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9

# Directional Particles in Cantonese

*Form, function,  
and grammaticalization*

Winnie Oi-Wan Chor

John Benjamins Publishing Company

# Directional Particles in Cantonese

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## **Volume 9**

Directional Particles in Cantonese. Form, function, and grammaticalization  
by Winnie Chor

# Directional Particles in Cantonese

Form, function, and grammaticalization

Winnie Chor

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John Benjamins Publishing Company

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Needless to say, I am solely responsible for any remaining errors and shortcomings in this book.



# List of abbreviations

ACC	Accomplishment particle ( <i>dou2</i> 倒)
BE	Copula BE ( <i>hai6</i> 係)
CL	Classifier
LP	Linking particle ( <i>ge3</i> 嘅)
PASS	Passive marker
PERF	Perfective particle
PL	Plural marker
POSS	Possessive marker
PRT	Sentence particle



# Romanization

The *JyutPing* romanization developed by the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong (Tang et al. 2002) is used in this study. It is a romanization scheme especially designed for Cantonese. For reasons of standardization, Cantonese examples quoted from other sources are also transcribed in *JyutPing*, disregarding the original romanization system. For the Mandarin examples given in this study, *Hanyu Pinyin* is used. Details about the phonological inventory of *JyutPing* are tabulated below, illustrated with characters.

## Tone marks

---

1 (夫/福)	High level
2 (虎)	High rising
3 (副/霍)	Mid level
4 (扶)	Low falling
5 (婦)	Low rising
6 (父/服)	Low level

---

## Onsets

---

b[p] (巴)	p[p <sup>h</sup> ] (怕)	m[m] (媽)	f[f] (花)
d[d] (打)	t[t <sup>h</sup> ] (他)	n[n] (那)	l[l] (啦)
g[k] (家)	k[k <sup>h</sup> ] (卡)	ng[ŋ] (牙)	h[h] (蝦)
gw[kw] (瓜)	kw[kw <sup>h</sup> ] (誇)		w[w] (蛙)
z[ts] (渣)	c[ts <sup>h</sup> ] (叉)		s[s] (沙)      j[j] (也)

---

## Syllabic nasals

---

m[m] (唔)
ng[ŋ] (吳)

---

## Finals

i[i] (思)	ip[ip] (攝)	it[it] (洩)	ik[ik] (識)	im[im] (閃)	in[in] (先)	ing[in] (升)	iu[iu] (消)	
yu[y] (書)		yut[yt] (雪)			yun[yn] (孫)			
u[u] (夫)		ut[ut] (闊)	uk[uk] (福)		un[un] (歡)	ung[un] (風)	ui[ui] (灰)	
e[ɛ] (些)			ek[ɛk] (石)			eng[ɛŋ] (鄭)	ei[ɛi] (四)	
		eot[ət] (摔)			eon[øn] (詢)		eoi[øi] (需)	
oe[œ] (鋸)			oek[œk] (腳)			oeng[œŋ] (彊)		
o[ɔ] (可)		ot[ɔt] (喝)	ok[ɔk] (學)		on[ɔn] (看)	ong[ɔŋ] (康)	oi[ɔi] (開)	ou[ɔu] (好)
	ap[ɛp] (汁)	at[ɛt] (徑)	ak[ɛk] (則)	am[ɛm] (斟)	an[ɛn] (珍)	ang[ɛŋ] (增)	ai[ɛi] (擠)	au[ɛu] (周)
aa[a] (渣)	aap[ap] (集)	aat[at] (扎)	aak[ak] (責)	aam[am] (站)	aan[an] (讚)	aang[an] (掙)	aai[ai] (齋)	aau[au] (嘲)

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# Introduction and theoretical preliminaries

## 1.1 Preamble

Scholars for a long time have looked at the development of grammatical markers at the *left periphery* of sentences or utterances (mostly Indo-European studies, such as Schiffrin 1987; Schourup 1999; Fraser 1999, 2006; Diewald 2011; Heine 2013; among others), and more recently some scholars have begun to look at functionally equivalent markers at the *right periphery* (many of those on verb-final Asian languages, including Morita 2005; Hayano 2011 on Japanese, Sohn 2002; Rhee 2012; Koo and Rhee 2013 on Korean). The current study attempts to fill the gap by providing a detailed study into how a group of grammatical markers that are found originally as part of the verb in the *clause-medial* position have grammaticalized from the same source – a set of directional verbs.

The goal of the current study is to track the paths of grammaticalization of a set of directional particles in Cantonese.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the book focuses on the semantic and discourse-pragmatic aspects of the development of this closed set of particles and investigates the mechanisms that are recurrently involved in the paths of their evolution. The diachronic component of the study helps clarify how the historical development of these particles relates to contemporary frameworks in the study of grammaticalization and language change in the larger context.

Twelve directional particles are discussed, namely: 嚟 *lai4* ‘come’, 去 *heoi3* ‘go’, 出 *ceot1* ‘move out’, 入 *jap6* ‘move into’, 開 *hoi1* ‘move away’, 埋 *maai4* ‘move towards’, 上 *soeng5* ‘ascend’, 落 *lok6* ‘descend’, 起 *hei2* ‘raise (something) up’, 到 *dou3* ‘arrive’, 返 *faan1* ‘move back’, and 過 *gwo3* ‘move across’. They can be classified into two groups. One group comprises the two particles *lai4* ‘come’ and *heoi3* ‘go’, labeled ‘deictic’ directional particles. Similar to the English *come* and *go*, *lai4* and *heoi3* denote the direction ‘towards’ and ‘away from’ the speaker’s location respectively (i.e. making reference to the speaker). The remaining ten particles comprise the second group; they are often labeled locative directional particles. They denote directional

---

1. Sometimes the term ‘grammaticization’ is used instead of ‘grammaticalization’, especially in works published before the 1990s (see, for instance, Givón 1975 and Bybee and Pagliuca 1985). The term ‘grammaticalization’ will be used consistently in this book.

meanings with respect to an objective location, which is usually referred to as their locative complement (i.e. making reference to a location).

There are several reasons why directional particles provide an ideal way to explore grammaticalization. First, as Li et al. (1995) remark, this category forms a closed system in Cantonese grammar – it is static in the sense that it does not normally admit new members. This allows us to produce a more unified account of this category of linguistic items. Second, the fact that the category consists of only twelve members provides us with a neat, manageable size of object to study. Third, cross-linguistic evidence has suggested that spatial morphemes are prime candidates for grammaticalization and that they are likely to grammaticalize into different types of grammatical markers (Svorou 1994). Spatial domain has always been the onset context for grammaticalization to take place. Fourth, not only do all directional particles have directional meanings in a post-verbal position, each has grammaticalized to encode abstract meanings that are not necessarily predictable from their lexical sense. By looking at these various pathways involved in the grammaticalization of directional particles, we can work out some generalizations regarding the type of meaning that can be developed from the domain of space. The sets of examples below provide a quick reference – example (a) shows the directional meaning while example (b) shows the more abstract, non-directional meaning corresponding to the same particle.

- (1) a. 佢行過對面馬路。(gwo3 – ‘move across’)  
*Keoi5 haang4 gwo3 deoi3min6 maa5lou6.*  
 s/he walk gwo3 opposite road  
 ‘S/he walked across to the opposite side of the road.’
- (2) a. 佢拎起本書。(hei2 – ‘move (something) up’)  
*Keoi5 ling1 hei2 bun2 syu1.*  
 s/he pick hei2 CL book  
 ‘S/he picked up the book.’
- (3) a. 佢行落圖書館。(lok6 – ‘descend’)  
*Keoi5 haang4 lok6 tou4syu1gun2.*  
 s/he walk lok6 library  
 ‘S/he walked down to the library.’
- (1) b. 佢做過老師。(gwo3 – ‘experiential’)  
*Keoi5 zou6 gwo3 lou5si1.*  
 s/he do gwo3 teacher  
 ‘S/he has been a teacher.’
- (2) b. 我寫起份報告。(hei2 – ‘completive’)  
*Ngo5 se2 hei2 fan6 bou3gou3.*  
 I write hei2 CL report  
 ‘I wrote up the report.’

- (3) b. 睇落,佢係唔值得幫嘅。(lok6 – ‘evaluative’)  
*Tai2 lok6, keoi5 hai6 m4 zik6dak1 bong1 ge3.*  
 see lok6 s/he BE not worthy help PRT  
 ‘As far as I can see, s/he does not seem to be worth helping out.’

In the above examples, each directional particle has demonstrated its development from indicating a directional meaning to expressing a more abstract grammatical meaning. The meaning of *gwo3* in (1) has been extended from ‘move across’ to the experiential meaning ‘have V-ed/have experienced V-ing’; *hei2* in (2) has developed from giving the meaning ‘move (something) up’ to being a marker of completion; and *lok6* in (3), meaning ‘descend’ as a directional particle, has also developed into a grammatical, subjective marker, expressing the speaker’s subjective evaluation of a situation. At first glance, the semantic link between the directional meaning and the non-directional, abstract meaning does not seem to be obvious. How exactly could the meaning change from (a) to (b) be possible? This is exactly the kind of problem that this study aims to explore. By taking into account the different uses of these particles across times in different contexts, the seemingly missing links that lead to the idiosyncratic non-directional meanings can be resolved.

The properties of Cantonese directional particles, as well as how the analysis of these particles is related to the grammaticalization theory and semantic change, are discussed in detail in Chapter 2. This first chapter mainly sets out some preliminaries to the investigation. The remaining part of this section explains how Cantonese, and the study of Cantonese particles in particular, is understood in the context of the present study. A review of contributions to research on grammaticalization and related theoretical frameworks is presented in Section 1.2. The book draws on several types of data and methods to form the basis for the analysis; they are discussed in Section 1.3. Section 1.4 specifies the goals of the study, followed by an outline of chapters in Section 1.5.

