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從主觀性理論看若干鄒語及中文之語言現象 1/2
Subjectification and its Linguistic Manifestation in Tsou and Mandarin

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Subjectification and its Linguistic Manifestation in Tsou and Mandarin

Subjectification and semantic change: Mandarin *Gei* in Discourse

1. Introduction

Langacker's Subjectification theory emphasizes the influence of a speaker's shift of grounding on the attenuation of language surface form. The extreme subjectification has the closest cognitive association with the focus.

Imagine that we are in a theater. The maximal scope is just like the larger on-stage area and the immediate scope is the on-stage place where the protagonists are performing, i.e., the major event we are observing. In (a), a so-called "optimal viewing arrangement", we locate in the audience seat which is the grounding where we observe the predicate from. In (b), as we feel the empathy to the protagonist, we move onto the stage but remain outside of the major event. Stage (c) is the extreme subjectivity, i.e., the "egocentric viewing arrangement," which takes place when our grounding has symmetry to the object, and we become part of the event under observation. There is a small or absent distance between the speaker's ground and the predicate being profiled.
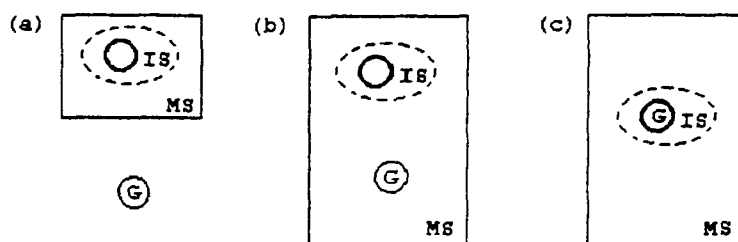

Figure 1.

2. Theoretical assumption

In this study, we reconstruct the path of semantic shift of Mandarin *gei*, and by this chance observe the connection between language and cognition. The contemporary functions of *gei* could be listed below.

Type	Function	Meaning	Syntactic form	Example
1	Ditransitive verb	Give	A+*gei*+IO+DO+(V) A+di.V+DO+*gei*+IO	给他一杯水 拿一杯水给他
2	Goal marker	To	A+di.V+(*gei*)+G+DO	送给他一本書 给新郎新娘道喜
3	Beneficiary marker	For	A+*gei*+B+V	给弟弟洗澡
4	Purposive	Permit, enable	A+*gei*+IO+V A+di.V+DO+*ge*+IO+V	送晚饭给他吃 给孩子睡覺
5	Agent marker	Passive "be...V-ed"	P+*gei*+A+V	房子给風吹倒了

From historical evidences, we conclude that there are two routs for evolution of *gei*, respectively ends up with benefactive marker and agent marker. As a n illustration of its path, figure 2. below illustrates two basic directions of *gei*'s evolution.

Though Langacker does not claim the diachronic change of view point with respect to a specific grammaticalization process, we assume that *gei* in different historical stages will show different degrees of subjectification.
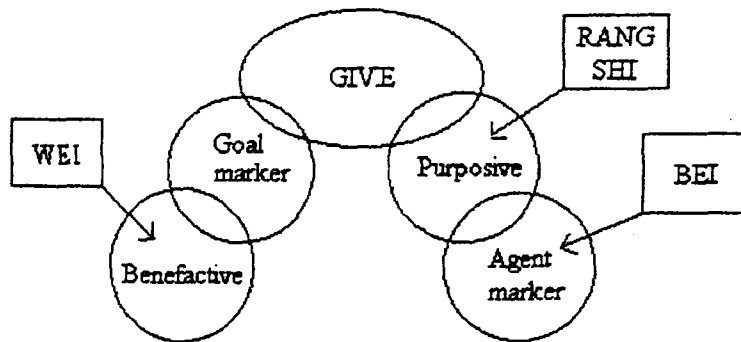
Figure 2

3. Methodology

Based on this reconstructed path, we analyze the degree of verbal transparency

by Langacker's four parameters: 1) change in status: "from actual to potential, or from

specific to generic," 2) change in focus: "the extent to which particular elements stand

out as focus of attention," 3) shift in domain: "from a physical interaction to a social

or experiential one," and 4) change in the locus of activity or potency: "From a

focused onstage participant to an offstage one, or from a specific move to a

non-specific, generalized one." By doing so, we want to make sure whether the shift

of grounding will be reflected in a diachronic aspect.

