Onset Causation and Extended Causation from the Perspective of Event Integration

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Abstract

This study explores the differences between onset causation and extended causation from the perspective of event integration. The notions of onset causation and extended causation are proposed by Talmy (2000a: 473, 498), and are categorized as two sub-types of direct causation in this study. The majority of the literature sporadically mentions the temporal relations between cause and effect, visual characteristics, and linguistic representation of these two types of causation and it is recognized that both the events with onset causation and those with extended causation between them can be conceptualized as **macro-events** (Talmy 2000b: 44). However, event integration or segmentation for onset causation and extended causation has not been empirically elucidated, let alone the mapping between the conceptual integration of events and syntactic representations of onset causal chains and that of extended causal chains within the theoretical framework of event integration. The other high imbalance lies in the fact that the majority of the literature uses western languages as data, with little or rarely any using Mandarin as source data.

Drawing insight from prior discussions, this study formulates a four-dimensional model of event integration which falls into two parts: conceptual event integration and syntactic integration. Conceptually, four dimensions determining which events can be conceptualized as an integrated macro-event are identified, including spatial and/or temporal integration, participant integration, event-type integration and relation integration. Syntactically, the morphosyntactic counterpart proposed as realizing conceptual event integration is the monoclausal construction derived from multiple clauses. Give this, within the four-dimensional model of event integration, taking English and Mandarin speakers as research subjects, this dissertation investigates the effects of the temporal variable and the presence of an instrument or not on speakers' event number classification and syntactic encodings of onset causal chains and extended causal chains. It explores whether there is any difference in the mapping from the conceptual event integration to syntactic integration between extended causal chains and onset causal chains within and between Mandarin Chinese and English. This study is restricted to four kinds of isolated instances of causal chains: instrumental onset causal chains (I^+OCC), non-instrumental onset causal chains (I^-

OCC), instrumental extended causal chains (I^+ECC) and non-instrumental extended causal chains (I^-ECC).

This dissertation proposes to answer five research questions: (1) What are the ontological differences between onset and extended causation? (2) How may events associated with onset causation and those with extended causation differ in terms of conceptual integration and monoclausal encoding within one language? Does the temporal structure of their subevents make a difference in the degree to which they are integrated? (3) Does an instrument make a difference when speakers conceive and encode onset and extended causal chains? (4) Do conceptual event integration and syntactic integration of onset causal chains and extended causal chains differ across the speakers of different languages? (5) Is the cognitive judgment of event integration consistent with the syntactic integration speakers express linguistically?

To answer these questions, an elicitation experiment and contrastive analysis were employed to explore the event integration of onset and extended causal chains in both Mandarin and English speakers. The discussion focuses on contrastive analysis of event number judgment and the encoding of forms within the four-dimensional model for event integration of causation between I^-ECC and I^-OCC, between I^+ECC and I^+OCC, between I^-ECC and I^+ECC, and between I^-OCC and I^+OCC.

(1) onset and extended causation have great differences according to aspects of the components of the situation, the temporal relation between causing event and caused event, the kind of force contact between agent and patient, and the completion of the causing event and the caused event.

(2) The spatial-temporal structure of causally-related events did affect how an onset causal chain and extended causal chain are conceptually construed and syntactically described in terms of event integration. In both Mandarin- and English-speaking groups, compared with onset causal chains, extended causal chains show a significant preference to be construed as single macro-events with a low degree of granularity, i.e., $I^-ECC > I^-OCC$; $I^+ECC > I^+OCC$ ('>' means the proportion is higher) and extended causal chains show a significant preference to be encoded by single clauses instead of two clauses.

(3) The variable of *instrument* does not have any effect on event-number judgments and

the choosing of clause patterns when speakers conceptualize and describe an extended causal chain or an onset causal chain.

(4) Cross-linguistically, in terms of single-event classifications (the conceptual integration of events), English speakers showed a higher likelihood of integrating the subevents in various types of causal chains as a macro-event, compared with Mandarin speakers. In light of monoclausal encoding, English speakers were more willing to encode I^-ECC and I^+ECC by using single-clausal constructions in English than Mandarin speakers were in Mandarin.

(5) A simple linear regression analysis shows that there is an interactive relationship between the number of single-clausal constructions and that of single-event classifications in terms of I^+ECC in Mandarin group and I^+ECC, I^-OCC and I^+OCC in English group. This suggests that, firstly, specific syntactic patterns might affect event conceptualization and event integration of causal chains. Secondly, the differences in the conceptual event integration of causal chains may affect the choice of syntactic structures. English speakers developed a preference for monoclausal constructions due to their increased means responses of integrating causative events as macro-events. Finally, linguistic encoding and conceptual representation of causal chains are separate and dissociable. A large number of monoclausal constructions with the same syntactic structure in both Mandarin and English can represent four different kinds of causal chains, and the vast majority of the Mandarin speakers judged I^+ECC, I^-OCC and I^+OCC as multiple events, whereas they were more likely to encode them by using single-clausal constructions.

This dissertation expands the range of both causation theory and event integration theory, which not only sheds light on the categorization of the notion of 'causation' and the investigation of causality across languages, but also has implications for studies on event integration, event segmentation, event perception and memory. In addition, this study has potential importance for teaching and translation as well.

Key words: extended causation, onset causation, event integration model, monoclausal construction, cross-linguistic analysis.