### 1.1.1 Typology of Cantonese

Chinese belongs to the Sinitic branch of the Sino-Tibetan family. Although speakers of different forms of Chinese all use characters, and the grammatical structure of those various spoken forms is similar in many respects, the spoken forms are not mutually intelligible. Hence, linguistically, they are not properly ‘dialects’, but rather different Chinese ‘languages’. As Chao remarked, ‘in point of phonology, lexicon and to a lesser extent grammar, [these] dialects are as different from one another as say, English is from Dutch or French is from Spanish, and are often rated by linguistics as different languages’ (Chao 1968b: 96). However, these linguistically different ‘languages’ are still often referred to as ‘dialects’ of a single language

because they share the same script. ‘In spite of the disparate pronunciation of the different dialects, their common writing system allows the same historical texts to be read and appreciated by literati and intellectuals all over China’ (Sun 1996: 3). Moreover, ‘the use of a common script in the domain of officialdom and education has served as a culturally unifying force over many centuries’ (Chappell 2001: 4). This standardized and unified way of writing the Chinese language unites all the different regions, with different regional speech varieties, in China. Besides sharing the same written script, the historical fact that they share the same ancestor also suggests that they can be described as ‘dialects’ of Chinese.<sup>2</sup>

Each Chinese dialect has a unique history. In a pioneering work on Chinese dialectology, F. Li (1939) put forward the first systematic classification of Chinese dialects. This classification is widely accepted and has been very influential in dialect research on Chinese. It has become one of the main foundations on which Chinese dialectological research has been based (Ramsey 1987; Norman 1988; Yuan 1989; Lyovin 1997; among others). It is generally agreed that there are seven major dialect groups, summarized in Table 1.1 (Chappell 2001: 6).<sup>3</sup>

Among the seven major dialect groups, the Mandarin group is by far the largest in terms of number of speakers and the area covered. Around 70 percent of the Chinese population speak one of the Mandarin dialects (Lyovin 1997: 127; Chappell 2001: 10). After Mandarin, Yue is the second biggest group, constituting 4.5 percent of the population (Lyovin 1997: 128). The Yue dialects are spoken over wide areas of Guangdong Province and the south-eastern part of the Guangxi region. Geographically, the Yue group is contiguous with Min and Hakka while it is remote from Mandarin and Wu. Cantonese is the best-known member of this dialect

---

2. Needless to say, to label these different spoken forms of Chinese as different ‘dialects’ is not without problems. Linguistically, these forms fail as ‘dialects’ because they are mutually unintelligible. English, Dutch, French and Spanish all share the same script (i.e. the Latin alphabet), but this does not make them ‘dialects’ of the European language. Despite the fact that these varieties do share words which have the same meaning and come from the same source (though having different pronunciation), they are considered different languages. Although the point about the unintelligibility of Chinese dialects has already been noted for many years, the term ‘dialect’ still seems to be more preferred. Educated Chinese all learn to write a standardized form of northern Chinese. In this respect, the case concerned with Chinese is different from that with the European languages; a person who can read English does not mean he can read French or Dutch, in spite of the fact that these languages share the same alphabet. In this book, we will continue to use this label ‘dialect’ to refer to these different forms of regional Chinese varieties, as has been done traditionally, but with all these concerns in mind.

3. F. Li (1939) divided the dialects into nine groups. However, ‘three of them were clearly Mandarin subgroups (distinguished only by geographic tags) and the last group is simply an amalgam of dialects that cannot be fitted conveniently into other groups’ (Norman 1988: 181).

**Table 1.1** Classification of Chinese dialects

- 
1. Northern Chinese (Mandarin)
    - i. Northern
    - ii. Zhongyuan or Central Plains
    - iii. North-western
    - iv. Jiang-Huai or Xiajiang (Lower Yangzi)
    - v. South-western
  2. Xiāng
  3. Gàn
  4. Wú
  5. Mǐn dialect group
    - i. Western or Inland Min
    - ii. Eastern or Coastal Min
  6. Kèjiā or Hakka
  7. Yuè dialects
- 

group. This term ‘Cantonese’ (literally ‘speech of Canton’) was named after Canton (the former English name of Guangzhou), the capital city of Guangdong Province. It conventionally designates ‘the urban Yue varieties spoken in Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and Macau’ (Matthews and Yip 2001: 266). It is also widely used in Chinese communities in Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, and elsewhere as a result of emigration from the Guangdong area and from Hong Kong itself.<sup>4</sup>

Although Mandarin in its modern form is the standard and official language in mainland China, it has only been around for about ten centuries, compared to the 2000-year history of the Yue dialect group. According to Sun (1996: 3), the history of Chinese can be divided into roughly four periods: Old Chinese, Middle Chinese, Early Mandarin, and Modern Mandarin. Early Mandarin dated from around AD 1000 in the Song dynasty. It progressively replaced older varieties of Chinese and non-Sinitic languages during the Yuan (AD 1271–1368), Ming (AD 1368–1644), and Qing (AD 1644–1911) dynasties (Chappell 2001: 10).<sup>5</sup> Owing to the lack of detailed historical records, it is difficult to say for certain when exactly the Yue dialects emerged. However, there were already dialectal differences noticed as early as the Chunqiu period (literally the ‘Spring and Autumn period’) (770–476 BC).

---

4. The countries are ranked in order according to the number of speakers (Lyovin 1997: 128).

5. The categorization of Chinese into different periods is only a rough guess; different scholars might come up with a different classification. However, most scholars share the view that the ancestor of Mandarin was formed around the time of the Song Dynasty.

It is surmised that the Yue dialects were formed around the Qin dynasty, when the Yue dialects are said to have become differentiated from Old Chinese (X. Li 1994: 57; Chappell 2001: 16).<sup>6</sup> The Yue dialects presumably originated in parts of the area known as Lingnan ‘south of the five ridges’ (now the Guangdong and Fujian areas), which was colonized by the Han people and was gradually settled during the Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220) (Chappell 2001: 16). This area was originally populated by many non-Chinese peoples, which were later referred to as ‘Bai Yue’ (literally ‘One Hundred Yue’), because of the large number of ethnic groups dispersed in that area.<sup>7</sup> The Yue dialects were believed to have differentiated around the Qin dynasty as a result of the language contact with non-Han peoples (X. Li 1994: 44; Chappell 2001: 16). Apart from this contact between the Han and the non-Han, the formation of the Yue dialects is also due to ‘internal evolution’. The separation of the early speakers of Chinese in the Lingnan area from other, more northern varieties of Chinese spoken in the areas from which they migrated must have resulted in gradual differentiation of their speech. Since the Lingnan area is isolated from other areas, the speech habits of these Chinese might differ from those of the first migrants brought to Lingnan over generations. It seems that the development of the Yue dialects was complex; they did not result from abrupt changes, but were rather formed gradually, with the integration of different language varieties and their language features.

After their development in the Qin and Han dynasties, the Yue dialects became more established, developing grammatical features distinct from those of Old Chinese. The Tang and Song dynasties (AD 618–1279) were a critical period for the development of the Yue dialects because of the waves of population movements towards the south as a result of wars. These waves contained some people who were not even Chinese. As Chappell remarked ‘the final formation period for Yue was shaped by northern Chinese refugees fleeing to this area [Guangzhou and Hong Kong] in the Song dynasty when North China was under attack from the Inner Asian invaders, the Liao and the Jin’ (2001: 16). From the mid-Tang, many people from the North migrated to the area around Guangzhou and formed a number of settlements. Guangzhou then became more prosperous. With the huge increase in population (X. Li 1994: 62), the people in Guangzhou had to use some kind of lingua franca to communicate, which can be seen as the ancestor of Cantonese (i.e. the language of the Canton, i.e. Guangzhou, area). It is interesting to note that ‘the sound system of Guangzhou and Hong Kong Cantonese remains remarkably close to the Medieval Chinese of the Tang and early Song’ (Chappell 2001: 16). Although

---

6. However, the regional form of Old Chinese which the Yue dialects differentiated from is not specified in these works.

7. These non-Chinese speaking tribes, as far as we know, did not have a written language.

there might be some written material possibly attributable to Yue dialect speakers from the Tang and Song period, the logographic nature of the writing script makes it difficult to reconstruct the particularities of Cantonese. However, it is generally agreed that by the Ming dynasty, the language spoken in the Pearl River delta had the linguistic characteristics of Modern Cantonese.<sup>8</sup>

Today, Hong Kong and Guangzhou Cantonese is probably one of the best-known and well-studied Sinitic languages.<sup>9</sup> It is essentially a spoken language which can be written, though its written form lacks social prestige. Thus, Cantonese is used primarily in daily oral interaction, while standard Chinese is the medium for writing.<sup>10</sup> As the official language, Mandarin has a strong influence on Cantonese, as well as other dialects.<sup>11</sup> On the occasions when Cantonese can be written (such as personal correspondence, diaries, comics, advertisements, and magazines), it is still affected by standard written Chinese so it is hard to find examples of pure written Cantonese.

### 1.1.2 Studies on Cantonese particles

One way in which Cantonese differs from Mandarin is its rich inventory of particles. Cantonese particles can be divided into two main categories – sentence (final) particles and verbal particles.<sup>12</sup> They constitute an extremely important feature of Cantonese speech, serving various semantic, pragmatic and communicative functions. Particles can express subtle nuances of meanings, which otherwise need to be expressed by lexical or syntactic means in other languages.

A sentence particle occurs at the end of a sentence. Sentence particles are one of the few areas of Cantonese grammar which have been extensively studied in the past. By simply altering the sentence particle at the end of a bare clause, one

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8. Again, we do not have substantial evidence about the exact date for when Cantonese consolidated; it is always difficult to make clear claims without the back up of genuine linguistic data. However, the fact that there was no major migration at that time might suggest a stabilization of the linguistic environment.

9. Hong Kong and Guangzhou Cantonese is sometimes called ‘city’ or ‘urban’ Cantonese.

10. On occasions such as news reporting, ‘standard written Chinese’ (i.e. the reporter’s manuscript) can also be read aloud in Cantonese pronunciation. In doing so, the reporters automatically ‘Cantonize’ the texts as they read them.

11. This influence from Mandarin is probably much stronger in Guangzhou than in Hong Kong, where English influence has been much more pervasive, at least until 1997 when Hong Kong was returned to China.

12. Grammatical morphemes that occupy a clause/sentence-initial position are often referred to as ‘discourse markers’ in Cantonese. Examples of discourse markers include 喺 *naa4* and 呢 *le1*.

will get a very different meaning.<sup>13</sup> Consider below the effect of adding a different sentence particle (SP) to the base utterance 佢嚟㗎 *Keoi5 lai4 zo2* he-arrive-PERF ‘he has arrived’.

Base utterance	Sentence particle (SPs)	English translation
佢嚟㗎 <i>Keoi5 lai4 zo2</i>	喎 <i>wo5</i>	‘ <u>People say that</u> he has arrived.’
	掛 <i>gwaai3</i>	‘ <u>It is probable that</u> he has arrived.’
	嘅 <i>ge3</i>	‘ <u>It is certain that</u> he has arrived.’
	啞 <i>aa4</i>	‘He has arrived. <u>How surprising!</u> ’
	咩 <i>me1</i>	‘He has arrived. <u>I doubt it.</u> ’
	呵 <i>ho2</i>	‘He has arrived, <u>right?</u> ’
	嘛 <i>maa3</i>	‘Has he arrived?’

One of the most comprehensive and pioneering works on sentence particles is Kwok (1984), who identified some thirty basic forms (compared to less than ten in Mandarin) and more than seventy final particle clusters.<sup>14</sup> Subsequent works on sentence particles (Law 1990; Luke 1990; C. Leung 1992; Fung 2000; Yiu 2001; Fang 2003; Peng 2010; among others) have provided different but complementary treatments of this important category of expressive elements in Cantonese.

Cantonese verbal particles have also attracted considerable interest in the past few decades. They are understood as versatile, grammaticalized bound forms occupying a post-verbal position (Chor 2004).<sup>15</sup> Some of these particles have undergone grammaticalization, coming to encode grammatical meanings such as aspect, quantification, and modality. Most grammar books published on Cantonese have sections on this group of post-verbal elements (H. Gao 1980; X. Li 1994; Li et al. 1995; Cheung 2007a; Matthews and Yip 2011a; Tang 2015), and ‘aspectual meanings’ seem to have received the most attention so far. Each of these studies in here

13. This phenomenon is not uncommon in East and Southeast Asian languages which are also rich in particles (e.g. Japanese and Korean, which are verb-final languages). However, it is rather rare in western European languages.

