons:

- a) Due to the meaning of the paired V and RVE, some of the forms simply don't make sense.
看得起 to respect (able to look up to)
看不起 to disdain (unable to look up to) but not: 看起 or 看起了
买得起 can afford to buy
买不起 can't afford to buy but not: 买起 or 买起了
- b) Some RVE's have more than one meaning.

请坐下 please sit down 坐下了 to have sat down

but 坐得下 and 坐不下, in the sense of *able to sit down* and *unable to sit down* don't exist, because 下 as a RVE has another meaning, *able to fit in*.

Examples of the RVE 下, meaning "able to fit in":

装得下、装不下；坐得下、坐不下；穿得下、穿不下

c) Some RV's are idiomatic, and are not generated freely.

错不了 can't go wrong but 错得了 doesn't exist

穿不得 unfit for wearing (e.g. too gaudy) but not 穿得 nor 穿得了

吃不消 too tough to take, can't take it 吃得消 can take it but not 吃消了

3. The leading verb is usually a FV, but it can also be a SV.

Examples with the leading verb being a SV:

好不了了 富不起来 听我的话错不了 用五年也坏不了

教师的工资不高，可以说“饿不死，也富不了。” (negative capability)

Examples with the leading verb being a FV:

她以为一看我的样子，就猜得出我的背景，其实她猜错了。

(positive capability, positive actual)

她做的菜有点儿怪味儿，我又不好意思说，所以结果没吃饱。(negative actual)

请别弄乱今天的报纸。你看完后请收好。

(negative imperative, basic, positive imperative)

4. A wide variety of grammatical forms can occur as RVE:

a) SV's: 好：修好了 饱：吃不饱 乾淨：洗乾淨了 完：做不完

b) FV's: 懂：听不懂 动：搬得动 住：记不住 开：打开了

到：没看到 见：看见了 走：带不走

(note the altered meanings of these words when used as RVE's)

c) Others: 会：学会了 了(liǎo)：吃不了 得(fit to)：看不得(unfit for the eye)

着*(succeed, catch on, attain)：找着了、睡不着 及(reach in time)：来不及

d) Directional verbs (dirV): 下：吃不下 上：看不上

出：想得出 起：住得起

e) The verbs 来 and 去: 送来了 没寄去 做得来 (note special meaning of 来 here)

f) The combination of dirV+来/去: 回+来/去：走不回去了 进/出+来/去：搬不进来

上/下+来/去：开不上去 起+来(no 起+去)：想不起来 过+来/去：改过来了

*着 has three usages which need to be distinguished from each other:

a. RVE, as in 找着了、睡不着

b. Aspect marker indicating "sustained state," e.g. 坐着(zhe)聊天 (cf. Lesson VIII.5.)

c. Verb meaning "to catch," e.g. 着(zhāo)凉、着火、着急

In the simplified character system, 着 is distinct from the character 著 zhù (as in 著名、著作). But in the complex character system, 着 and 著 are merged into one (著). So in the complex character system, one needs to make a four-way distinction with the character 著.

5. The converse of the phenomenon noted in #4 is that there are no words that function only as RVE's, i.e., all RVE's are words used in their derived meaning. The SV RVE's are most faithful to their original meaning. RVE's derived from FV and those in the "others" category are somewhat "stretched." Those that are derived from dirV, 来/去, and the dirV+来/去 combination are sometimes quite literal, but sometimes quite figurative or idiomatic. Here are some figurative meanings of these RVE's, some of which are not "results" per se, but simply take on the structure of the RV. Some of the figurative meanings seem rather farfetched; it may be best to learn them as idioms:

