

Newest Trends in the Study of Grammaticalization
and Lexicalization in Chinese

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Newest Trends in the Study of Grammaticalization and Lexicalization in Chinese

Edited by

Janet Zhiqun Xing

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Introduction¹

Janet Zhiqun Xing

In the last three decades, the study of grammaticalization and lexicalization has generated tremendous interest among Western researchers who study Indo-European and African languages. As a result, more than two dozen monographs and edited volumes have been produced (e.g. Heine and Reh 1984, Heine *et al.* 1991, Traugott and Heine 1991, Hopper and Traugott 2003 [1993], Heine 1993, Bybee *et al.* 1994, Lehmann 1995, Ramat and Hopper 1998, Heine and Kuteva 2002, Wischer and Diewald 2002, Traugott and Dasher 2002, Bisang *et al.* 2004, Fischer *et al.* 2004, Brinton and Traugott 2005, Echardt 2006, Lopez-Couso and Seoane 2008, Good 2008). Most of these works study grammaticalization on the premise that it is a unidirectional process or change whereby a lexical item or a construction has undergone a change and consequently serves a grammatical function. The major issues raised by those studies are related, but not limited, to the sources/origins, motivations, mechanisms, pathways, and targets/outcomes of grammaticalization. Many of these studies focus on the morpho-syntactic process of change, for instance, whether a lexical item has become cliticized, affixed, and then fossilized (e.g. Heine and Reh 1984, Heine *et al.* 1991, Lehmann 1995). Many others probe the patterns of semantic change that accompany morpho-syntactic change (e.g. Traugott and Dasher 2002, Visconti 2004, Echardt 2006). Nonetheless, what most of these studies have in common is that they are based on data from either Indo-European or African languages. Naturally, the patterns or tendencies

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1. This collection of articles has been made possible in part by funding provided by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Western Washington University. On behalf of all the contributors, I would like to thank Walter Bisang and Sandra Thompson for their enthusiastic support and encouragement of the initial proposal for this project. We are all very grateful to the anonymous reviewer for his/her meticulous review of the entire manuscript and constructive suggestions for revision. Our gratitude also goes to Randi Hacker and the readers from Mouton for commenting on and proofreading all the chapters in the volume and to Birgit Sievert for her support throughout the process of this project. Without their help, it would have been impossible to complete this project.

of semantic change, grammaticalization, and lexicalization generated from those studies reflect specific characteristics of the relevant languages, because even though the languages of these families (e.g. African languages vs. European Languages) may share some linguistic features, each language or language family has its own unique history and evolutionary process. Taking African languages as an example, we know that Heine and his associates' earlier studies on grammaticalization were mostly based on the internal reconstruction of the languages in this family because there was no recorded history of their development. In comparison, English does not have the gap or lack of evolutionary history that African languages exhibit. However, throughout its history, it has been heavily influenced by other European languages. As a result it is difficult to determine whether certain changes in English are *natural* or *coerced* (e.g. via language contact, cf. Heine and Kuteva 2008). For instance, one of the major shifts in English occurred during the transition from Old English to Middle English when the language lost most of its agreement markers (e.g. case), which led English to change from an inflectional language to a more analytical one. Presumably, such a change would affect the pathways and mechanisms of semantic change and grammaticalization. This type of unique history of a language or language family undoubtedly contributes to the typological characteristics of its later stages, like Middle English and Modern English. Therefore, we cannot say with any degree of certainty that those patterns and tendencies that are derived from English or African languages apply to other genetically unrelated languages, such as Chinese or Burmese, without studying grammaticalization in these languages in depth.

Chinese, on the other hand, is clearly a language that has hardly been studied by western researchers with regard to grammaticalization and lexicalization. In the past three decades, we have seen only a few dissertations (e.g. Sun 1996, Xu 2006) published for English-speaking communities but no edited volume on this topic.² The reason for this is probably twofold:

2. As far as I know, there are currently only two edited volumes on the market related to some of the issues discussed in this collection: *Chinese Grammar: Synchronic and Diachronic Perspectives* by Hilary Chappell (Oxford University Press 2001) and *Space in Languages of China: Cross-Linguistic, Synchronic and Diachronic Perspectives* by Dan Xu (Springer Science 2008). However, Chappell's collection focuses on dialectal variations and Xu's collection primarily discusses issues related to the syntactic aspects of spatial terms in Chinese. They do not overlap with the theme of our volume, namely, the characteristics of Chinese in the three areas of diachronic change: semantic change, lexicalization, and grammaticalization.

Western researchers are not familiar with the Chinese language and their Chinese counterparts are not familiar with the theoretical framework developed in the West. Consequently, neither group feels comfortable in tackling such issues, even though both groups are aware that Chinese is typologically different from Indo-European languages, and moreover exhibits a rich and uninterrupted body of historical data (i.e. recorded history of more than 3000 years without major typological shifts such as those having occurred in English.) Because of the facts mentioned above, Chinese has a clear advantage over Indo-European languages and African languages when it comes to the study of grammaticalization.

The first example of a study on grammaticalization in Chinese that attracted Western linguists' attention is perhaps Li and Thompson's (1974) study on the change of word order involving *bǎ*, a lexical item which underwent a change from a full-fledged transitive verb to an object marker in a serial verb construction (i.e. NP + *bǎ* + NP + V). This study not only provides convincing evidence for syntagmatic change in grammaticalization, but also sheds light on the typological characteristics of syntagmatic change in Chinese. That is, in a language with serial verb constructions where verbs are not marked for tense, number, case, etc. verbs may become grammaticalized into function words more easily than they can in languages with agreement marking (i.e. tense, number, case, etc.). This assumption, as shown in the following section, is supported by the pattern of semantic change in grammaticalization observed in Chinese.