14. The precise number of particles or particle clusters identified might differ from study to study, depending on the treatment of the particles. For instance, C. Leung (1992) has identified as many as 95 sentence particles in Cantonese.

15. The term ‘versatile’ is used in opposition to ‘restricted’. ‘A form is restricted if it occurs only when one or a very small number of other forms occur in a near context, and versatile if its occurrence is not so limited’ (Chao 1968a: 155). As suggested by Chao, the concept of versatility can better be understood in terms of the notion of productivity and the degree of freedom. A verbal particle is said to be versatile if it can be freely attached to different kinds of verb.

has a section on ‘aspect markers’, but particles expressing other kinds of meaning seem to have attracted less attention.<sup>16</sup>

Among previous studies which have attempted to categorize Cantonese verbal particles, apparently only Matthews and Yip (2011a) have identified the category ‘directional particles’, and specified the additional figurative meanings these particles express. They managed to include most of the colloquial, idiosyncratic uses of these particles in their discussion. However, since their work aims at providing a ‘comprehensive grammar’ of Cantonese rather than a specialized study on a specific area, they could only give one or two examples for each use, and had no room to address the semantic links among different senses. Senses which seem distinct from the core semantics of a particle are usually labeled ‘idiomatic’ in their study, leaving aside any further explication.

Particles denoting directional meanings are often discussed under the heading ‘complement’ rather than ‘particle’ in most works on Cantonese grammar. In Chinese grammar, 補語 *bǔyǔ* ‘complement’ is often understood as the second verbal element in the VV compound which describes the state or result of the action denoted by the verb (Zhu 1982: 125). It always supplements the information of the preceding verb in the sense that a ‘resultative complement’ describes the result of the action and a ‘directional complement’ indicates the direction of the action named by the preceding verb (i.e. the meaning is always compositional, deriving from combining the literal meaning of the verb and the complement). The preference for most grammar books to discuss post-verbal directional morphemes under ‘complements’ rather than ‘particles’ suggests that it is the compositional, directional meanings of these directional morphemes which have received more attention, with the grammaticalized, idiosyncratic uses being somewhat disregarded.<sup>17</sup> Although a number of articles written on individual particles have had a focus on their non-directional meanings, a systematic account of this area is definitely lacking.

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16. Aspect markers are verbal suffixes which contribute aspectual meanings. The most well-known aspect markers are the perfective marker 咗 *zo2* and the progressive marker 緊 *gan2*. They are the only examples Chao mentioned in his early pedagogical work *Cantonese Primer* (1947: 44). The term ‘aspect’ in English and 體 *tai2*, literally ‘aspect’, in Chinese are understood rather differently. While it is often the perfective-imperfective dichotomy which constitutes ‘aspect’ in English, *tai2* ‘aspect’ in Chinese often receives a broader definition. Kwok (1971), the first comprehensive study on Cantonese verbs, has identified some eleven categories of aspect markers in Cantonese. S. Zhang (1996), a very detailed work on ‘aspect’, suggested that the scope of aspect should as well include concepts like possibility, change, attempt, existence and certainty (1996: 144). Some of these would be called ‘modality’ or ‘mood’ in western European grammar. For a more detailed review of works on aspect markers or verbal particles in general, see Chor (2004).

17. The label ‘directional particle’, rather than ‘directional complement’, is used in this book. A detailed justification is given in Chapter 2.

The present study hopes to supplement what is lacking in the literature, on the one hand, by providing a more comprehensive account of the semantic and syntactic properties of this category of directional particles, and, on the other hand, by proposing new perspectives and insights into the ways Cantonese particles may be looked at and analyzed (e.g. from the perspectives of discourse-pragmatics, subjectivity, cognitive linguistics, etc.). At first glance, the idiosyncratic meanings expressed by these particles might not seem to be related to their origin as directional verbs. However, as will be found out in this book, the non-directional meanings can all be explained in terms of some general tendencies in the framework of grammaticalization theory elaborated by Elizabeth Traugott and her associates. In the remaining chapters, the grammaticalization of each particle, in particular *how* (i.e. via what steps) each has come to acquire other idiosyncratic, non-directional meanings, will be investigated in detail.

## 1.2 Research on grammaticalization in China and the West

When a word or construction has moved towards the grammatical end of the lexical/grammatical function continuum, it is described as having undergone ‘grammaticalization’. Grammaticalization is often described as the way lexical, ‘content’ categories (e.g. verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc.) change into grammatical, ‘functional’ categories (e.g. clitics, particles, auxiliaries, connectives, etc.). The study of grammaticalization has been one of the most prominent topics in contemporary grammatical research. However, the starting point for grammaticalization research is different in Indo-European languages and the Chinese language, so are the pace, depth, and emphasis of these studies. In this section, a description of the nature and properties of grammaticalization, and a brief review of grammaticalization studies in Indo-European languages, and in the Chinese language, are presented.

### 1.2.1 A brief history of grammaticalization

The term ‘grammaticalization’ was apparently first used by the French Indo-Europeanist Antoine Meillet at the beginning of the twentieth century. He defined grammaticalization as ‘the passage of an autonomous word into the role of grammatical element ... the attributions of a grammatical character to a previously autonomous word’ (Meillet 1958 [1912]: 131).<sup>18</sup> This 1912 paper not only marked the beginning of systematic research into grammaticalization, but also provided insights and directions for future research.

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18. The original text was ‘le passage d’un mot autonome au rôle d’élément grammatical ... l’attribution du caractère grammatical à un mot jadis autonome’ (Meillet 1912: 131).

Meillet's ideas on the origins of grammatical forms have predecessors in much earlier speculations. Before the coinage of the term 'grammaticalization', the concept about processes leading from words to affixes, and from concrete to more abstract meanings, had been widely discussed from the eighteenth century on. Robins (1967) observed that a number of European philologists (E.B. de Condillac, J. Horne Tooke, among others) argued that inflectional and derivational elements in words are fragments of earlier independent words, which have been agglutinated to the root words (Robins 1967).

As Hopper and Traugott (2003) remarked on the history of grammaticalization, a clear tradition in the study of grammaticalization had already been established by a group of German linguists and philosophers, in particular Wilhelm von Humboldt and Georg von der Gabelentz, by the nineteenth century. They proposed some sophisticated speculations about the origins of grammar and presented evidence in support of the claim that inflections are in fact the result of the earlier affixation of formerly separate words. Humboldt (1825) suggested that 'the grammatical structure of human languages was preceded by an evolutionary stage of language in which only concrete ideas could be expressed. Grammar, he suggested, evolved through distinct stages out of the collocation of concrete ideas' (quoted in Hopper and Traugott 2003: 19–20). Gabelentz (1891) also offered many important insights into the origins of grammatical forms and their transformations.

By the end of the nineteenth century, these and other works had clearly laid the seeds for later research on grammaticalization, despite the lack of a specific name for this area of study. The introduction of the term 'grammaticalization' by Meillet was a breakthrough; he first recognized the study of grammaticalization as a separate, and in fact central, area in the study of language change. His 1912 work was the first work devoted specifically to grammaticalization. The fact that later on grammaticalization has frequently been described as leading from lexical to grammatical also owes its origins to this work by Meillet. For a more complete account of the early history of grammaticalization, see Heine et al. (1991), Hopper and Traugott (2003), and Lehmann (2015).

Carrying Meillet's insights and definition further, research on grammaticalization has been carried out from different perspectives and on many languages outside the Indo-European family. From the 1970s onwards, studies on grammaticalization flourished, with a substantial amount of research into the phenomenon. Cross-linguistic and cross-disciplinary approaches to grammaticalization have also been widely discussed since then.

The most commonly cited definition of grammaticalization is perhaps the one by Hopper and Traugott (2003). In their work, grammaticalization is referred to as the process whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions, and, once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions. This echoes what was already noted in

Lehmann's influential article that 'grammaticalization is a process which turns lexemes into grammatical formatives and makes grammatical formatives still more grammatical' (1985: 303). Carrying this definition further, Lehmann refers to grammaticalization as a unique process whereby units are recruited into grammar, 'becoming more subject to constraints of the linguistic system' (2004: 155).

### 1.2.2 Typical features associated with grammaticalization

A standard and much cited example of grammaticalization is perhaps the evolution of *be going to*, leading from a verb of motion to an auxiliary indicating futurity. This is illustrated in (4) below (Fischer and Rosenbach 2000: 3).

- (4) a. *I am going (to Haarlem) to visit my aunt.*  
 b. *I am going to marry (tomorrow).*  
 c. *I am going to like it.*  
 d. *It is going to rain.*  
 e. *I am going to go there for sure.*  
 f. *I'm gonna go.*

The verb *go* in (4a) is a full lexical verb denoting concrete direction; the speaker involved moves from one place to another in order to visit his aunt. Note that in a context like (4a), there is often a pragmatic inference of futurity. The fact that the future interpretation coexists side by side with the motion interpretation creates the ground for this purposive directional meaning to be reinterpreted as futurity. Turning to (4b) and (4c), the directionality is changed from a locative one to a temporal one. In (4b), *go* has the sense of moving towards a purpose and this implied 'futurity' is more obvious with the addition of *tomorrow*. This reanalyzed use of *go* has been extended to be used with other infinitives such as *like* in (4c), which is incompatible with a purposive directional meaning. The expression *be going to* is solely used to indicate futurity, moving towards a future state. Starting from there, the physical directional meaning has been gradually lost, and *go* finally grammaticalized into a future tense marker, as in structures (4d)–(4f).

Besides the English *be going to*, there are other equally standard examples of grammaticalization. For instance, body part terms becoming adpositions (e.g., *by (X's) side*), markers of deontic modality becoming markers of epistemic modality (e.g., the modal auxiliary *must*), and, temporal markers becoming concessive conjunctions (e.g., *while þe* 'at the time that' > *while* 'during' > *while* 'although'). Grammaticalization also includes the development of pragmatic markers (e.g. *well*) and parentheticals (e.g. *I think*). Many of these pathways are not unique to English, but also attested across languages. For example, the development of 'be going to' > 'futurity' is also attested in languages such as French, Bari, Sotho, Zulu, among others (see Heine and Kuteva 2002 for more detail). All pathways of grammaticalization

are common in the sense that they all involve processes leading from lexical to more grammatical forms, and from concrete to more abstract meanings.

Grammaticalization is usually (though not necessarily) accompanied by a number of features, understood at various levels, including aspects of morpho-syntax, semantics, phonetics, and pragmatics. One commonly noted feature is the tendency for the grammaticalizing item to lose morphosyntactic autonomy, and become more constrained in the range of construction types in which it can occur. In Haspelmath's terms, the linguistic items come to have 'stronger internal dependencies' (2004: 26). This feature is given the label 'decategorization' in some studies, which refers to the loss in morphosyntactic markings of the source categories (typically the shift is from a 'major' to a 'minor' category). It is also characterised by processes like cliticization and affixation, in which the item loses its independent word status and categorial properties, becoming more dependent on its host item.