After that, we aims to approach the issue of subjectification at the discourse

level. The functions of *gei* in contemporary literacy and natural conversation will be

studied by their frequency of occurrence. By an empirical study of language use in

ongoing interaction, we will examine the appropriateness of Langacker's

subjectification theory.

4. Findings

Though Langakcer does not claim a diachronic change of point point with relation to lexical grammaticalization, *gei* in five stages do show cues of attenuation. A visualized conceptualization is illustrated in the figure below.
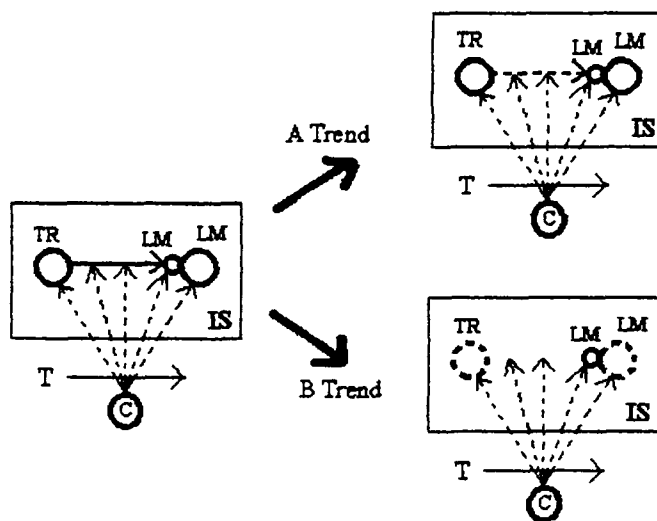

Figure 4.

The investigation of contemporary *gei* in literacy shows that 60.6% of *gei* functions as the ditransitive verb. The derived functions of *gei* is not prevailing because most of the functions have been occupied by other morphemes such as benefactive *wei*, purposive *rang*, *shi*, and agent marker *bei*.

	Number	Percentage
GIVE	182	60.6%
Goal marker	20	6.6%
Beneficiary marker	41	13.6%
Purposive	24	8%
Agent marker	33	11%
Total	300	100%

We also make same calculation for the functions of *gei* in natural conversation such as face-to-face talk, telephone conversation, or TV show. The distribution of *gei* in approximately 3 hours of conversation shows the same tendency.

	Number	Percentage
GIVE	42	68.9%
Goal marker	9	14.7%
Beneficiary marker	3	4.9%
Purposive	7	11.5%
Agent marker	0	0%
Total	61	100%

The semantic change of *gei* has only reached the second stage of subjectification wherein the grounding of the speaker moves closer to the onstage area, yet remain unprofiled.

When categorizing the function of *gei*, we, however, find that there are two extra functions of *gei*: imperative *gei* and emphatic *gei* (in transitive disposal/passive constructions). *Gei* in disposal and passive construction could occur with markers such as *bei* 被, *ba* 把, *rang* 讓, *jiang* 將, etc., but the reason is still unknown.

Gei as an imperative marker is often found in natural conversation. For example:

A: 要像這樣怎麼說呢

就是說

你要嘛

→你給我掃地

二四六掃地

This construction is specific in several points. (1) 給我 is always a frozen construction. Since the construction always contains the first person pronoun, it shows a clear tendency of subjectification in which the conceptualizer shifts onto the stage and become the focus. (2) The subject should always be the second person pronoun. (3) Imperative *gei* is termed "emphatic" by Newman (1996), but we consider it should be imperative because it always denotes a speech act. (4) It could be a derived form of benefactive marker with an implicit first person benefactee. A strong emotional reason (a pique) drives this construction.