1. Regularity in semantic change

According to studies conducted by Western researchers (Heine *et al.* 1991: 74 and Traugott and Dasher 2002: 11–12), semantic change triggered by metaphoricalization and metonymization in grammaticalization develops along the following cline: $A > A, B > (B)$, where A stands for an early lexical semantic function from which a new meaning B – a polysemy (not necessarily a new grammatical category) – has been derived and coexists with the earlier meaning A. Over time, meaning A may gradually become obsolete leaving only the newly developed polysemy B in use, and later the polysemy B may become obsolete as well. Such a tendency for semantic evolution seems applicable to most cases of grammaticalization in English and other inflectional languages (Heine *et al.* 1991, Traugott and Heine 1991, Bybee *et al.* 1994, Heine and Kutiva 2002, Good 2008). In Chinese, however, study after study shows a different pattern (e.g. Liu 1989; Ma

1993, 2002; Peyraube 1989a, 1989b, 1989c, 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1996, 1998; Shi Z. 1989; Shi and Li 2001; Sun 1996; Wang 1980 [1956]; Xing 2003, 2009; Xu 1992; Zhang 1991; etc.). It has been observed that semantic change in the grammaticalization of Chinese lexemes undergoes a process of ‘accretion’ of meanings, i.e. $A > A, B > A, B, C$, in which the multiplication from a conceptual entity A to A, B, C first goes through an intermediate stage (A,B) where the older meaning (A) and the newer meaning (B) co-exist. Then the older meaning (A) or the newer meaning (B) may continue to develop and extend their meaning to (C), a new conceptual entity. As a result, all of the three entities may co-exist. This cline,³ or rather this tendency of semantic change in Chinese, is clearly different from the one reported by Western researchers, i.e. $A > A, B > (B)$. The key difference between the two developments lies in the last stage, where Chinese allows a co-existence of multiple conceptual entities (i.e. polysemies), whereas Western researchers forecast the “recessive” nature and possible complete disappearance of the original meaning (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 11).⁴

I have argued in different case studies (e.g. Xing 2003, 2004, 2006, 2009) that the reason why semantic functions in Chinese evolve by way of an accretion of meanings over time is primarily attributable to the isolating nature of the Chinese language structure at three different levels: morphology, syntax and discourse.

At the morphological level, all Chinese characters are represented by one immutable written form, beyond which they simply cannot be reduced

3. It should be noted that of the three generalizations (i.e. expansion, reduction, and metaphorical extension) of semantic change traditionally discussed by Chinese grammarians (e.g. Gao Mingkai 1942), reduction appears to provide evidence that contradicts the pattern of accretion discussed here. However, if we examine the examples used to demonstrate the reduction of meaning by those grammarians, it becomes obvious that almost all examples are solid words (i.e. nouns and verbs) which do not undergo grammaticalization, and are thus not comparable to the cases examined in this study. Therefore, they are not counter-examples. When discussing semantic change, Wang Li (1980: 537564) also indicates that the pathway of semantic change in Chinese is: $A > A, B > B$. Again, if we look at the examples, we find the same situation with the reduction just mentioned.

4. The English verb ‘have’ seems to behave more like Chinese lexemes that have undergone grammaticalization than those that follow the evolutionary cline suggested by Western researchers. In modern times, ‘have’ has multiple semantic functions including: 1) possessive verb – “I have a computer”; 2) perfective aspect – “I have bought a computer”; and 3) modal auxiliary – “We have to go”.

unless they are systematically simplified through a language reform. In addition, two or more characters/words, especially those that have undergone grammaticalization, cannot merge into one character/word⁵ as they can in alphabetical languages (e.g. ‘going to > gonna’; ‘you all > y’all’, etc.), nor is it likely that new characters will be created by rearranging different strokes, as can be done anagrammatically in alphabetical languages, e.g. “lead”, “deal”, “lade”, and “dale” in English. But most importantly, there is no agreement marking in Chinese with respect to the grammatical categories like number,⁶ case, gender, tense, mood, etc. As a result, the SAME noun form (i.e. character) can be used as subject/agent or object/patient and the SAME verb form (character) can be used as a main verb, a serial verb, a complement, an adverb, an adjective, a conjunction, or a preposition. Furthermore, a verb can also be used as a noun and vice versa, e.g., *huì* 會 and *lián* 連 illustrated in (1) and (2). In comparison, nouns and verbs in English are not likely to behave in the same way as shown in example (3) using ‘even’.⁷ It appears that the unmarked word structure in Chinese permits flexibility and relative freedom in the interpretation of nouns and verbs consequently leading to the co-existence of multiple polysemies.

(1) *huì*’s 會 various functions

a. NOUN: ‘meeting’

至會所, . . . , 以遇禮相見。 (2nd Century AD: *Kongzi Jiayu*)

zhì huì suǒ, . . . , yǐ yù lǐ xiāng jiàn.

arrive **meeting** place, as-to meet ritual each-other meet

‘They arrived at the meeting place, . . . so as to meet them politely.’