Grammaticalization is also characterized by the loss of semantic and phonological weight.<sup>19</sup> At the semantic level, 'bleaching', or 'semantic reduction' (i.e. loss in meaning content and complexity), has long been considered criterial in the process of grammaticalization. As a lexical item grammaticalizes, it loses specific features of meaning, and a new, more abstract, grammatical function is developed to replace the old content meaning. However, while the semantic content of a linguistic item is often said to have bleached in grammaticalization, its pragmatic meanings are often enriched. That is to say, the grammaticalized item can be applicable to a wider range of contexts, with this lost in semantic weight and gain in pragmatic weight. Besides this semantic reduction and pragmatic enrichment, grammaticalization is also often accompanied by phonological attrition – the loss of phonetic substance.

Another important property of grammaticalization is the notion of 'retention' (Ziegeler 1997) or 'persistence' (Hopper and Traugott 2003).<sup>20</sup> In the process of grammaticalization, the former, more lexical meaning might constrain and influence the latter grammaticalized form. In other words, the grammatical use of the

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19. Lehmann (2015: 130) sets 'weight' as one of the parameters along which degrees of grammaticalization can be measured on both the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes.

20. Not every case of grammaticalization involves the retention of the lexical source meaning in the grammaticalized forms. This property is highlighted here because, as we shall see, it is especially relevant to the grammaticalization of Cantonese directional particles under investigation, in particular the evolution of the particles *hei2*, *lok6* and *faan1*. The more grammaticalized meanings and uses of these particles can often be traced back to the semantic properties of them being used as directional verbs in certain contexts.

Besides investigating the retention of lexical source meanings in grammaticalization processes, Ziegeler (1997) also looks into parallels between grammaticalization and the individual developments of speakers during the process of language acquisition. It is found that the diachronic past of a lexical item is accommodated for in the type of collocations in which the grammaticalized form occurs synchronically, and that L1 speakers are more sensitive to this than L2 speakers.

item always reflects nuances of their earlier lexical meanings in certain contexts. The retention on earlier meanings might result in the source meaning and the grammaticalized meaning occurring side by side for some time.

The evolution of *going to* into *gonna* is cited more frequently than other examples of grammaticalization as it demonstrates most of the typical features of grammaticalization. Semantically, the sense of *go* has changed from involving a spatial, ‘bodily’ movement, to an abstract, temporal concept which is incompatible with physical direction. Via this loss of specific features of meaning, the phrase is said to be pragmatically enriched at the same time as it is applicable in a wider range of contexts. The property of retention is also illustrated here as the original purposive meaning continues to constrain the use of *be gonna* as an auxiliary, that it can only be used in situations relating to future intentions, plans, or schedules. Morphosyntactically, the *to*-infinitive phrase, which was originally the complement phrase of *go*, is reduced and no longer behaves as a phrasal constituent on its own. The independent status of the infinitival *to* is also lost (fused in *gonna*). Phonologically, the form *going to* evolves into *gonna* via reduction of the two syllables of *going*, and the resulting vowel coalesces with *to*, with the assimilation and merger of the velar nasal and the alveolar stop to an alveolar nasal. Functionally, the motion verb is extended to be used in non-motion contexts, and the meaning of the whole construction is extended from purposive direction to future. If we look at (4) again, all these lexical and more grammatical forms of *go* still exist in modern English. The development of new senses does not imply the dying out of old forms. In fact, this grammaticalization process is still ongoing in English.

Traugott and Dasher (2002: 84–85), Hopper and Traugott (2003: 2–3), and Brinton and Traugott (2005: 25–30), present a summary of features associated with grammaticalization, with other illustrative examples.

### 1.2.3 Grammaticalization studies on Western European languages

In the last few decades, grammaticalization theory has assumed a significant place as a research topic in its own right. It has an important position in contemporary linguistics as it purports to account for most grammatical change. Croft holds a stronger view that perhaps the theory of grammaticalization can account for all grammatical change, depending on whether the theorist considers other processes such as reanalysis and analogical change to be part of grammaticalization or not (2000: 62).

The process of grammaticalization is often schematically formulated as  $A > (A, B) > B$ . Early works on grammaticalization have often focused on what kinds of lexeme have been recruited into grammar. Recently, considerable attention has been paid to *how* and *why* the various changes have come about. Linguists are no longer content with just finding out what A is or what B is; they also want to

know what the arrows are. They are eager to work out the concrete steps (i.e. the ‘pathway’) leading to these various changes. From the 1970s onwards, research on grammaticalization has diversified, and an increasing number of studies have been done on different languages, from different perspectives, and in different domains of linguistics.

An important line of research dating from the early 1970s was connected with the work of Talmy Givón, a functionalist whose aphorism ‘today’s morphology is yesterday’s syntax’ (1971: 413) captures the view that in order to understand language structure, one must have some knowledge of its earlier stages of development. It is considered as a part of a more general evolution, as sketched in the historical progression below (Givón 1979: 209).

(5) Discourse > Syntax > Morphology > Morphophonemics > Zero

Givón introduced a new approach to understanding grammar and his 1979 work, in which he talked about the general principles of grammaticalization, was particularly important. Other major works on general principles of grammaticalization include Heine and Reh (1984), Bybee and Pagliuca (1985), Heine et al. (1991), Bybee et al. (1994), Pagliuca (1994), Heine (1997a and 1997b), Ramat and Hopper (1998), Fischer et al. (2000), Traugott and Dasher (2002), Hopper and Traugott (2003), Fischer et al. (2004), and Lehmann (2015). These works define how grammaticalization is generally understood in contemporary linguistic studies and provide a framework for subsequent research on grammaticalization. Hopper and Traugott (2003: 25–38) and Lehmann (2015: 1–9) supply reviews of key works produced on the grammaticalization theory.

Besides the above general works, there have also been a number of works written on the grammaticalization of a specific part of grammar, such as tense and aspect (Dahl 1985, 2000; Bybee and Dahl 1989; Bybee et al. 1994), auxiliaries (Heine 1993; Kuteva 2001), demonstratives (Diessel 1999), passives (Haspelmath 1990). Heine (2003: 578) gives a very detailed summary of these works.

Another well-researched area has focused on the regularities as well as the universality of different grammaticalization processes. Cross-linguistic studies show that grammatical meanings are regularly recruited from similar lexical sources and evolve in particular ways along some determined semantic paths. Studies by Givón (1975, 1979), Traugott (1975, 1978, 1982, 1989), Heine and Reh (1984), Bybee and Pagliuca (1985, 1987), Lehmann (1985), Davidse and Leuschner (2012) and Jonas et al. (2012) have shown that language change is controlled by very general principles. Other studies have provided evidence that cross-linguistically, lexical items with the same or very similar meanings tend to grammaticalize through more or less the same path in unrelated languages. For instance, Bybee and Pagliuca (1985) presented cross-linguistic evidence for the regularity of the development of

grammatical meaning in genetically and areally unrelated languages. In Bybee et al. (1991), the focus was on the grammaticalization of future markers from verbs of desire and intention in a cross-linguistic context. Later, they moved on to identify the cross-linguistic sources for tense, aspect, and modality markings in their 1994 work. Svorou (1994) is an important work devoted to the evolution of spatial morphemes cross-linguistically. Traugott and Dasher (2002) give a good description of recognized paths and regularities of the grammaticalization of lexical items across different conceptual and functional domains cross-linguistically. Heine and Kuteva (2002) is a good resource book which provides information about common grammaticalization patterns in the languages of the world. Narrog and Heine (2011) as a compiled handbook on the grammaticalization phenomenon has a very good coverage on the theoretical aspects and morphological issues on grammaticalization. Traugott and Trousdale (2013) is a more recent work that attempts to bring together theories of construction grammar, grammaticalization and lexicalization, and perceives them as a unified theory of constructional change.

#### 1.2.4 The unidirectionality principle

While there is now a wealth of studies on grammaticalization (extending from articles to books and contributions to handbooks), the theory of grammaticalization is not without critiques; in more recent years there has been criticism of the grammaticalization theory (see especially Newmeyer 1998; Campbell 2001; Campbell and Janda 2001; Janda 2001; Norde 2001). The major points of criticism examined include: (1) grammaticalization is not a distinct process; (2) 'grammaticalization theory' is not a theory; (3) grammaticalization is not unidirectional. Among these issues, most doubts have been raised as to whether grammaticalization truly is a unidirectional process.

Grammaticalization, in general, is considered to be unidirectional, progressing from the lexical to the grammatical pole on the cline of grammaticality (i.e. the alleged irreversibility of the developmental path from free element to clitic to affix, or from lexical to grammatical element). In many works (e.g. Heine et al. 1991; Traugott and Heine 1991), unidirectionality is implicitly defined as an inherent characteristic of grammaticalization. As Heine et al. remarked, 'as conceptual manipulation leads from lexical or less grammatical meanings to more grammatical ones, this process is unidirectional, and so are all developments in the process of grammaticalization' (1991: 212). Heine (1997b: 4), for example, also writes that 'grammatical change is unidirectional, leading from lexical to grammatical, and from grammatical to more grammatical, forms and structures.' Brinton and Traugott similarly assert that 'unidirectionality from lexicon or construction > grammar and not vice versa is a strong, empirical, and therefore interesting hypothesis' (2005: 25).

The phenomenon of unidirectionality has been known for centuries. Givón can be credited with initiating the theoretical discussion of unidirectionality as it is allegedly argued in his 1975 work that counterdirectional change is simply not attested (Chao 1968b: 96). More recently, however, challenges to the unidirectionality hypothesis (particularly Newmeyer 1998; Janda 2001) have triggered much debate in the literature on the status and role of unidirectionality in grammaticalization. One important objection that has always been raised against is that there seems to be numerous exceptions to the unidirectionality principle (for an extensive list of references on this, see Janda 2001: 292).

As critics of unidirectionality as a defining characteristic of the grammaticalization phenomena, both Newmeyer (1998) and Janda (2001) challenge the irreversible pathways of change in grammaticalization. Newmeyer holds a very strong view that he takes ‘any example of upgrading as sufficient to refute unidirectionality’ (1998: 263). In fact, a whole chapter of his book is devoted to ‘deconstructing grammaticalization’. Janda (2001) also discusses the discontinuity and counterability of the allegedly continuous and unidirectional/irreversible ‘path(way)s’ of change in grammaticalization.

Given that a large body of work assuming continuous and/or unidirectional ‘path(way)s’ of grammaticalization, examples of counterdirectionality are not without due acknowledgement. As believers of the unidirectionality phenomenon, Heine et al. acknowledge that ‘although cases in the opposite direction have been reported, they may be viewed as exceptions to the unidirectionality principle’ (1991: 212). In fact, as acknowledged by most scholars who criticize the unidirectionality phenomenon, contradicting cases are few compared to the large number of examples that confirm the hypothesis. Newmeyer (1998: 275) estimates the ratio of irreversible pathways of grammaticalization to counterdirectional ones is roughly 10:1. If this figure is correct, the quantitative imbalance between the two types of pathways is statistically significant. More importantly, however, no instances of ‘complete reversals of grammaticalization’ have been discovered so far (cf. Newmeyer 1998: 263; Norde 2001; Janda 2001: 294–295). Also, most of the counterexamples that have been identified can be described as being ‘idiosyncratic’ in the sense that they do not allow for cross-linguistic generalizations. In other words, even if counterdirectional changes are found, they do not hinder our understanding of the unidirectionality phenomenon as a general ‘tendency’ or characteristic of grammaticalization.

