

行政院國家科學委員會補助專題研究計畫成果報告

(客語 LAU 字句的分析：時貌的觀點)

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中文摘要

客語 LAU 字句具有多重語意功能，LAU 可標示終點、來源、受惠、受事及伴隨等語意角色，本計劃採取結構語法的觀點，認為這些語意功能來自於 LAU 字句本身的語意。換言之，LAU 字句的語意功能是整合其所含的詞組語意成份的結果。含雙向語意成份的詞彙、結構片語、及結構多義等現象為本研究分析提供了合理的支持證據。

關鍵詞：結構語法、雙向語意成份詞彙、結構片語、結構多義

Abstract

With regard to the multiple functions exhibited by Hakka LAU constructions, this study, taking a constructional approach proposed by Goldberg (1995), Jackendoff (1997), among others, argues that each of the functions can be accounted for if the construction itself is taken as a meaning-bearing unit. Specifically, it is maintained that the meaning of the construction comes not exclusively from the specifications of the main predicate but from the integration of all the components of the construction. Evidence for this line of argument can be provided from underspecified lexical items, constructional idioms and cases with overlapping meanings.

Keywords: constructional approach, underspecified lexical items, constructional idioms, constructional polysemy

I. Motivation and purpose

Similar to Mandarin BA and Taiwanese Southern Min KA, Hakka LAU marks multiple semantic roles functioning as a patient marker, a benefactive marker, a goal marker, a source marker, and a comitative marker.

Comitative

- (1) Ayin LAU Amin giefun.
'Ayin and Amin married.'
- (2) Ayin LAU yipo
kiungha hi giedong.
'Ayin and her great aunt went downtown together.'
- (3) ...Do liadeu pengyiu ge guli

LAU zici ha,

'...under the encouragement and support of these friends, ...'

- (4) Tudi oi chongki bofu
LAU guifa.

'The land needs to be protected and planned on a long term scale.'

Source

- (5) Amin LAU gi mai yi kiu tien.
'Amin bought a piece of field from him.'

- (6) Ngai oi taishang LAU
petngin kong hafa.
'I'll speak Hakka to others loudly.'

Benefactive

- (7) Ayin cinvoi LAU ngin
zomoingin.
'Ayin is good at match making (for people).'

Patient

- (8) Gi LAU qien yung ciangciang.
'He spent all the money.'

The phenomena in question show tremendous complexity both in structures and in functions. Because of the diversities of functions, LAU constructions can best be viewed as a case of constructional polysemy (following Goldberg 1995). The various senses carried by a LAU construction comes not from the verb alone but from the interaction among its components both structurally and semantically. More specifically, factors that affect the well-formedness of a LAU construction are closely related to the inherent semantic features of the predicates, the aspectual features, and the semantic constraints of the event participants. Given the complexity of this construction, this study, through examining its range of complex syntactic and semantic properties, attempts to propose a plausible account for the manifestation of the multiple functions exhibited by LAU constructions.

II. Discussions

Each of the five functions will be discussed in turn. First of all, the comitative function of LAU actually includes two different functions: a comitative preposition and a coordinative conjunction. A couple

of distinctions can be made between the two. In terms of the predicate, verbs of social interaction and verbal interaction such *camciong* ‘discuss’ that select for a collective subject will bring out the conjunction function of LAU. When the verb does not inherently imply that more than one participant is involved, an adverb such as *kiunggha* ‘together’ is often added to indicate that the first NP is doing the activity together with the LAU NP. Besides, the first NP is more prominent in terms of its discourse role than the LAU NP if LAU is a preposition, whereas the two NPs connected by LAU do not have such a difference with regard to their topical prominence. Also, the preposition LAU connects mainly two animate participants, but the conjunction LAU can conjoin two or more animate or inanimate participants. Furthermore, the prepositional LAU NP has to occur at the second position of the sentence, whereas a conjunction LAU can constituents more than subject NPs.

The three functions—goal, source and benefactive—are closely related to each other because they more or less involve the so-called ditransitive construction in other languages, and hence will be discussed altogether. The goal function of a LAU construction involves verbs of illocutionary communication, a volitional subject and willing animate object. The source function involves verbs of taking things away, a volitional subject, and an animate object, although not necessarily willing one. The benefactive function involves verbs of creation, verbs of obtaining, or any verbs conveying acts done for the benefit of the third party, a volitional subject, and an animate object, although not necessarily willing one.