-
5. This does not include those words that were *created* by combining two characters such as *bú zhèng* 不正 ‘not straight’ for *wāi* 歪, or *nǚ zǐ* 女子 ‘female child’ for *hǎo* 好 ‘good’.
 6. The only plural marking in Chinese is the suffix, *mén* 們, which attaches to singular pronouns, *wǒ* 我 ‘I’, *nǐ* 你 ‘you’, and *tā* 他/她 ‘he/she’ among others (i.e. *péngyǒumen* 朋友們).
 7. There are some lexemes in Modern English that can be used as both a verb and a noun, such as ‘report’, ‘cause’, ‘experience’ etc. In addition, lexemes that can be used as both nouns and verbs undergo a stress change e.g., PERmit for the noun, perMIT for the verb. However, when they are used as nouns, they have to be marked for number and/or definiteness. When they are used as verbs, they have to be marked for tense, aspect or mood.

b. VERB: ‘to meet’

在禮，卿不**會**公侯，會伯子男... (1st Century BC: *Zuo Zhuan*)
zài lǐ, qīng bù huì gōng-hóu, huì bó-zǐ-nán
 for etiquette official not **meet** ranking-official **meet** low-ranking
 ‘For the sake of etiquette, the official could not meet the [high]
 ranking officials but could meet the low-ranking officials.’

c. SERIAL VERB: ‘meet + verb’

知戰之日，則可千里而**會**戰。(4th Century AD: *Sunzi*)
zhī zhàn zhī rì, zé kě qiān lǐ ér huì zhàn.
 know battle POSS day, then may thousand kilometer then **meet** fight
 ‘Knowing the date of the battle, we can go a thousand miles to
 meet and fight.’

d. AUXILIARY: ‘might’

汝向後也**會**去住。(10th Century AD: *Zutangji*)
rǔ xiàng hòu yě huì qù zhù.
 2SG toward late also **possible** to stay
 ‘You can also go and stay (there) later.’

e. SERIAL VERB/COMPLEMENT: ‘verb + perceive’

小學是直理**會**那事；(12th Century AD: *Zuzi Yulei*)
xiǎoxué shì zhí lǐ huì nà shì;
 basic-classics is direct understand **perceive** DET issue
 ‘Primary learning means to directly understand and learn that issue.’

f. COMPLEMENT: ‘verb + learnt’

小尼姑也都學**會**了年紀卷經咒 (17th Century AD: *Honglou Meng*)
xiǎo nígū yě dōu xué huì le niánjì juàn jīng-zhòu
 young nun also all learn **get** ASP number volume Buddhist-doctrine
 ‘All the junior nuns have also learnt a number of volumes of
 Buddhist doctrine.’

(2) *lián*’s 連 various functions

a. VERB: ‘to connect’

根下相**連** (7th Century AD: *Bianwen*)
gēn xià xiāng lián.
 root under each-other **connect/join**
 ‘Roots underneath connect with one another.’

b. VERB/ADJECTIVE: ‘continuing/continuous’

皇帝... 看之, 連聲便喚。(7th Century AD: *Bianwen*)

huáng-dì... kàn zhī, lián shēng biàn huàn.

emperor see it **connect/consecutive** voice then call

‘When the emperor saw it, he repeatedly called ...’

c. ADVERB: ‘continuously’

梵人連忙前來。(7th Century AD: *Bianwen*)

Fán rén lián máng qián lái.

name people **connect/consecutively** busy forward come

‘The Turkish people came forward in a hurry.’

d. PREPOSITION: ‘including/with’

久住則連肉爛也。(Liu 1989: 452, 12th Century AD)

jiǔ zhù zé lián ròu làn yě.

long stay then **including** flesh rotten ASP

‘If it were kept long, it would become rotten, including the flesh.’

e. CONJUNCTION: ‘even’

衆人轟然一笑, 連賈珍也撐不住笑了。

(17th Century AD: *Honglou Meng*)

zhòng-rén hōng-rán yī-xiào, lián Jiǎ-Zhēn yě chēng-bú-zhù xiào le.

everyone suddenly laugh **even** name also NEG-help laugh ASP

‘Everyone burst into laughter; even Jia Zhen laughed.’ or

‘Everyone burst into laughter and Jia Zhen could not help laughing either.’

(3) *even*’s various (historical) functions (the examples are quoted from OED)

a. ADJECTIVE: Eeuen/eauen: flat (of a land/ground), smooth, direct, exact, equal

Me thinkes the ground is eeuen. (1605, Shakespeare’s *Lear*)

b. VERB: Eueuen: to level (ground), to even out

Law, whose end is, to euen and right all things (1851, Sidney’s *Apol*)

He hath now euened all his reckonings... (1664, Pepys’ *Diary*)

c. ADVERB: Euene/euene/euen: evenly

as the rest goes euen (1601, Shakespeare’ *Twel*)

At the sentence level, since tense, number, gender and case are not marked in Chinese, the semantic and pragmatic relationships between syntactic units (i.e. NP + VP + NP + NP) are not as evident as they are in languages with those markings. As a result, a NP preceding a verb (*bèi* 被 or *jiào* 叫) can be interpreted as either an agent or a patient, depending on the meaning of the main verb (prototypical verbs in a passive construction expressing some kind of adversative meaning) and the overall meaning of the sentence, as shown in (4)–(5). Such flexibility of NP interpretation means that the verb in a sentence can be easily coerced into an interpretation that fits the contextual meaning of the whole sentence. This is not possible in languages with clear markings for case, tense and/or mood.