In this study, however, I will not go into the debate on the status of the unidirectionality phenomenon in grammaticalization, as this is not our major concern here. Rather, having in mind the dissenting voices, this book takes unidirectionality as a strong tendency in grammaticalization. The point is that the easily imaginable reverse of the process hardly occurs, apart from a few exceptional instances. At least all the instances of grammaticalization investigated in this study conform to the unidirectionality phenomenon.

## 1.2.5 Grammaticalization studies in Chinese

A brief review of the empirical basis for grammaticalization has been provided in 1.2.3, showing its initial focus on western-European languages, then the gradual movement towards typologically more diverse data. Not only that studies on grammaticalization have flourished in the past few decades in western linguistics, there has also been an increasing number of studies addressing the validity of applying grammaticalization theory as developed in the west to Chinese languages (e.g. Li and Thompson 1974, 1975; Huang 1982; A. Li 1990; Sun 1996; Tao 1996; Yu 1998; Shi and Li 2001; Y. Shi 2002). The number of studies on grammaticalization in Chinese started to increase in the 1990s, when grammaticalization as a theoretical framework was systematically introduced into Chinese linguistics.

Despite the relative newness of this western ‘terminology’ (i.e. the introduction of the term 語法化 *yúfǎ huà*, the literal translation of ‘grammaticalization’), precursors to the ‘concept’ of grammaticalization in Chinese research can be traced back to as early as the Song Dynasty (AD 960–1279) when Chinese scholars started to discuss the functions of 虛字 *xū zì* ‘empty/grammatical word, particle’ and 實字 *shí zì* ‘solid/content word, lexical item’. Two Song scholars, Lou Fang and Liu Jiuyuan, described the distinction between ‘empty’ words and ‘solid’ words in (6) and (7) respectively.<sup>21</sup>

- (6) 文字之妙,  
*wén zì zhī miào*,  
 text word LP excellence  
 只在幾個助詞虛字上。  
*zhǐ zài jǐ gè zhù cí xū zì shàng*.  
 only lie several CL helping word empty word on  
 助詞虛字,  
*zhù cí xū zì*,  
 helping word empty word  
 是過接幹旋千轉萬化處。<sup>22</sup>  
*shì guòjiē wòxuán qiān zhūn wàn huà chù*.  
 BE connecting around thousand turn hundred change place  
 ‘The subtle [power] of words resides solely in that small number of helping expressions and “empty words” (particles). Such helping expressions and particles connect and mediate myriad shifts and changes [of expression].’

21. Examples (6) and (7) are quoted from Xing (2003: 2–3), but with my own free translations.

22. The word 妙 *miào* is better translated as ‘mysterious’.

(7) 字之指歸又有虛實，

*zì zhī zhǐ guī yòu yǒu xū shí,*  
word LP reference converge also have empty solid

虛字當論字義，

*xū zì dāng lùn zì yì,*  
empty word should refer word meaning

實字當論所指之實。

*shí zì dāng lùn suǒ zhī zhī shí.*  
solid word should refer which reference LP object

‘In what words refer to there is also [the distinction of] ‘empty’ vs. ‘substantial’. For empty words, it is appropriate to categorize their [inherent] senses, while for lexical expressions, one distinguishes the [real-world] substances they refer to.’

Although the remarks in (6) and (7) do not give sufficient grounds to claim that systematic studies of grammaticalization had already started in the Song Dynasty, they nevertheless provide a clue to the fact that scholars around that time were already aware of the distinction between function and content words, a prerequisite for an interest in the study of grammaticalization.

The earliest known systematic description of the change from content words to function words, 實詞虛化 *shící xūhuà* (literally ‘emptying of solid words’) apparently occurred in the Yuan dynasty (AD 1271–1368), when the Yuan scholar Zhou Boqi (AD 1298–1369) wrote 六書正偽 *Liù shū zhēng wěi* ‘The original and the spurious in the six-fold classification of graphs’, in which he made this very important observation:<sup>23</sup>

(8) 今之虛字皆古之實字。

*Jīn zhī xū zì jiē gǔ zhī shí zì.*  
today LP empty word all ancient LP solid word

‘Empty words (grammatical words) in the current [language] were all solid words in ancient times.’

Although Zhou did not go into the details of why and how solid words become 虛化 *xūhuà* (lit. ‘emptied’) ‘grammaticalized’, he recognized the historical relation between the categories of lexical and grammatical words, laying a basic foundation for later works. His observation that today’s empty words (grammatical words) are all yesterday’s solid words (content words) is indeed very important. A possible typological reason why the ‘bleaching’ (as in the ‘western’ terminology) of lexical to grammatical morphemes was recognized so much earlier in China than elsewhere might be that, for most of its history, Chinese has been an isolating

23. Example (8) is quoted from Zheng and Mai (1964: 95), but with my own free translation.

language, virtually devoid of the kind of inflections and derivations that characterize Indo-European and many other languages. The strict, morpho-graphic nature of the Chinese script may well have helped keep the results of grammaticalization transparent to the reader's eye. As noted above, discussions of the distinct functions of the same *graph* ('full' vs. 'empty') were already present in the Song Dynasty. On the phonological level, modern Cantonese is highly conservative, differing from both English and Standard Mandarin in that phonetic reduction is not commonly attested. Thus, in distinction to Beijing Mandarin, Cantonese does not show a reduced, 'neutral tone' opposed to a set of full, lexical tones, nor does it include many examples of fusion in its grammaticalization processes, such as that exemplified by English *going to* > *gonna*.<sup>24</sup> These two features – lack of morphology, and the integrity of the syllable in both diachronic phonology and hence, graphic representation – may well have left the results of grammaticalization more 'exposed' to the language user's perception.

After Zhou's introduction of *shíci xūhuà* in the Yuan dynasty, later studies often made reference to the distinction between 'content' and 'empty' words, and acknowledged the versatility of these two types of words (Zheng and Mai 1964: 100–104). Studies of this kind became popular in the following centuries, reaching a peak in the Qing Dynasty (AD 1644–1911) (Y. Shi 2002: 5).

Despite the fact that *shíci xūhuà* has been noted for a long time and exemplified extensively for a few centuries, it did not receive any comprehensive treatment until the 1990s, when the analysis of 'grammaticalization', as it originated in the west, was introduced into Chinese linguistics. As is apparent from the literal translation of *shíci xūhuà*, the Chinese tradition was more about 'emptying of solid words'. That is, *shíci xūhuà* focuses more on how the lexical meanings of solid words are lost and become generalized (similar to 'bleaching' in the context of the western tradition). In other words, the process of *shíci xūhuà* only represents one aspect of the western study of 'grammaticalization' as descended from Meillet. The study of 'grammaticalization' in the west is more diversified, ranging from research on the sources and products of grammaticalization, to the motivations, mechanisms, as well as processes involved in the evolution of grammatical words.

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24. Although occasionally Cantonese does demonstrate phonological fusion, as in 唔好 *m4hou2* > *mou2* 'not good', this is more appropriately considered as phonological linking resulting from conversation, rather than from the process of grammaticalization.

When proceeding further in the study, we will see that beyond these differences in morpho-phonology, other typical, *semantic* paths attested in English grammaticalization, such as the evolution from a concrete domain to a more abstract domain, the functional change from indicating directional meanings to grammatical meanings, the persistence of older meanings, etc. are all well-observed in the grammaticalization of Cantonese directional particles.

The study of *shíci xūhuà* began with the distinction between ‘solid’ and ‘empty’ words, with little attention to the reasons for this distinction. It was not until the early 1990s when studies of grammaticalization began to gain new momentum after the publication of some pioneering works (Sun 1994; Shen 1994, 1998a; among others), that the framework proposed by Heine et al. (1991) and Hopper and Traugott (2003) was introduced to other Chinese scholars. Those pioneering works also suggested ways in which the theory could be applied to Mandarin Chinese. Sun (1996) provided a comprehensive application of grammaticalization theory to diachronic changes in Mandarin. In this work he adopted the theory of grammaticalization to analyze word-order change in the history of Chinese.

The number of grammaticalization studies has increased dramatically in the last ten years or so. Shi and Li (2001) and Y. Shi (2006) laid a very good foundation for the study of grammaticalization, in particular the motivations and mechanisms of the grammaticalization process in Mandarin Chinese. Studies looking at grammaticalization from different perspectives also emerged. Z. Wu (2004) adopts a formal perspective to look at grammaticalization and language change in Chinese, while Shen (2005) discusses grammatical change from a more functional approach. Xing (2013, 2016) are two more recent studies that provide a comprehensive account of semantic change in Chinese within the broader context of grammaticalization. Xing (2012) is an edited volume that points to some recent trends in the study of grammaticalization in Chinese.

Apart from the more general works, some studies have focused on theoretical issues including how grammaticalization in Chinese can be explained by a construction-based framework (Bisang 2010) or by a unidirectionality account (F. Wu 2003). Other topics that have been investigated include how grammaticalization is motivated and cultivated in different contexts (Ma 2003; Wang and Yan 2005). There have also been case studies on a particular element or group of elements, such as how a quantifier gets grammaticalized into an auxiliary (Y. Zhang 2003), how a nominal item or construction gets reanalyzed as tense-aspect-mood (TMA) and sentence final particles (e.g. Xu and Matthews 2011; Yap and Matthews 2008; Yap and Wang 2011; Yap et al. 2010, 2011), or how the semantic and pragmatic properties of a particular particle are changed in grammaticalization (e.g. *le* in Z. Shi 1989 and *lian* in Xing 2004). Besides, studies have also been devoted to explore how grammaticalization took place with aspect markers (Z. Shi 1989; Li and Shi 1997), passive markers (Yin 2004; C. Li 2007; Huang 2013), and verbs (Huang and Chang 1996; Li and Cao 2002; Xing 2003; H. Jiang 2003; Z. Gao 2004).

Studies from other angles and perspectives have also emerged. There has been considerable interest in the mechanisms that are at work in the process of grammaticalization, such as discourse-pragmatics and cognitive linguistics (G. He 1997; Shen 1997, 1998b, 2000; X. Yue 2003; Yap et al. 2014). There is also a growing

interest in diachronic syntax (Ting 2008; Aldridge 2009). Research from the perspective of subjectivity has also increased drastically since 2005 (Y. Zhang 2005; J. Li 2005; Zeng 2005; Lu and Su 2009; Lim 2011; Q. He 2014; among others), when Shen (2001) introduced it into Chinese grammar.