From the features, we have an idea that the function and the interpretation of this construction is only possible in interactional contexts. The participants are always the first and the second pronoun, and the sentenced is produced for expressive purpose.

During this process of *gei*'s evolution, social interaction plays an important role. We thus would suggest that Langacker's parameters of verbal transparency should include the fifth parameter, that is, a shift of linguistic level: from lexical to

pragmatic level.

5. Tentative conclusion

From the reconstruction of *gei*'s path of grammaticalization and the application of Langacker's four parameters of verbal attenuation, we have an idea that though the theory of subjectification does not emphasize a diachronic influence, our study of Mandarin *gei* does reflect speaker's shift of grounding onto the stage. However, *gei* in five stages only reaches the weak subjectification, and the conceptualizer himself remains unprofiled.

Two *gei* constructions in modern Mandarin conversation reveals the insufficiency of Langacker's four parameters. We thus detect a need to add a fifth parameter: The shift of viewpoint is from lexical to pragmatic level. We believe that this is what Traugott wants to emphasize in her third tendency of semantic–pragmatic change. Though Traugott (1989) speaks of "pragmatic" and she claims it to be the core issue in her theory, we do not see clear distinction between semantic and pragmatic mechanisms in her theory.

In subsequent studies, we will focus on this assumed fifth parameter. We will first reconstruct the path of grammaticalization of the two new *gei* constructions. It is hoped that the two functions of *gei* will provide more evidences for the fifth parameter from discourse-analytic angle. Efforts will also be make to address the

problem of semantic-pragmatic distinction.

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Subjectification and Semantic Change:

Mandarin *Le* in Discourse

1   Introduction

This paper aims to study the discourse function and the motivation of semantic

change in the development of Mandarin particle *le*.   We will examine its synchronic

use in spoken discourse and examine its development from a diachronic perspective.

In this paper. we argue that the development the shift from main verb to perfective

aspect to current relevance marker is essentially a process of subjectification.   From

main verb to perfective it undergoes the first stage of subjectification and carries on a

discourse function. following Traugott's tendency of semantic change (1989. 1995):

proposition > textual.   Perfective aspect further grammaticalizes and takes on more

subjective meaning via pragmatic inference. following Traugott's external >

texual/metalinguistic principle.

2   Theoretical Assumption

The theory employed in this paper includes the following:

2.1 Subjectivity (Langacker 1985, 1990, 1999):

Langacker (1985. 1990. 1999) proposes the notion of subjectivity in language

and viewing of linguistic expressions.   It is in the communication between

conversational participants that the essence of subjectivity can be shown. He argues that "the primary conceptualizers are the speaker and the addressee". (1999:206) In other words, subjectivity pertains to the manifestation of speaker and hearer's role in discourse. We observe the significance of interactional context from his following remarks on "ground" (1999: 218-9):

> The viewing we are concerned with is the apprehension of the meanings of linguistic expressions. The viewers of concern are consequently the speech event participants—primarily the speaker and the addressee... it is convenient to have a succint way of referring to the speech event. and its immediate circumstances. I use the term *ground* for this purpose.

Next is the distinction between OVA (optimal viewing arrangement) and EVA (egocentric viewing arrangement). Linguistically. the distinction between OVA and EVA is the amount of the speaker's subjective choice of contextual information put forth to the focus of interactants' attention. That is. the speaker may choose OVA rather than EVA in coding the information he wishes to get across when there involves less subjective choice of contextual information or the speaker's own attitude.