(4) a. Noun preceding *bèi* as an AGENT

月被其光而明。(12th Century AD: *Zhuzi Yulei*)

yuè bèi qí guāng ér míng
moon receive its light then bright

‘The moon becomes bright when receiving its light.’

b. Noun preceding *bèi* as a PATIENT

阿孃被問來由，不覺心中歡喜。(7th Century AD: *Bianwen*)

ā-nián bèi wèn lái-yóu, bùjué xīnzhōng huānxǐ
nanny pass ask come-reason, not-feel heart-middle happy

‘When the nanny was asked for the reason, she could not help feeling happy.’

(5) a. Noun preceding *jiào* as an AGENT

他爸爸叫他修理一下那輛自行車。

tā bàba jiào tā xiūlǐ yíxià nà liàng zìxíngchē.
3SG father ask 3SG fix bit DET CL bicycle

‘His father asked him to fix the bicycle.’

b. Noun preceding *jiào* as a PATIENT

他叫那條狗咬了一口。

tā jiào nà tiáo gǒu yǎo le yī kǒu.
3SG PASS DET CL dog bite ASP one bite

‘He was bitten by that dog.’ or ‘He got bitten by that dog.’

At the discourse level, Chinese sentences are arranged by such logical relations as sequential order and cause/reason–result, as illustrated by

jiù's functions in (6). Such 'fixed' discourse structures, a characteristic of isolating and analytic languages, coincide with Kiparsky's (1997, 2008: 24) reflection on the characteristic of inflectional languages that "the loss of inflectional morphology entails fixed order of direct nominal arguments."

I argue that the fixed discourse structure in Chinese plays an indispensable role in the development of two functions of the lexeme *jiù* 就, namely, its discourse function of connecting two sequential events as in (6a) and (6b), and its function of connecting two logically related events as shown in (6c)–(6e) (cf. M. Liu 1993, 1997). Certainly, *jiù*'s lexical meaning 'to approach' may also be a factor contributing to its discourse function. However, the discourse structure appears to be instrumental in the development of its discourse function.

(6) a. SEQUENTIAL:

..., 欲遣**就**師。(3rd Century AD: *Sanguo Zhi*)

..., yù qiǎn **jiù** shī.

want dispatch **approach** master

'(Someone) wants to approach the master.'

b. SEQUENTIAL:

虎賁舁上殿**就**坐。(3rd Century AD: *Sanguo Zhi*)

hǔbēn yú shàng diàn **jiù** zuò.

commander carry up throne **approach/then** seat/sit

'The commander was carried up to the throne to sit down.'

c. CONDITION–RESULT:

施薪若一，火**就**燥也；...。(1st Century BC: *Xunzi*)

shī xīn ruò yī, huǒ **jiù** zào yě, ...

add hay like one, fire **approach/then** dry PART

'(If you) add one piece of hay, the fire will die.'

d. REASON–RESULT/SEQUENTIAL

資復遜位歸第，**就**拜驃騎將軍，(3rd Century AD: *Sanguo Zhi*)

zīfù sùnwèi guī dì, **jiù** bài biáoqí jiāngjūn,

leader resign return home, **then** pay-visit horse-riding commander

'(If/when) the leader resigns and returns home, then (he) will pay a visit to the commander.'

e. REASON–RESULT

遇富貴，就富貴上做工夫； (12th Century AD: *Zhuzi Yulei*)

yù fùguì, jiù fùguì shàng zuò gōngfū;
run-into rich-honorable, then rich-honorable on do diligently
'(If you) run into someone rich and honorable, then work
accordingly hard.'

We have seen that all three levels, morphology, syntax, and discourse, leave room for Chinese lexemes to be used/interpreted/reanalyzed somewhat differently by speakers/listeners. As a result, various polysemies have developed and co-exist at the modern stage of language development, a conclusion also supported by Bisang's (2008: 586) study of Archaic Chinese, which shows that a lexical item in a given position is coerced into a particular semantic interpretation associated with that position. Arguably, if Chinese had agreement markers, it probably would not be common for a noun to function as a verb, an agent to be interpreted as a patient, or for a verb to be interpreted as an adjective, adverb, preposition or conjunction. If that were the case, the semantic change in Chinese would probably follow the cline suggested by Heine *et al.* (1991) and Traugott and Dasher (2002).

Another factor that appears to have accompanied and somewhat affected the development of polysemies in Chinese is the process of lexicalization. It is well documented in Chinese linguistic literature (cf. Peyraube 1988, Feng 1999, Dong 2002, and Dong in this volume) that disyllabic words and serial verb constructions emerged during the Han Dynasty (2nd Century BC–2nd Century AD) and became well established in the Tang Dynasty (7th–9th Century AD). Xing (2009) reported that among the 23 lexemes that have undergone grammaticalization, all had a tendency to be paired up with other lexical items to form disyllabic words after the Six Dynasties period (4th Century AD). Taking *guò* 過 as an example, we can easily find disyllabic lexemes or words built from the monosyllabic *guò* 過 in the course of its development, as shown in Table 1.

Notice that some of these words have inherited *guò*'s original verbal meaning 'pass' or its earlier nominal function 'mistake',⁸ whereas others were derived from *guò*'s later developed polysemies 'over, celebrate'.

8. The nominal function of *guò* 過 'mistake', as pointed out by the anonymous reviewer, was already attested in Classical Chinese (11th Century BC–220 AD) and should be accounted for in some of the compounds developed later, such as *zuìguo* 'crime mistake', with a loss of *guò*'s lexical tinge.