With this drastic increase of systematic research on grammaticalization in Mandarin, similar research on Cantonese has also gained momentum and the number of grammaticalization studies on Cantonese has grown rapidly in the past decade. Although no book-length study has been written on any aspect of Cantonese grammaticalization, studies looking at grammaticalization as part of the Cantonese grammar have started to emerge since the 2000s (e.g. M. Li 2002; Chan et al. 2002; Yeung 2003, 2006; K. Wong 2004; Yap et al. 2004; Matthews 2006; Matthews and Yip 2009).

In fact, Cantonese provides us with a wide range of phenomena involving grammaticalization. It has a rich system of grammatical particles occupying the clause-initial position (i.e. discourse markers), the clause-medial position (i.e. verbal particles), as well as the clause-final position (i.e. sentence final particles). Many of them are attested to have evolved via different grammaticalization pathways to indicate modality, evidentiality, as well as the speaker's subjective attitude. Examples of pathways include the grammaticalization of sentence-final evidential *wo5* from the quotative verb *waa6* 'say' (Matthews 1998; Yeung 2006; W. Leung 2010; among others), the grammaticalization of the Cantonese *give* verb *bei2* (Chin 2011; Matthews and Yip 2011b), the grammaticalization of the sentence-final scalar particle *tim1* from the additive verb *tim1* 'add' (Lee and Pan 2010), the grammaticalization of the clause-medial assertive particle *ngaang6* from the adjective *ngaang6* 'hard' (Tang 2003), the grammaticalization of attitudinal phrases such as *ngo5 gok3dak1* 'I think' into epistemic parentheticals (Yap et al. 2014), and the grammaticalization of fear verbs (e.g. *paa3* and *geng1*) into the epistemic marker *tai2paa3* 'seemingly' (Yap et al. 2012). This book will look into yet another pathway leading to grammatical markers in Cantonese – the grammaticalization of directional particles into markers indicating tense-aspect, evidentiality, as well as speaker's subjective stance.

### 1.3 Data and approach

Analysis in this book relies on data obtained from various sources including early Cantonese pedagogical texts, Cantonese films, Cantonese dictionaries, and a contemporary Cantonese corpus, with supplementary daily examples that I have jotted down as a native speaker. With this range of data, it has been possible to survey a sufficient number of occurrences of each directional particle, and to adopt a

qualitative research approach and examine the data from a diachronic perspective. For each particle, its different senses have been traced back to the early Cantonese data, so that the grammaticalization pathway can be worked out. Particular attention has been paid to identifying the particles' idiosyncratic, non-directional uses, and exploring how and why different grammatical functions have come about along different evolutionary pathways.

Given below are the details of each category of data and how each is treated and analyzed.

### 1.3.1 Early Cantonese materials

Historical materials form a crucial link with the synchronic structure of the particles as they provide important evidence about the pathways of grammaticalization which can only be delineated through precise analyses of earlier contexts of usage. Thus, early written records are always invaluable resources when studying historical changes in language use. However, as in many areas of diachronic investigation, the paucity of available materials must be acknowledged. Cantonese is particularly challenging in this regard as it lacks the support of a literary tradition, as opposed to the immense amount of documentation for written Chinese. For written Chinese we are lucky enough to have historical records of sufficient time depth to observe patterns of change by identifying the earlier and the later forms of a particular structure. However, early colloquial writings in dialects other than Early Mandarin are scarce, and this scarcity is especially pronounced for Cantonese. The divergence between the dialect represented by the written language, and spoken Cantonese, is also great. Written records representing Cantonese are not very extensive and have only a very shallow history, which in the best case goes back no further than two hundred years.

Although pre-modern written records composed by native speakers of Cantonese are virtually non-existent, there is fortunately a wealth of pedagogical material compiled by western missionaries who came to Guangzhou and neighbouring areas in the nineteenth century for religious and other purposes. Most of these materials are translations of the bible, short stories and religious works. Dictionaries, textbooks, grammar books and vocabulary lists of Cantonese were also compiled at that time. At first, these texts were written to help other missionaries who came later on to learn the language of the locals. However, the usage of these pedagogical materials was broadened after China opened the door to the outside world. A lot of westerners (such as seamen, merchants, government officials, etc.) came to the Cantonese-speaking area for various diplomatic and commercial purposes. These teaching materials were used to meet their needs in communicating with the locals.

Early Cantonese texts when placed together constitute a valuable source of colloquial data. This pool of data is important in at least five respects: first, it constitutes a resource that documents how the Cantonese dialect has changed in that span of time; second, most materials were not only recorded in characters, but were also presented in romanized phonetic script and English translation, giving clues to the phonetic values and meanings of the words; third, the explanatory notes and annotations of grammatical structures, which often appear in the beginning sections are important in understanding the syntax of earlier periods; fourth, dictionaries and vocabulary lists reveal important information about the lexical inventory at that time, and thus are especially valuable for lexicological studies; and fifth, the types of conversations or topics included in these textbooks of Cantonese often reflect the actual uses of the language in different social contexts, and information of this kind is important in studies of sociolinguistics. These resources when put together definitely enable us to gain a clearer understanding of the evolution of the Cantonese language.<sup>25</sup>

The reliability of these early Cantonese pedagogical texts might be challenged as they were not compiled by native speakers of Cantonese. The compiler's native language structure (i.e. English) might also have an influence on them when they compile the texts. Thus, the texts that are chosen for this study are those which have been introduced and judged by historical linguists as reliable (A. Yue 2004a; Cheung 2007b). Also, my native-speaker command of contemporary Hong Kong Cantonese can also help in judging whether there are inconsistencies in the texts, or if the texts contain any serious grammatical mistakes.

Altogether nine sets of materials compiled between 1828 and 1941 have been selected, arranged chronologically according to date of publication in Table 1.2 below.

While items 1, 2, 4, and 7 are available online as part of a searchable early Cantonese database, other items were looked through from the first page to the last in the form of a PDF file.<sup>26</sup> Microsoft Access was used to organize these early materials into a database. For each of the twelve directional morphemes under investigation,

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25. For an insightful and comprehensive critique of the importance of using historical materials for diachronic studies, see A. Yue (2004a). For a detailed bibliography of the materials compiled by western missionaries, see You (2002).

26. Items 1, 2, 4, and 7 from Table 1.2 have been included into an online searchable database on early Cantonese materials, developed by Prof. Samuel Cheung under the project entitled 'The Cantonese Language: Its Past as Reconstructed from Early Colloquial Text', supported by the Hong Kong Research Grant Council (HKUST/CUHK6055/02H). Interested readers can learn more about the database from: <http://pvs0001.ust.hk/Candbase/>.

**Table 1.2** List of early Cantonese materials

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1	Morrison, R. 1828. <i>A Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect</i> . Macau: East India Company's Press. 647 pages.
2	Bridgeman, E.C. 1841. <i>Chinese Chrestomathy in the Canton Dialect</i> . Macau: East India Company's Press. 693 pages.*
3	Bonney, S.W. 1853. <i>Phrases in the Canton Colloquial Dialect</i> . Canton. (name of publisher not available) 98 pages.
4	Ball, D.J. 1883. <i>Cantonese Made Easy</i> . Hong Kong: China Mail Office. 86 pages.
5	Stedman, T.L. and Lee, K.P. 1888. <i>A Chinese and English Phrase Book in the Canton Dialect</i> . New York: William R. Jenkins. 186 pages.
6	Ball, D.J. 1894. <i>Readings in Cantonese Colloquial</i> . Hong Kong: Kelly and Walsh Limited. 171 pages.
7	Ball, D.J. 1912. <i>How to Speak Cantonese: fifty conversations in Cantonese colloquial</i> . Hong Kong: Kelly & Walsh Limited. (Fourth Edition) 229 pages.
8	Wisner, O.F. 1927. <i>Beginning Cantonese</i> , Part I. (place and name of publisher not available) 280 pages.
9	O'Melia, T. A. 1941. <i>First Year Cantonese</i> . Hong Kong: Maryknoll House.

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\* This is the first textbook published on Cantonese (You 2002: 23).

both the verb and the particle uses were noted down. Repeated usage of the same kind was recorded once only so as to avoid duplications.<sup>27</sup> That is, the search was for types rather than tokens. If there were several instances of, for instance, 行返屋企 *hang4 faan1 uk1kei2* 'walk back home', the phrase was noted down only once. However, every distinct use of a directional particle and every new verb-particle collocation was noted down as a new entry.

For each entry, thirteen fields of information were filled in. The image below shows the data entry form. For clarity, the purpose of each field is further elaborated in Table 1.3.<sup>28</sup>

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27. Owing to time constraints, instances of the same usage are not input to the database. However, the importance of token counts should be acknowledged in studies on grammaticalization and semantic change.

28. When quoting these early Cantonese examples, the original free translations from the source texts are used. However, since most texts (except those by Ball) did not provide glosses, glosses of all examples cited in this book, including those from Ball, are my own so that glossing is consistent throughout. In other words, Ball's own glosses have been replaced by my own, more accurate ones.

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Access window titled 'Microsoft Access' with a menu bar in Chinese. The main window displays a form titled 'Examples' with the following fields and values:

- ExampleID: 20
- DirectionalCode: GWO
- CategoryCode: P
- Example: 我做過咁
- Gloss\_CHI: 做過
- Gloss: done
- Translation: I have done it
- AcceptabilityCode: Y
- Lesson: 8
- Context: Opposites
- Page: 18
- Source: Ball (1883)
- Comments: (empty)

Table 1.3 Information fields of a data entry

	Field	Description
1	ExampleID	An identification number assigned to each example.
2	DirectionalCode	A unique code for each of the twelve particles (i.e. the romanization). It is 過 <i>gwo3</i> in the sample above.
3	CategoryCode	Either verb 'V' or particle 'P'.
4	Example	Original sentence as appearing in the source.
5	Gloss_CHI	The part of interest, usually the verb phrase.
6	Gloss	The gloss of 'Gloss_CHI', as given in the original text.
7	Translation	The English translation of the example as given in the original text.
8	AcceptabilityCode	Marked yes 'Y', no 'N' or not sure '?', indicating the acceptability in modern Cantonese.
9	Lesson	The lesson number (if applicable, usually of a textbook).
10	Context	The context in which the example occurs.
11	Page	The page reference of the example from the original text.
12	Source	The source text of the example.
13	Comments	Further comments (if any).

Altogether 470 data entries were collected. Searches were performed over this database to retrieve the relevant information. For instance, to retrieve all entries concerning the use of 開 *hoi1* 'move away' in the database, we select 開 in the drop-down menu and all the examples appear at once, as illustrated below.