As to the patient function, it is argued that almost all action verbs can co-occur with the patient LAU NP as long as the whole sentence specifies a delimited event in Tenny’s (1992) sense, since the construction usually involves a causer who performs some kind of an action that brings change of state to the LAU NP. Following this generalization, all the situation types except for statives can occur in the LAU construction as long the predicate can denote an action that will measure out an event.

Evidence of underspecified lexical items, some highly idiomatic LAU constructions, and cases of constructional polysemy can be provided to support this constructional approach of the construction in question.

III. Remarks

To explore the syntactic and semantic complexity exhibited by the multiple functions of LAU constructions, this study, taking a constructional approach proposed by Goldberg (1995) and Jackendoff (1997) among others, has argued that each of the various functions has to do not only with the predicate but also with the event participants, the

complements and the aspectual features. Each of the functions has been claimed to be closely related with the inherent semantic features of the predicate, the semantic constraints of the participants and the complement. It is through the interaction with the above components that each of the functions is substantialized. Evidence for this line of arguments have been provided from constructional idioms and cases with overlapping senses, among others.

By postulating that a construction is a meaning-bearing unit and henceforth particular semantic structures come from the meaning associated with the construction has several theoretical implications. First of all, such an analysis that attributes the semantic peculiarities to the constructions themselves instead of different verb senses blurs the boundary between lexicon and syntax. Supporting evidence of highly constructionally idiomatic expressions and ambiguous cases also blur the boundary between semantics and pragmatics. Furthermore, by recognizing the existence of constructions that do carry meanings, principle of compositionality is preserved in a weakened form. Compositionality, which requires that the meaning of an expression is a function of the meanings of its immediate constituents, has proved to meet difficulty when it comes to idioms whose meanings cannot be obtained compositionally. Instead of claiming that the syntax and semantics of a construction comes exclusively from the specifications of the main predicate, and henceforth the meaning of a construction comes from combining the constituents hierarchically, a constructional approach holds that the meaning of a construction is the result of integrating the meanings of its components into the meaning of it. Although not composed in a syntactically hierarchical way, the meaning of a construction, taken from a mono-stratal perspective, is composed holistically. (cf. Goldberg 1995)

Several issues remain to be resolved with regard to the phenomena in question. First of all, as has been mentioned, LAU constructions demonstrate a case of the so-called constructional polysemy in which the same form is paired with different senses. Although brief discussion has been done in terms of how the overlapping meanings can be derived, the issue in terms of how the relations between the different senses can be explained in a natural way has been left untouched.

The second issue is closely related to the first one. Although each of the various functions—the comitative, the goal, the source, the benefactive, and the patient function—has been accounted for in terms of the integration of the elements of the construction, a legitimate question to ask is what the semantic relatedness among these different functions is. In particular, following the line of argument of Sweetser (1986, 1988, 1990), Heine et al. (1991) and Hopper & Traugott (1993), among others, one can ask whether there is a central sense that can connect all the various senses. And this issue will be taken up in a separate

study.

Furthermore, as has been hinted at in the comitative function, one very peculiar feature of the LAU NP has to do with its discourse function. LAU NP has to occur strictly in the so-called second position, right after the first NP, of the construction. This restriction of word order brings forth two significant issues that deserve further investigation. On the one hand, the special semantic characteristics and discourse function associated with this particular position of the construction need to be probed into. On the other hand, like Mandarin, Hakka puts some general word order requirements of some ablative phrases, including the LAU phrase. And whether occurring preverbally or postverbally, they can make differences in terms of their meanings and discourse functions. In Mandarin, Li & Thompson (1974) and Tai (1985), for instance, have discussed the semantic consequences of word order in certain Mandarin Chinese structures. Besides, Tsao (1990), and Cheng & Tsao (1995) propose a secondary topic account to explain this second position requirement of the BA NP in the BA construction in Mandarin as well as the KA NP in the KA construction in Taiwanese Southern Min. Henceforth, it is definitely worthwhile to examine the restriction of word order required by LAU NP in Hakka so that a typological comparison can be set forth.

One last issue has to do with dialectal variations within the Hakka language. As has been mentioned a couple of times in the footnotes, LAU shares labor with BUN both syntactically and semantically. Another morpheme that joins this camp is TUNG, which is exclusively used by Dungshi Hakka and Sisian Southern Hakka for the corresponding LAU constructions. Some native speakers of Sisian Northern Hakka allow free variations between LAU and TUNG in some of the functions. Further investigation into the variations cross-dialectally is called for the help explicate the complexity of Hakka grammar in particular. And this task will have to left for future study as well.

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