Table 1. Lexicalized words with *guò* 過

CHAR.	PINYIN	GLOSS	ENGLISH
過火	<i>guòhuǒ</i>	over fire	'overdone'
過活	<i>guòhuó</i>	pass life	'to live'
過去	<i>guòqù</i>	pass go	'to go over'
過節	<i>guòjié</i>	celebrate festival	'to celebrate a festival'
過門兒	<i>guòménr</i>	pass door	'to marry into a family'
過錯	<i>guòcuò</i>	over mistake	'fault'
過目	<i>guòmù</i>	pass eye	'to look over'
過失	<i>guòshī</i>	pass miss	'wrong doing'
錯過	<i>cuòguò</i>	miss pass	'to miss'
難過	<i>nánguò</i>	difficult pass	'sad'
不過	<i>búguò</i>	not pass	'but'
罪過	<i>zuìguò</i>	crime mistake	'sin'

These lexicalized disyllabic words commonly used in modern texts not only provide evidence of *guò*'s polysemous functions but also reinforce those functions in modern communication. In other words, once *guò* is combined with another lexeme (be it a verb + object or verb + complement combination) and becomes a frequently used lexical item, it is likely to be in use for a long time before it undergoes further change.

In this volume, more evidence will be provided to illustrate the patterns of semantic change, grammaticalization, and lexicalization in Chinese.

2. Summary of the contributions to this volume

The purpose of this volume is to provide an overview of recent developments in the study of grammaticalization and lexicalization in mainland China and Taiwan for English-speaking communities in the west. There are nine articles included in this volume, all of which are empirical studies based on diachronic and/or synchronic data, and all of which discuss issues relevant to either the characteristics of grammaticalization or lexicalization in Chinese or the typological patterns of the Chinese language in comparison to other languages. The nine articles are divided into two parts: Part I centers primarily on issues of grammaticalization and Part II

focuses on lexicalization. Following is a brief summary of each of the nine articles arranged alphabetically according to the author's last name.

In Chapter 1, Chen investigates the development of sentence-final *yě* 也 based on historical data. According to him, *yě* has had two aspectual functions in the history of Chinese literary works: static and dynamic. There are two different views on their relationship, viz., whether the latter represents an extension of the former or whether there is any relationship between the two at all. Using historical data as evidence, Chen first defines the static *yě* 也 in non-judgment sentences as a stative element and then argues that the emergence of dynamic *yě* 也 is derived from static *yě* 也, consistent with an established pattern of the grammaticalization of perfect markers in Chinese and some other languages.

In Chapter 2, Fang studies the discourse and pragmatic functions of the proximal demonstrative *zhè* 這 and the distal demonstrative *nà* 那 in Contemporary Beijing Mandarin. The results of this study show that the definite article was derived from the demonstrative *zhè* through its recognitional use, a process that is accompanied by the emergence of the use of *yī* 一 'one' as an indefinite article. She argues that such a functional shift from a demonstrative to a definite article is a clear case of *grammaticalization*, a term she uses to "refer to a process whereby an item is entering the grammar of a language synchronically and may become fixed and constrained in distribution" (cf. Hopper and Traugott 1993: XVI). As a result, a new grammatical category, definiteness, has emerged in Contemporary Beijing Mandarin, even though this pattern, as she points out, is not yet observed in written Mandarin Chinese.

In Chapter 3, Liu investigates the various syntagmatic functions of the directional verb *lái* 來. By providing resolutions to confusing cases as well as preventing erroneous assumptions about *lái*'s grammaticalization, Liu concludes that the constructionist view seems the only available perspective to explain why *lái*_{VERB} 來 has remained vital over such an extraordinarily long period of time (from the 6th Century BC to the present), without being obviously influenced by all the changes related to it. She argues that the reason for *lái*'s long life may be that the form of the verb remains at all times a free morpheme and change takes place only after the form has stepped into specific constructions and deviated from its original form.

In Chapter 4, Liu and Chang explore one type of attributive predication in Mandarin Chinese in which a degree modifier (e.g. *hěn* 很 'very') is normally required to precede an attributive predicate. Adopting a constructional approach, Liu and Chang suggest that the attributive pattern

‘Degree + X’ can be re-analyzed as a Degree-Evaluative Construction where the degree marker is taken to be the *constructional operator* and the following element X, whatever it is, contributes a quality or attribute that is inferred. Through discussion of the interaction between grammaticalization and constructionalization, the authors demonstrate that the adverbial element *hěn* triggers the constructional interpretation and becomes grammaticalized into a constructional operator.

In Chapter 5, Peyraube and Li investigate three categories of volitional verbs in Chinese written texts from as early as the Pre-Classical period (11th–2nd Century BC) to the Medieval (4th–6th Century AD) and Modern periods: Category I: expressing the meaning of *yuànyì* 願意 ‘be willing to’; Category II: expressing the meaning of *xīwàng* 希望 ‘hope’ and Category III: expressing the meaning of *yùwàng* 欲望 ‘intention’. By tracing their origins and following their processes of semantic change, the authors come to the conclusion that volitional verbs have evolved in three different ways: 1) from intentional to future meaning, 2) from weak volition to strong volition, and 3) from concrete physical meaning to abstract mental meaning. They argue that modals that originally expressed the meaning of ‘intention’ (i.e. Category III) are the only ones that can become grammaticalized into future markers. It is less likely, if not impossible, that the other two types will evolve in this way because of their unique semantic and syntactic properties.