QueryResults: 選取查詢

DirectionalName	CategoryName	Gloss_CHI	Gloss	Translation	Accept	Lesson	Context	Page	Source	Comments
開		開	open	Open the door	Y	2		6	Ball (1883)	
開		開	open	He wants to open a shop	Y	9	Commercial	20	Ball (1883)	
開		開	start	When do you start?	?	13	Nautical	28	Ball (1883)	開身 as a fre
開		開	start	When des it start?	N	19	Kowloon City	48	Ball (1912)	開身 as a ph
開		開	issue	(issue) Fermits-to-break-bulk	?	48	Exports and imports	206	Ball (1912)	w/ 184
				dig a well	?	0		8	Bonney (1853)	
				open the door	?	0		15	Bonney (1853)	
				set the table	Y	0		16	Bonney (1853)	
				the ship is setting sail	Y	0		33	Bonney (1853)	開身 as a ph
				commence work directly	Y	0		35	Bonney (1853)	
				open the umbrella	Y	0		35	Bonney (1853)	
				you began work late	N	0		49	Bonney (1853)	
				began work immediately	N	0		63	Bonney (1853)	
				why have you come out so late at night?	N	0		70	Bonney (1853)	
				The steamer will get under wat in a moment!	?	22	Interrogative particles	116	O'Melia (1941)	開身 as a ph
				(Chen) will start the car in a moment	?	22	Interrogative particles	116	O'Melia (1941)	
				I am going to open the door	Y	24	Relative clauses	207	O'Melia (1941)	
				When the meal is served we should eat	?	35	Wh-clauses	217	O'Melia (1941)	
				It is very fragrant here when the flowers are in bloom	Y	35	Wh-clauses	218	O'Melia (1941)	
				He is just starting to do it	N	40	Tense auxiliaries	258	O'Melia (1941)	

Each field of information has a drop-down menu; every search can be refined to suit different needs. For instance, we can retrieve only the particle uses of *hoi1* which appeared in Bonney (1853) and Ball (1894) and are still acceptable in modern Cantonese. Having specified all the query selections, we can export the data to an excel spreadsheet such as the one below for further analysis and future reference.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	43 乜擔督我兜欄開山填口個咁石呢	轉, 開	roll, saw	How shall we get into the grave	Y	10		16	Ball (1894)	Old Cantonese
2	243 攤開			spread them out	Y	0		11	Bonney (1853)	
3	250 行開			walk aside	Y	0		14	Bonney (1853)	
4	252 打開			break it open	Y	0		15	Bonney (1853)	
5	286 開開房			partition the room	Y	0		35	Bonney (1853)	
6	288 分開讀			read separately	Y	0		37	Bonney (1853)	
7	341 先學分開字音			first learn to distinguish the tones of the let	Y	0		67	Bonney (1853)	

### 1.3.2 Cantonese films

A total of twenty-four Cantonese films, including fourteen which were first screened in the 1950s, seven in the 1970s, and three in the 1990s, were selected to form a small database of colloquial spoken data illustrating the use of Cantonese from the 1950s onwards. This period was a prime time for film production and a great variety of films appeared. Film data are significant in the sense that they provide many good examples demonstrating natural, colloquial usage of Cantonese in different contexts.<sup>29</sup>

Tables 1.4–1.6 show the details of the films. The abbreviations given in parentheses will be used throughout the book.<sup>30</sup>

**Table 1.4** Films from the 1950s\*

Year	Title	Duration (min)
1947	新白金龍 New White Golden Dragon [Dragon]	85
1949	夜吊白芙蓉 The Night Mourning of Pak Fu-yung [Pak]	86
1950	五福臨門 Five Blessings in a Row [Blessings]	108
1952	恩恩愛愛 A Couple of Love [Couple]	102
1952	契爺艷史 Foster-Daddy's Romantic Affairs [Foster Daddy]	106
1952	十月芥菜 A Ready Lover [Lover]	85
1953	我為情 That's for My Love [Love]	95
1954	錯燒龍鳳燭 Wrong Wedding [Wedding]	106
1954	蝴蝶夫人 Madam Butterfly [Butterfly]	109
1955	兩地相思 The Woman between [Woman]**	60
1955	鴻運喜當頭 As Luck Will Have It [Luck]	80
1955	恨不相逢未嫁時 If Only We'd Met When I Was Single [Single]	95
1957	甜姐兒 Darling Girl [Darling]	108
1959	兩傻捉鬼記 Two Fools Capture a Ghost [Ghost]	103
Total:		1328 (22 hrs 8 mins)

\* Although strictly speaking, the films New White Golden Dragon and The Night Mourning of Pak Fu-yung were not produced in the 1950s, but late 1940s, they are categorized as 'Films from the 1950s' for convenient reference.

\*\* Only disc 1 of the film works.

29. Though film data to a certain extent has been 'scripted', it is still classed as natural and colloquial as it includes the use of Cantonese particles that are not normally scripted. When given the scripts in written Chinese, actors make their own judgment on what particles should be used when rendering the speech in Cantonese.

30. My heartfelt thanks go to Leung Waimun for sharing with me her transcriptions of these films: (1) New white golden dragon; (2) The night mourning of Pak Fu-yung; (3) A couple of love (sic); (4) Fight back to school I; (5) Fight back to school II; and (6) The God of cookery.

Table 1.5 Films from the 1970s

Year	Title	Duration (min)
1971	唐山大兄 The Big Boss [Boss]	92
1971	精武門 Fist of Fury [Fury]	102
1973	七十二家房客 The House of 72 Tenants [Tenants]	98
1973	香港七三 Hong Kong 73 [HK73]	95
1974	鬼馬雙星 Games Gamblers Play [Gamblers]	103
1976	半斤八兩 The Private Eyes [Eyes]*	38
1978	賣身契 The Contract [Contract]	90
	Total:	645 (10 hrs 5 mins)

\* Only disc 2 of the film works.

Table 1.6 Films from the 1990s

Year	Title	Duration (min)
1991	逃學威龍 I Fight Back to School I [Fight I]	100
1992	逃學威龍 II Fight Back to School II [Fight II]	99
1996	食神 The God of Cookery [Cookery]	95
	Total:	294 (4 hrs 54 mins)

Each of the 1950s and 1970s films was watched from the beginning to the end for instances of directional particles, except for these five films screened in the 1950s which full scripts are available online as part of an online film database: [Foster-Daddy], [Lover], [Wedding], [Luck], and [Single].<sup>31</sup> Similar to the treatment of early Cantonese data, sentences in which the directional particles occurred were copied down, forming a small film database representing the use of the twelve directional particles in Hong Kong at that time. The three films screened in the 1990s were mainly used to supplement our corpus data, representing the usage of Cantonese from the 1990s onwards. These three texts were treated similarly to the texts in our contemporary corpus, as described below.

31. The full scripts of these five films have been included into an online searchable database on Cantonese films screened in the 1950s and 1960s, developed by Dr. Andy Chin from the Hong Kong Education University under the two projects entitled ‘Spoken Corpus Construction and Linguistic Analysis of Mid-20th Century Cantonese’ (RG41/2010–2011) and ‘A preliminary linguistic analysis of Mid-20th Century Cantonese from a corpus-based approach’ (RG62/12–13R), supported by the Hong Kong Research Grant Council. For readers who are interested in using film data of the mid-20th century, please consult the online database here: <http://corpus.edu.hk/hk/hkcc/>.

### 1.3.3 The HKCanCor corpus

A contemporary Cantonese corpus, the Hong Kong University Cantonese Corpus (HKCanCor, recorded in Hong Kong in the late 1990s), is used in the present study.<sup>32</sup> It contains recordings of spontaneous speech in ordinary settings among family members, friends, and colleagues (51 texts), and radio broadcasts (42 texts) that involve two to four people. These speech data were recorded between March 1997 and August 1998. They are unscripted, spontaneous speech instances heard in everyday conversations and they reflect the linguistic properties of Hong Kong Cantonese. About 29 hours of tape-recordings, transcribed as approximately 190,000 Chinese characters were collected in the corpus. The corpus (in TEXT format) was searched for any target forms, which were then compared and analyzed with data from earlier periods of time to examine the evolution of each directional particle. Every occurrence is evaluated *in situ*; each example is judged for its meaning and usage in that particular context.

### 1.3.4 Cantonese dictionaries

Dictionaries are undoubtedly another important source of data as they reflect how lexicographers understand and categorize the various senses exhibited by a lexical item. They also provide important information about the possible etymology of a particular linguistic form.

Five Cantonese dictionaries have been chosen for the purpose of this study, listed in Table 1.7 in chronological order according to date of publication.<sup>33</sup> These dictionaries are particularly important to our study as they provide usages of words or phrases which the dictionary compilers consider as core and more ‘standard’ to Cantonese. On the one hand, the usage of each directional particle resulting from our database was checked against these dictionaries to see if any of the more basic and common usages were missed out; on the other hand, any new findings on the usage of particles from our database might reveal what lexicographers have alternatively missed when compiling these dictionaries.

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32. The HKCanCor was built under the research project ‘Constructing a Database of Spoken Cantonese with English Translation and On-line Dictionary’, led by Prof K.K. Luke and Mr O.T. Nancarrow. This project is funded by the Hong Kong Research Grant Council (HKU 397/96H). See Luke and Wong (2015) for the details of this corpus.

33. While it might take a few years of preparation before a dictionary is published; it is believed that the data should not deviate very much from the contemporary use of Cantonese.

**Table 1.7** List of Cantonese dictionaries

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1	Rao Bingcai, Jueya Ouyang and Wuji Zhou. 1996. 廣州話方言詞典 [ <i>A Dictionary of the Guangzhou Dialect</i> ]. Guangzhou: Guangdong Renmin Chubanshe
2	Wu Kaibin. 1997. 香港話詞典 [ <i>A Dictionary of the Hong Kong Speech</i> ]. Guangzhou: Huacheng Chubanshe.
3	Cheng Tingau. 1997. 香港粵語詞典 [ <i>A Dictionary of Hong Kong Cantonese</i> ]. Jiangsu Jiaoyu Chubanshe.
4	Bai Yuanru. 1998. 廣州方言詞典 [ <i>A Dictionary of the Guangzhou Dialect</i> ]. Nanjing Shi: Jiangsu Jiaoyu Chubanshe
5	Zhang Liyan and Leihuai Ni. 1999. 港式廣州話詞典 [ <i>A Dictionary of Hong Kong Style Cantonese</i> ]. Hong Kong: Wanli Shudian

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Apart from the above-mentioned data sources, from time to time the analysis is also supplemented with examples that I have consistently noted down in my daily interactions in Cantonese. Other native speakers' opinions are also sought for confirmation whenever feasible.

#### 1.4 Goals of the present study

The remainder of this book aims to give a systematic account of the development of Cantonese directional particles, from the perspectives of their form, function, and grammaticalization. Among the issues that this book seeks to address are the following:

1. to formulate more precise claims about the nature of directional particles in contemporary Cantonese – what they are, and are not, from the perspectives of semantics, discourse-pragmatics, and morphosyntax;
2. to delineate the precise paths (i.e. the actual steps and their motivation(s)) in the grammaticalization of the twelve directional particles;
3. to understand how the various mechanisms (i.e. metaphorical extension, pragmatic enrichment, and subjectification) actually operate in the grammaticalization of these particles, and their significance in the larger context of grammaticalization; and,
4. to identify some diachronic trends which are specific to Cantonese (when compared with Mandarin or other languages).

The main goal of the current study is to provide a more in-depth analysis of Cantonese directional particles, and to obtain a detailed description of the characteristics of their paths of evolution. Questions of how grammaticalization is affected by mechanisms like metaphorical extension, pragmatic enrichment, and

subjectification, and whether different phases of the process of change are attributed to different mechanisms, are also central to the present analysis. It is expected to show that the instances of grammaticalization in Cantonese are rich, and in some cases unique. It is hoped that this study will open new paths for research, leading on the one hand, to the discovery of general tendencies in grammaticalization, and on the other, to the explanation of variations in different languages.