下 (accommodate) 住得下六个人吗？
 上 (attainment, "respect") 没考上大学 看不上眼 爱上了古典音乐
 跟不上她的同学们 说不上是个好学校，就是一般
 起 (afford to, respect) 看不起别人 坐不起飞机
 来 (able to do) 那么累的工作，她做得来吗？ 他们俩怎么也谈不来
 开 (open, apart, emotionally "broadened") 打得开 离不开 看不开 想开了
 消 (idiomatic usage) 吃不消 (too tough to take, can't take it) 吃得消 (can take it)
 出+来 ("out") 想出来(to think of something afresh)算出来 站出来说些真话
 下+来 (to attain/obtain a goal) 这次一定要把世界杯拿下来
 花了三个月的时间把那本书啃下来了
 上+去 (when it comes to...) 看上去不像五十岁的人
 下+去 (continue to...) 请说下去 干不下去了
 起+来(to V up something, to start doing something, when it comes to doing something)
 锁起来 想起来了(recall) 还没行动起来 说起来好像不难，可是做起来…
 过+来 ("come around") 醒过来了 明白过来了 她的四声问题改不过来
 过+去 (pass muster, pass "out") 看得过去 说不过去 晕过去了

6. If an RV involves an object, the object may be located in two places:

- a) Preposed object: Topic (object), Subj. RV (preferred)
 Subj. 把-O RV (basic and actual forms of RV only, not for positive/negative capability forms)
 学生的名字，我一定要记住。 我一定要把学生的名字记住。
 那张桌子，请别搬走。 请别把那张桌子搬走。
 那个学生的名字，我想不起来了。 but not: 我把那个学生的名字想不起来了。
 出去的时候，请把门锁上。
- b) Object placed after the RVE:
 With simple RVE: Subj. V RVE O 我一定要记住所有学生的名字。
 请锁上门。
 With RVE+来/去: Subj. V RVE O 来/去
 In some cases, there is this alternative: Subj. V RVE+来/去 O (marginal)
 but not Subj. V O RVE+来/去.
 想起那件事来了 想起来那件事了 but not: 想那件事起来了
 想不出她的名字来 想不出来她的名字 but not: 想她的名字不出来
 (When the object is specified and is the object of the leading verb - as in the above examples, the "preposed object" patterns above are preferred.)
 唱起歌来了 (object not specified) but not: 唱起来歌了 or 唱歌起来了

走下山去 (object is linked to 下)
带回家来 (object is linked to 回)

but not: 走下去山 or 走山下去
but not: 带回来家

The best strategy is to learn the main pattern for active use, keeping the alternative pattern for comprehensive only, because it works only sometimes.

7. Interrogatives involving RV's. All the standard interrogative forms may be applied to the RV. In the case of the "capability" form of RV, the "choice type question" is:
V-得-RVE V-不-RVE

看得见看不见?
坐得住坐不住?

回得来回不来?
考得上考不上大学?

8. Pitfalls:

- a) Omission of 来/去 in using the dirV+来/去 combination because the "direction toward/away from the speaker" is not in one's mind.

wrong: 小明跑上了。 ✓小明跑上去了。

小明跑上山去了。 小明跑上楼去了。

小明跑上山了。 小明跑上楼了。(both acceptable, but not as good as above)

wrong: 你是什么时候搬的?

✓你是什么时候搬来/去的?

wrong: 我们今天买的床, 家具店明天送。 ✓我们今天买的床, 家具店明天送来。

- b) Matching leading verbs with RVE's (knowing which leading verbs go with which RVE's), especially the idiomatic ones (5 above). Some RVE's differ only in nuance, so special attention is needed to distinguish among them, e.g.:

想得起来 (can recall) 想得出来 (can think of) 想得到 (can expect)

想得开 (can think through an emotional problem)

What about 穿得上 vs. 穿得下?

- c) Avoidance of the "capability" form of RV. Due to an inclination to translate from the English "Subj. can/can't ..." into the Chinese "Subj. 能不能……", one might miss using the much more colloquial and expressive RV. E.g. *我不能买 instead of 买不得、买不起、买不到.

- B.1. Traveling. The fullest sentence pertaining to traveling includes the following elements: a) from..., b) to..., c) by means of (mode of transportation), d) for the purpose of.... The "time-when" of the travel follows the "time-when" pattern covered in Lesson X, so it's not included in this discussion. The first three elements - "from A + to B + by means of..." - follows this sentence pattern:

Subj. (means) 从... (means) 到...来/去 ("means" may come before or after 从...)

The main verb in this pattern is the 来/去 at the very end. The other elements are all CV phrases. The ordering of the CV phrases is determined by the temporal sequence, which is perfectly logical. Any of the CV elements may be omitted if not relevant, but the 来/去 is

essential. (What if you want to emphasize the point of origin, destination, or mode of transportation, rather than 来/去? In Lesson XIV, we will introduce the 是…的 pattern which serves this purpose.)