In Chapter 6, Xing studies the emergence, development, and disappearance of classifiers in Mandarin Chinese by investigating the semantic changes involved in the grammaticalization of 16 of the most commonly used Modern Chinese numeral classifiers. She provides historical evidence showing that three mechanisms – metaphor, metonymy, and semantic reanalysis – play an important role in the emergence and development of classifier meaning while in the disappearance of classifiers, loss of semantic function and high frequency have been shown to be major contributing factors. She argues that the numeral classifier meaning is derived from the ‘numeral + NP’ construction and not the other way around and concludes that such an evolution of meaning provides evidence for the interaction between the construction’s form and grammaticalization.

In Chapter 7, Zhang provides diachronic and synchronic evidence to refute the view that the repeater is the earliest numeral classifier in Sino-Tibetan languages. She argues that since the original meaning or the construction where the repeater is used is not compatible with that of the classifier, it is unlikely that the numeral classifier is derived from the repeater. In addition, she suggests that the repeater disappeared before

1100 B.C. in Chinese, which provides little evidence to support the claim that the numeral classifier is the origin of the repeater. She claims that the reason why researchers believe the repeater and the classifier to be related is that the repeater happens to be the most convenient way to express the grammatical category of ‘classifier’. She also suggests that numeral classifiers emerged and developed quite abruptly in Late Archaic Chinese (200 B.C.–200 A.D.).

In Chapter 8, Dong discusses various issues related to the characteristics and processes of lexicalization in Chinese. First she demonstrates different types of lexicalization observed in the history of the Chinese language (e.g. from lexical phrases to words, from functional phrases to words, from syntactically unrelated word strings to words), then she discusses the degree of lexicalization, the constraints on lexicalization, the relation between syntactic change and lexicalization, and the interaction between Chinese typology and lexicalization. She concludes that lexicalization, like grammaticalization, is a naturally occurring change and thus is pervasive which can be seen very clearly from data in the history of the Chinese language. She points out that lexicalization might have idiosyncratic and language-specific features that are not, as yet, well understood by scholars and therefore, further research on the relationship between the characteristics of lexicalization and language typology is necessary.

In Chapter 9, Tsao investigates the change of the argument structure, re-analysis and lexicalization of *gěi* 给 ‘give’ from a transitive verb to a ditransitive verb in Chinese. By analyzing the relationship between the distribution of *gěi* and the verbal clauses that occur in a ditransitive construction, Tsao singles out three patterns: (1) *gěi* is optional in ditransitive constructions involving a verb of transference; (2) only three classes of transitive verbs, namely verbs of acquisition like *mǎi* ‘buy’, verbs of movement like *rēn* ‘throw’, and verbs of creation like *zào* ‘build’, can enter into the ditransitive construction; and (3) in order for that to happen, a verb of the above-mentioned classes has to go through a process of grammaticalization or lexicalization such as serial-verb-construction condensation or adjunct incorporation. Then he compares *gěi*’s development with its counterparts in Japanese and English and finds that its Japanese counterpart undergoes the serial-verb-construction condensation while its English counterpart undergoes adjunct incorporation.

From the summaries of the nine articles given above, it is evident that all the studies rely heavily on empirical data for their analyses, generalizations, and conclusions. Notice that among the nine articles, five focus on the issue of a certain grammatical category, such as the emergence of the

definite article (Fang), the development of modal verbs of volition (Peyraube & Li), the emergence of the classifier class (Xing), the disappearance of the repeater (Zhang), and the process of lexicalization (Dong), while the remaining four articles are case studies of unique grammatical words which have all undergone a complicated process of grammaticalization: the sentence particle *yě* (Chen), the versatile directional verb *lái* (Liu), the degree adverb *hěn* (Liu and Chang), and the verb of giving *gěi* (Tsao). Even though these studies do not have a uniform theoretical orientation or rely on the same implications (e.g. some prefer the framework laid out by Construction Grammar; others apply either syntactic pathways or semantic mechanisms of grammaticalization to their analyses), they all attempt to identify the characteristics of diachronic change in Chinese. In addition, some of them have revealed certain typological characteristics in Chinese and have compared them with the typological characteristics of other languages.

All the articles are important contributions to the corpus of work on diachronic change in the Chinese language and all are designed to expand the understanding of Western scholars interested in the history of the Chinese language. We of course hope that the subjects discussed in these articles will inspire other researchers to do further research and thus extend the field.

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The development of the Chinese aspectual sentence-final marker *yě**

Qianrui Chen

1. Introduction

This paper studies the development of two aspectual functions of sentence-final *yě* 也 in the history of Chinese literary works. Both Lü ([1942] 1982: 276) and Wang (1989: 306) suggest that in Classical Chinese, sentence-final *yě* is static as in (1), while sentence-final *yǐ* 矣 is dynamic as in (2). The static function is realized as a judgment in sentence (1), whereas the dynamic function indicates a change of situation in sentence (2).

- (1) 是社稷之臣也。(5th Century BC, *Lúnyǔ*)

Shì shèjì zhī chén yě.

This country POSS official **PART**

‘This person is an official of the country.’

- (2) 今日病矣, 余助苗长矣。(3rd Century BC, *Mèngzǐ*)

Jīnrì bìng yǐ, yú zhù miáo zhǎng yǐ.

Today sick **PART** I help seedling grow **PART**

‘Today the seedlings are withered. I helped them to grow.’