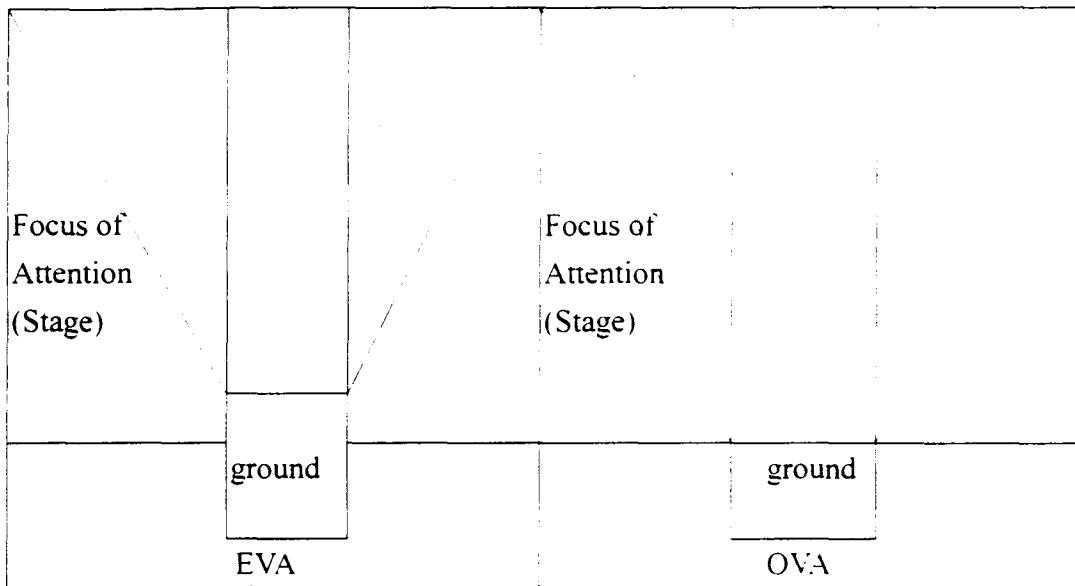The following figure illustrates their main difference:

Focus of
Attention
(Stage)

ground

EVA

Focus of
Attention
(Stage)

ground

OVA

Figure 1 Egocentric Viewing Arrangement and Optimal Viewing Arrangement

2.2 Subjectification

The view that Perfect involves subjectification has been widely reported

throughout literature. (Fleischman 1990. Carey 1995) Perfectness does not itself

express the time of an event. but rather serves as an indicator of relation between the

subjectively chosen reference points (one of them usually involves here and now).

The phenomenon of subjectification (Langacker 1990. Traugott 1985. 1995). also

known as subjectivisation (Finegan 1995). is crucial to the solution of this difficulty.

Traugott (1989:31) remarks on the essence of subjectification: "meanings tend to

become increasingly situated in the speaker's subjective belief state or attitude toward

the proposition." She also outlines three stages of semantic development:

propositional > textual > expressive. The meaning change of *le* perfectly conforms

to this pattern. The main verb *liao3* is on the most lexical end of this meaning chain.

which corresponds the propositional level. The perfective *le* serves as a linker which

connects the main verb with a noun. such as 吃了·倒·行了·本片·跳了·脚. etc.

The linking function belongs to the textual level. Finally. Perfect *le* reflects the

speaker's subjective choice of relevant facet of the context. which subtly conveys the

speaker's attitude. and is therefore expressive.

2.3 Relevance (Sperber and Wilson 1986)

Relevance and pragmatic inference is essential in this study as well. Relevance

and pragmatic inference plays an important part in regulating communication.

(Sperber and Wilson 1986: Traugott 1989) By these principles. people exchange

information economically. In this section. we will demonstrate that. Mandarin

Perfect *le* actually serves to indicate a state change. which is relevant to the entire

communicative context up to the moment of utterance.