我预备明天坐火车从北京到上海去。
我预备明天从北京坐火车到上海去。
我父母昨天坐飞机从香港到北京来了。
(why is the 了 attached to 来 and not to any of the CV's?)
我父母昨天从香港坐飞机到北京来了。

An alternative pattern, favored in the South (including Taiwan), is:

Subj. (means) 从… (means) 来/去…(destination)

我预备明天坐火车从北京去上海。
我预备明天从北京坐火车去上海。
我父母昨天坐飞机从香港来北京了。

2. Traveling for the purpose of... There are three possible sentence patterns to use. Learn at least the first one for active use, but learn the other two as well for comprehension.

(从…) 到…来/去 pur-VP	到北京去留学
(pur-VP: verb phrase stating the purpose)	
(从…) 到…来/去 pur-VP 来/去	到北京去留学去
(从…) 到… pur-VP 来/去	到北京留学去

What is the difference between 坐飞机到上海去 and 到上海去坐飞机?

When the event of going somewhere for a certain purpose is "completed action," the 了 is attached to the 来/去 *at the end of the sentence*. Hence, the first of the three patterns above may not be used (because 来/去 is not at the end of the sentence).

No good: (从…) 到…来/去了 pur-VP
OK: (从…) 到…来/去 pur-VP 来/去了
No good: (从…) 到…来/去了 pur-VP 来/去
OK: (从…) 到… pur-VP 来/去了

她去年到美国留学去了。 她去年到美国去留学去了。
but not: 她去年到美国去了留学。

There is also an alternative set of patterns, favored in the South, paralleling the alternative mentioned at the end of section 1.

(从…) 来/去… pur-VP 她要去美国留学。

completed action: (从…) 来/去… pur-VP 来/去了 她去美国留学去了。

There is also the pattern "(从…) 来/去… pur-VP 了" (with "pur-VP 了" at the end), but it conveys "change" rather than "completion of action."

她快要往美国留学了。(imminent move)
她去往美国留学了。(她已经不在北京了，最近她去美国留学了。)

3. The coverb 往 ("toward") - used to indicate direction - is often used in conjunction with traveling. The object of 往 can be a location (往宿舍走), a direction (往前走, 往前看), and even a non-physical entity (往好处想); and the main verb following 往-O is not necessarily a verb of movement (it can be a FV like 看、想).

往前走一里路就到了。
你从这儿往前走，不到五分钟，就会看见那家餐馆了。
今天有没有往西安去的飞机？
你应该多往好处想，别老想那些解决不了的问题。
我们常常往国外打电话，所以每个月的电话费都很高。
中国古代的文化是从北部往南部发展的。
现在世界各国的政治都在往民主这个方向发展。
你怎么把点心老往自己的嘴巴里塞呢？应该请客人多吃才对啊！

Figurative usage of 往下：Aside from its literal meaning (你怕高吗？别往下看就不怕了！), 往下 has the figurative meaning of "continue to..." (synonymous with V-下去), e.g.:

你再往下看几句就明白了。
我已经知道你的意思了，你不必往下说了。
我对你们的产品不感兴趣，你不必往下说了。(挂了电话)
两国的关系到这个地步，再往下谈判会有用吗？

4. 往 has a postverbial usage, which occurs most frequently in schedules of airplanes, trains, etc. This usage is a bit formal, and is restricted to use with *intransitive, single-syllable* leading verbs:

今天晚上没有开往上海的车了。
广州的天气不好，飞机不能在那儿降落，我们现在只好飞往厦门。【降落：descend】
开往广州的火车已经进站了。【进站：to enter the station】
今天海上有暴风雨，飞往日本的飞机都会误点。【暴风雨：thunderstorm；误点：delayed】

What's wrong with these sentence?

- *台湾的公司都要发展往国外。
- *从中国大陆打电话往国外非常贵。
- *我们不常打电话往国外。

Answer: In all the above sentences, 往 should be used as a coverb rather than postverb. Now please revise the above sentences accordingly.

What about this sentence? Is it OK? 我们不常打往国外的电话。