Current studies have noticed that in Medieval Chinese and Early Modern Chinese,¹ *yě* 也 also has a dynamic function expressing the “result of a

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1. This paper adopts Fang (2004)’s framework on the division of the history of the Chinese language: Archaic Chinese (prior to the 1st Century BC), Medieval Chinese (1st–6th Century), Early Modern Chinese (from 7th Century to 18th Century).

change”, as shown in the examples in (3), cited from Ohta ([1958] 1987: 353) and Cao (1987: 14). In (3) the functions of *yě* 也 are similar to that of sentence-final *le* 了 in Modern Chinese and the present perfect pattern “have + -ed” in English.

- (3) a. 天下已有主也。(3rd Century, *Sōushénjì*)
Tiān xià yǐ yǒu zhǔ yě.
 Heaven under already have master **PART**.
 ‘The kingdom already has its lord.’
- b. 旦书至也, 得示为慰。(3rd Century, *Zátǐě*)
Dàn shū zhì yě,
 Morning letter arrive **PART**
dé shì wéi wèi.
 receive read as comfort
 ‘The letter arrived in the morning and reading the letter comforted me.’
- c. 石贤者来也, 一别二十余年。(4th Century, *Yōumínglù*)
Shíxián zhě lái yě,
 name **PART** come **PART**
yī bié èrshí yú nián.
 one apart twenty over year
 ‘Shixian has come; I have not seen him for over 20 years.’

From the examples given above, it can be seen that there exist two opposite uses of *yě* 也 in Chinese history, namely, a static and a dynamic one, which raises the question of how the two usages developed. One view, the Sound-record Hypothesis, is represented by Ohta Tatsuo, who suggests that the two *yě*s 也 are not in any way related to each other. Ohta (1987: 353) argues that dynamic *yě* 也 perhaps originates from the dynamic particles *yǐ* 矣 or *yǐ* 已 ‘already’ because, in oral expression, the sound [i] 矣 or 已 changed to [ia] by attaching the popular particle [a] 阿. Therefore, *yě* 也 was needed to express a dynamic function and was used to fill this gap. Following Ohta, Shimura (1995: 98–99) points out that it is not clear how the sound [ia] evolved to be used as a dynamic particle and therefore this issue needs to be explored further.

The other view, the Extension Hypothesis, is represented by Luo (1994), Sun (1999: 46) and Dai (2006), who suggest that dynamic *yě* 也 is an extension of static *yě* 也. Luo (1994) claims that in Early Modern Chinese

yě 也, expressing static affirmation or judgment, extended its function to express a change of state. Sun (1999: 46) demonstrates that the scope of the use of *yě* 也 has been expanding since Medieval Chinese (from the 1st Century to the 6th Century). However, neither Luo nor Sun comments on Ohta's view. Comparing Shimura's (1984) and Sun's (1999: 46) views, Dai (2006) partially supports Sun's idea, saying that *yě*'s 也 dynamic use is an extension of *yě*'s 也 earlier grammatical function.

1.1. The two hypotheses and their problems

Yang's study (1991) supports the Sound-record Hypothesis using evidence from historical phonology and the Minnan dialect in Chinese. She also points out (1991: 237) that Ohta does not give any reasons for the attachment of [a] 阿 to [i] 矣 or 已. In the same paper, Yang makes an attempt to explain the reason why *yǐ* 矣 might have been read as [ia] in oral Chinese during the Medieval period, which might, in turn, have caused *yě* 也 to be used to represent the sound of the particle expressing the dynamic function. Yang's (1991) main argument is that, in the Minnan dialect, there is a similar sentence-final *a* 阿 which is said to have arisen from *yǐ* 矣. However, Yang (1991) also recognizes that both *yě* 也 and *yǐ* 矣 in the Minnan Dialect contain the vowel [a], and are thus similar to sentence-final *a* 阿. Therefore, it is premature to interpret dynamic *yě* 也 as having a phonetic origin.²

As for the Extension Hypothesis, Dai (2006: 209) demonstrates that this hypothesis is primarily based on the Tiantai dialect of the Zhejiang province, China. By examining the origin of the perfect marker [a] 啊 in the Tiantai dialect, Dai infers that [a] 啊 was the result of the reduction of *yě* 也 and originated from Medieval Chinese dynamic *yě* 也. Thus, a semantic relationship between the dynamic *yě* 也 of Medieval Chinese and the aspectual marker *a* 啊 in the modern Tiantai dialect can be established, though a relationship between the dynamic *yě* 也 of Medieval Chinese and the static *yě* 也 of Archaic Chinese is not suggested.

At this point, it is clear that the argument for the rise of dynamic *yě* 也 based on historical phonology and dialectal analyses is not quite persuasive and that the support from semantic and grammatical functions is rather weak. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the issue more systematically and from a more theoretical point of view.

2. During interviews, Professor Bo Hong did not agree with the Sound-record Hypothesis and its explanation; Professor Fuxiang Wu confirmed that the two uses of *yě* 也 are actually related.

1.2. Inspiration from aspectual typology

The theory of aspectual typology may shed some light on this study. According to Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca (1994: 105), the anterior or perfect aspectual marker has generally developed from three lexical sources: 1) auxiliary verbs like *be* and *have*; 2) verbs denoting the meaning of coming; and 3) verbs denoting the meanings of finishing and moving. The path of development of auxiliary verbs runs from resultative to anterior, then on to perfective or past tense.