2.4 Common Ground (Clark 1992, 1996; Van den Berg 2002)

To study use of Mandarin Perfect *le*. we need to introduce "common ground" and

pragmatic inference. An interactive view of "common ground" states that two or

more participant in a discourse work together towards achieving common goals by

constructing a held common store of information. the conversational "common

ground". (Clark 1992. 1996: Van den Berg 2002) Based on this. Van den Berg (2002)

adopts a radical pragmatic approach to the sentential particle and considers it a

"common ground co-ordination device." We agree with this analysis because we

observe that the discourse function of CRS *le* concerns the information exchange and

speaker-hearer collaboration.

3 Methodology

The data in this study are mainly spoken transcription. The corpus is based on the

transcription convention by Du Bois. Schuetze-Cobum. Cumming. and Paolino

(1993). and contains a length of 128 minutes and 50 seconds of conversational data.

which amounts to 7802 intonation units in total.

4 Findings

4.1 Synchronic Account of Le

Synchronically. *le* is found in two syntactic positions: verbal and sentential final *le*.

The former one occurs after clausal main verbs. and the other sentence-finally. as

shown in (1) and (2) respectively:

(1)

```
7   B:   ..   它是  一個=._
8        ..   在..十九世紀的一個._
```

9	..	法國考古學家._	
10	..	她到了^埃及去做研究的時候._	
11	...	那有一天呢._	
12	..	她在這個曼斐斯神殿上面._	
13	..	[挖了一堆]骷髏頭.\	(RS 002: Opera)

(2)

| 1. | A: | 昌雲的%論文寫完了沒呀?_ | |
| 2. | B: | (1.6)她寫到第三章了.\ | (SS011: Thesis) |

Semantically. previous analyses regard them as falling into two types: Perfective (verbal) and Perfect (sentential) *le*. Following principle of relevance and pragmatic inference. the hearer must try to get this hint to collaborate in their common ground building. Let us consider excerpt (2). In this exchange. A inquires about the completion of a friend's thesis. Through A's question. her lack of knowledge of the thesis is known to B. The use of *le* in B's reply reflects her effort to bring the fact that "the friend has finished it up to chapter three." B is bringing up this fact to the focus of attention of the communication. and thus tries to sensitize A to this change. By use of *le*. B marks the prominency of the state change and informs A of their friend's latest progress. This hint (state change of latest progress) is given to A anyway. whether she gets it or not. In this example. what gets moved onto stage to indicate subjective involvement is present time and the fact of state change that [ ] 雲's thesis has been finished up to chapter 3.

Also. we observe that the Perfect *le* is more like Langacker's EVA. The "ground." in Langacker's term (1999). is subjectively chosen and manipulated by the

speaker in order to direct the hearer's attention to a certain facet of the immediate

communicative context. In other words. a certain facet of the conversational context.

subjectively chosen and will have to refer back to the context. is chosen as the anchor

point for the participants to situate themselves in discourse. This portion of the

immediate context is put forth to the focus of the interactant's awareness. and a

subjective linkage is thus established by the speaker between the conceptualizer and

the event marked with Perfect *le*. Let us see one more example to illustrate this:

(5)

53	A:	可是她的身分人家並不知道._
54		.. 對不對?\
55	B:	.. 大家還是[知道]._
56	A:	[oh].-
57	B:	.. [對].\
58	A:	[只-/ji/]--
59		只-已經知道[她是公主]/?_
60	B:	[知道].\ (RS002: Opera)

In this excerpt of story-telling. the Perfect *le* reflects the change of hearer's

knowledge at the time of speech. Before IU 55. A thinks that no one knows the

girl's identity. But after a few IUs of exchange. A wants to ascertain the information

which s/he newly acquired. i.e.. the fact that the girl's identity is known to everybody.

Here. the use of *le* brings the hearer's attention to the transition between people's old

and new knowledge of the girl's identity. That is. A marks the relevance of the

newly established identity to the information exchange at the moment. and by use of

le, he subtly requests B to give note to this relevance to achieve their common ground building. For relevance's sake. B immediately gets this hint and recognizes A's invitation to join the common ground building process by returning a positive response in IU 60. The conceptualizer is participating in this information exchange with EVA since a part of the ground (context) is in their focus of attention.