The resultative, commonly composed of an auxiliary verb and the past particle in Indo-European languages, denotes a state that resulted from some action in the past. Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca (1994: 63) illustrate how this works in English using the “*be + -ed*” construction. The sentence *He is gone* refers to the situation that he is no longer here. Therefore, the sentence *He is gone and has come back already* is not well accepted. In comparison, the anterior is formed by “*have + -ed*” in English. The sentence *He has gone* only indicates the current relevance of the action that happened in the past (perhaps he came back again). Thereby the sentence *He has gone and come back already* is acceptable grammatically and the anterior “*have + -ed*” is extended from the resultative “*be + -ed*”.

The dynamic use of *yě* 也 in Medieval Chinese and Early Modern Chinese is much more similar to that of sentence-final *le* 了 in Contemporary Chinese. With regard to the aspectual function of the latter, it has been labeled a “sentence-final aspectual particle”, anterior or perfect (Cao 1995: 96, Li, Thompson, and Thompson 1982). In Archaic Chinese (prior to the 1st Century BC), the function of *yě* 也 in its static use was mainly to express a judgment analogous to the original meaning of *be* in English. Other usages of static *yě* 也 are similar to the resultative one and indicate a state which will be explained in the following section. Dynamic *yě* 也, therefore, coincides with the perfect aspect in English not only in its lexical source but also in the path of its grammaticalization.

When explaining Bybee and Dahl’s approach, Dahl (2000: 7) defines the basic units of investigation as *grams* and notions like tense, aspect and mood as ways of characterizing the semantic content of grams, therein observing the semantic content and diachronic change of the gram. Based on this approach, this study aims to demonstrate the typological characteristics of the aspectual marker *yě* 也 in Archaic Chinese and to examine the process of development from static *yě* 也 to dynamic *yě* 也 in comparison with the grammaticalization of the perfect aspect in English. It will then go on to explore the typological significance of the aspectual uses of *yě* 也.

2. The aspectual use of *yě* 也 in Archaic Chinese (prior to the 1st Century BC)

The usage of *yě* 也 in Archaic Chinese is rather complicated. This paper examines only the two uses of *yě* 也 as an assertive-sentence-final particle defined as “static” and “dynamic”.

2.1. Static *yě* 也 in Classical Chinese

Classical Chinese is the form of written Chinese that was in use from Archaic Chinese (prior to the 1st Century BC) to the early 20th Century when it was replaced by vernacular written Chinese. It follows the standards of classical works in Archaic Chinese, and has been studied thoroughly for a long time. Lü ([1944] 2002: 226–227) classified *yě* 也, when used at the end of assertive sentences or narrative sentences in Classical Chinese, into three types. The first type is defined as “the mood of judgment” to account for inclusiveness, as shown in (4)–(5). ((4)–(12) are cited by Lü (2002) as examples in Classical Chinese):

- (4) 医者, 意也。 (7th Century, *Qianjin Yifang*)

Yī zhě, yì yě.
Doctor PART awareness PART

‘One who is a doctor must be aware.’

- (5) 孺子可教也。 (*Chinese Idiom*)

Rú zǐ kě jiào yě.
Child son be-able-to teach PART

‘This child is can be taught.’

The second use of static *yě* 也 is defined as “the mood of explanation” to account for states of affairs or a cause, a result or a purpose involving some state of affairs as shown in (6) and (7).

- (6) 南方多没人, 日与水居也。 (11th Century, *Riyù*)

Nánfāng duō mò rén, rì yǔ shuǐ jū yě.
South more down person day with water dwell PART

‘In the south, more people are drowned because they live close to water.’

- (7) 古之人与民偕乐, 故能乐也。(4th Century BC,
- Mèngzǐ*
-)

Gǔ zhī rén yǔ mǐn xié lè,
Ancient POSS person with people together entertain

gù néng lè yě.
therefore can happy **PART**

‘(Since) the ancient people always enjoyed life with the commoners,
they were happy.’

The third use of static *yě* 也 is defined as “the mood of resolution (*jiānjué* 坚决)” to stress the meaning of the whole sentence, as shown in (8) and (9).

- (8) 环滁皆山也。(11th Century,
- Zuìwēngtíng Jì*
-)

Huán Chú jiē shān yě.
Surround city-name all mountain **PART**

‘Chu city is surrounded by many mountains.’

- (9) 虽当世宿学, 不能自解免也。(1st Century BC,
- Shìjì*
-)

Suī dāngshì sùxué,
Although current knowledgeable-person

bù néng zì jiě miǎn yě.
not can self solve relieve **PART**

‘Even knowledgeable people cannot avoid being ridiculed.’

Yě 也 in (4) expresses a typical mood of judgment. In the typical judgment sentence, the semantic function of *yě* 也 coincides with *shì* 是 ‘be’ in Modern Chinese as well as with the verb *to be* in English.

According to her theory of situation types which include stative, activity, accomplishment, achievement and semelfactive, Smith (1991: 38) considers a construction with a judgment verb and its main arguments a stative situation with static and durative properties, but without telic properties. He (1992: 135–159) further subclassifies the stative situations into five states: 1) the absolute, such as *have*, *belong to*, etc.; 2) the non-absolute, such as *more*, *snow-white*, *green*, etc.; 3) the existential, like *stand*, *lie*, etc.; 4) the habitual, such as *he smokes*; and 5) the mental, such as *love*, *believe*, etc. Based on He’s classifications, static *yě* 也 as in (4) belongs to the first type of stative situation – the absolute state.

In (4) the predicate is nominal but in (5) it is verbal. He (2004: 421) suggests that *yě* 也 following the verbal predicate conveys the speaker/writer’s judgment of the characteristics, significance, and the intention of a person or issues represented by the subject of the sentence.