4.2 Diachronic Account of *Le*

We observe that. Mandarin *le* also develops out of resultative compound (verb serialization). where *le* (*liao3*) was originally a main verb. Such diachronic and crosslinguistic evidence leads us to the belief that. the Perfective and Perfect *le* in Mandarin should actually be one grammatical element. Also. synchronically. we will later give a cognitive and discourse explanation for their polysemy.

In this section. we will explore the plausibility of the claim for the polysemy instead of homophony existing between the traditionally termed "verbal" and "sentential" *le*. namely. Perfective aspect and Perfect. The phenomenon of subjectification (Langacker 1990. Traugott 1995). also known as subjectivisation (Finegan 1995). is crucial to the solution of this difficulty. Also. the development path of *le* conforms to the stages and tendencies outlined in Traugott (1989).

As previously discussed. the Perfective aspect and Perfect both involve temporal reference points of the event coded by the predicate. The main difference between

the two is: In the case of Perfectives. on the one hand. the speaker focuses on the

boundary of the event described. which directs the conversational participants'

attention to the entirety of the process at issue. On the other hand. Perfectness

highlights the link between the boundary of the event in the predicate. and a reference

point given from the context or inferable from the conversation interactant's shared

knowledge. The boundedness of the event is retained. so the event coded by Perfect

is still viewed as an unanalysable whole. However. a shift of boundary. i.e.. anchor

point. occurs. As the particle grammaricizes. it moves toward the more subjective

end of the subjectivity scale. and gradually takes on a function. linking the proposition

with the speaker. In the development of English Perfect. Carey (1995:88) observes

the shift of locus of relevance on the subjectivity axis. which corresponds to our case

of *le*:

> The locus of relevance for the anterior event is not just the subject. but in
> addition the discourse itself... The locus of relevance expands from the
> discourse itself to any aspect of the discourse context that the speaker chooses to
> as involved in a cause-effect relationship with the anterior event.

Now let us try to relate Prefective and Perfect *le* by looking into the relation of

subjectification and grammaticization. The nature of subjectification is "a shift from

a relatively objective construal of some entity to a more subjective one". (Langacker

1999:297) Traugott (1989:31) also remarks on the essence of subjectification:

"meanings tend to become increasingly situated in the speaker's subjective belief state

or attitude toward the proposition." She also outlines three stages of semantic development: propositional > textual > expressive. The meaning change of *le* perfectly conforms to this pattern. The main verb *liao3* is on the most lexical end of this meaning chain. which corresponds the propositional level. The perfective le serves as a linker which connects the main verb with a noun. such as 吃了 、個 、行了 一本書 、踢了一腳. etc. The linking function belongs to the textual level. Finally. Perfect *le* reflects the speaker's subjective choice of relevant facet of the context. which subtly conveys the speaker's attitude. and is therefore expressive. This change conform's to Traugott's claim (1989: 31): propositional > ((textual) > (expressive)).

5 Tentative Conclusion

The foregoing discussion allows us a closer picture of how subjectivity works with Perfectness under a framework of "relevance/pragmatic inference" and "common ground building": Perfective *le* is a temporal concept recruited by the speaker to code the boundedness of an event. and a comparison of its boundary with another temporal reference point gives rise to the reading of "experienced past" or "prior to". Our current treatment gives a unified analysis of this particle from a subjectivity approach. taking the immediate context of the gram into consideration. This. of

course. is achieved under the guidance of the relevance principle and common ground

building.   The study further provides a pragmatic explanation of "subjectification as

the driving force of the meaning change" from verbal aspect to discourse sentential

final *le*.   It is hoped that. this on-going study may help to shed some light on the

manifestation of "self" in interaction and cognitive grammar.

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