## 1.5 Outline of chapters

The data and methodology, and some theoretical preliminaries of this study, have been given in this introductory chapter. A review of prior studies in grammaticalization and related areas has also been provided. The remaining part of this book is organized in the following way.

Chapter 2 describes the category of directional particles in more detail. The relationship between directional particles and grammaticalization, and the properties of these particles from different perspectives, are examined in this chapter. In particular, the verb-particle construction is compared with other similar constructions including the verb-complement construction and the serial verb construction, all of which look superficially alike in that they are comprised of two verbal elements. By doing so, the status of directional particles is further clarified.

Chapter 3 examines the three mechanisms of change by which the grammaticalization of the twelve directional particles under investigation exhibits. It is found that not only are these mechanisms consistently at work in the grammaticalization of directional particles, they are actually observed to operate in the following specific order in the evolutionary path of *each* directional particle: metaphorical extension > pragmatic enrichment > subjectification. Reasons are suggested to account for this claimed, invariant sequence of evolution.

Chapters 4 to 6 form the core of this book – the actual analyses of the particles. The proposed steps that each particle has taken in the course of its grammaticalization are spelt out via the analysis of examples taken from the database assembled for this study. The evolution of *lai4* ‘come’, *heoi3* ‘go’, *ceot1* ‘move out’, *jap6* ‘move into’, and *dou3* ‘arrive’ are first examined in Chapter 4. They all share the common feature of involving metaphor, and metaphor alone, in their grammaticalization. Chapter 5 investigates the grammaticalization path of *gwo3* ‘move across’ and *hei2* ‘raise (something) up’, by highlighting the role of linguistic context in their development. Pragmatic enrichment is involved in their grammaticalization, in addition to metaphorical extension. A plausible path is proposed to explain how *gwo3*’s implicature of ‘worthiness’ and *hei2*’s implicature of ‘completion’ have arisen in

their respective bridging contexts. The remaining five particles, namely *soeng5* ‘ascend’, *lok6* ‘descend’, *hoi1* ‘move away’, *maai4* ‘move towards’, and *faan1* ‘return’, are discussed in Chapter 6. This chapter focuses on how subjectification comes into play, especially at later stages of grammaticalization. The way in which directional particles are used to externalize the speaker’s subjective view point is illustrated in this chapter.

Chapter 7 presents summary and conclusions and look forward to further investigations of related phenomena in Cantonese and Mandarin, as well as other languages.



## Directional particles in Cantonese

### 2.1 Introduction

Spatial concepts are both universal and basic in nature, and this is why their involvement in processes of grammaticalization is worth exploring. In Chapter 1, 'directional particles' have been broadly defined as versatile, grammaticalized bound forms which are all grammaticalized from their corresponding verb counterparts, such that they come to occupy the position immediately following the main verb. However, this is only a working description; there is certainly a need for further clarification. For instance, on what grounds do we consider the subject of investigation in this book a 'particle', rather than a 'complement' to the preceding verb, or even a 'coverb' in a serial verb construction? What are the morpho-syntactic properties of these directional morphemes under investigation? Are there any constraints imposed on the host verbs of these directional morphemes? These questions are all crucial to our understanding of this category of grammatical items in Cantonese.

This chapter explores more deeply the nature of directional particles as a whole. We first look into their relationship with the grammaticalization theory in Section 2.2, and suggest the reasons why they seem an ideal area to explore within the larger context of grammaticalization and language change. In Section 2.3, the properties of Cantonese directional particles are discussed in detail at various levels, including the semantic and morphosyntactic levels.

### 2.2 Directional particles: Form, function, and grammaticalization

One important consequence of recent research into grammaticalization is the series of claims about the universality of the mechanisms of change as well as the common paths of change that lead to the development of particular grammatical morphemes and constructions. For instance, Bybee et al. (1994) showed that although no specific conditions are guaranteed to result in a certain change, grammatical categories are regularly recruited cross-linguistically from similar sources. Svorou (1994) suggested that morphemes denoting spatial relations are common candidates for grammaticalization and that they are likely to grammaticalize into

similarly limited types of grammatical markers cross-linguistically. Directional particles in Cantonese echo this tendency. As will be explored in the next few chapters, they exhibit various degrees of grammaticalization across different domains.

Numerous previous studies have attempted to explore the grammaticalization of spatial morphemes into grammatical markers in different domains (Traugott 1978; Lehmann 1985; Radden 1985; Svorou 1986, 1988, 1994, 2002; Heine 1989; Xu 2008; among others). A natural question is: why has spatial meaning received such extensive attention?

One reason is universality. Among the many categories of lexical items in a language, only a small number of items enter into the grammaticalization process. Heine et al. (1991) observed that candidates for grammaticalization are largely culturally independent. That is, they are universal to human experience. Space pertains to a central and universal aspect of human experience, and thus constitutes a good research ground for grammaticalization studies.

Another reason for spatial morphemes being the focus of grammaticalization and semantic change studies has to do with the supposed basic nature of space. It is suggested that mental models are fundamentally spatial in nature; when they encode other types of information they do so in a spatial format (Rickheit and Habel 1999). There are strong parallels between space and other semantic domains. It is found that the same spatial expression is often used to represent other more abstract meanings. As Svorou noticed, the more abstract grammatical notions such as tense and aspect, modality, and causality, can be traced back to concrete, physical concepts involving spatial movements and orientations (1994: 64). In cognitive semantic analyses, a claim often made is that spatial items are strongly polysemous. In other words, they are characterized by a multiple set of distinct, but systematically related senses (Lakoff 1987; Langacker 1987-91; Deane 1988; Cuyckens 1991; Geeraerts 1993; Regier 1996; Tuggy 1999, 2007). In fact, the observation that the more abstract domains of language (and cognition) are modeled on the spatial domain is an old insight, which goes back at least 150 years (see Hjelmlev 1935 for a review of the nineteenth century work). Pütz and Dirven even claim that 'space is at the heart of all conceptualization' (1996: xi). Kreitzer shares a similar view that 'abstract domains are consistently conceptualized in terms of spatial image schemata' (1997: 317). If that is indeed the case, an understanding of spatial meanings and subsequent grammaticalization would provide the key to understand human conceptualization in general.

Space has been a popular topic in linguistic research. Numerous studies on the subject have been published over the past few decades. The fact that spatial morphemes are basic and incorporate only the general meaning of space/directionality allows room for innovative uses and reinterpretation of meanings in particular contexts. This prepares the way for grammaticalization to take place. However,

as Svorou noticed, only a few scholars (Lehmann 1985; Svorou 1986, 1988; Heine 1989) have attempted a comprehensive account of the grammaticalization of spatial morphemes (1994: 64). Although a few more works have appeared in the last decade or so, ‘none of these books were [was] based on linguistic data from Chinese’ (Xu 2008: 1). In view of this, the category of directional particles in Cantonese is undoubtedly an area worth exploring in the context of grammaticalization.

### 2.3 More about directional particles

In this section, we shall look at how directional particles are positioned in the context of the present study, and find out what they are (and are not) with respect to their semantic and morphosyntactic properties.

We start by justifying our subject of investigation as a group of directional ‘particles’ rather than directional ‘complements’ in Section 2.3.1. Following this in Section 2.3.2, the formation of complex directional complements in Cantonese is briefly described. In Section 2.3.3, we discuss the two major uses of directional complements, the directional use and the resultative use, and see how they are relevant to the grammaticalization of Cantonese directional particles. Then, we turn to look at directional particles from a morphosyntactic perspective. In Section 2.3.4, we describe how the verb-particle construction differs from other similar constructions, in particular the serial verb construction (SVC) and the coverb construction. Lastly, we close this chapter by suggesting some morphosyntactic constraints that a directional particle might impose on its host verb in 2.3.5.

#### 2.3.1 A ‘particle’? A ‘complement’?!

To recall, a ‘complement’ (*bǔyǔ*) in Chinese always provides additional information about the verb that precedes it. Thus, the post-verbal directional morphemes in (1) and (2) below are traditionally classified as directional ‘complements’, in which *soeng5* denotes ‘running to a place *upwards*’ and *jap6* ‘walking *into* a place’.

- (1) 佢跑上屋頂。  
*Keoi5 paau2 soeng5 uk1 deng2.*  
 s/he run *soeng5* house roof  
 ‘S/he ran up to the rooftop.’
- (2) 佢行入課室。  
*Keoi5 haang4 jap6 fo3sat1.*  
 s/he walk *jap6* classroom  
 ‘S/he walked into the classroom.’

The use of such ‘directional complements’ in Cantonese is ubiquitous. While some verbs in English already encode a built-in directional meaning (e.g. *bring* and *take*), in Cantonese we rely on the use of an explicit ‘directional complement’ to indicate the direction of an action, as in *ling1lai4* carry-come ‘bring’ and *ling1heoi3* carry-go ‘take’. Such ‘directional complements’ have been studied extensively in the Cantonese literature, in particular by Cheung (2007a) and Yiu (2005). The former involves a comprehensive study on directional complements found in the earlier literature while the latter is a thesis devoted to the study of Cantonese directional verbs and their meanings when they appear after another verb as a complement. Yiu (2005) provides a good summary of the major works on directional complements in the Cantonese literature, although she does cover their ‘extended’ uses. Yiu’s analysis is mainly on those meanings which are still conceptually ‘directional’.

The fact that most previous studies have described post-verbal directional morphemes as directional ‘complements’ might suggest that it is the compositional, directional meanings which have been emphasized in their works. In this book, the term ‘directional complement’ is avoided and the label ‘directional particle’ is preferred when referring to those post-verbal elements transparently derived from directional verbs. The reason is two-fold. Firstly, the term ‘complement’ is understood rather differently in studies of English and Chinese. In English, ‘complement’ is a grammatical function which prototypically refers to a constituent which is necessary to complete the meaning of a phrase. For instance, an object is considered a complement to a transitive verb (i.e. its internal argument). On the other hand, ‘particle’ in English refers to a word-class. The second element in an English phrasal verb is conventionally assigned to the class ‘particle’, as in *turn on* and *put away*. In Chinese, the label *bǔyǔ* ‘complement’ is often understood as the second verbal element in the VV compound which describes the state or result as denoted by the verb (Zhu 1982: 125), whereas ‘particle’ is a flexible label for any linguistic form which does not occur as an independent unit. In other words, it is ‘always bound’ (Chao 1968a: 795). In the Chinese literature, the term 助詞 *zhùcí*, literally ‘helping-word’, is often used to represent these bound morphemes which are attached to words, phrases, or sentences to express various grammatical meanings such as 情態 *qíngtài* ‘mood’ and 體 *tǐ* ‘aspect’. In order to avoid any potential confusion arising from these two uses of the term ‘complement’, the label ‘directional particle’ is used as a cover term in this book for post-verbal morphemes which originate from directional verbs.

There are also semantic and syntactic reasons for using the term ‘particle’ over ‘complement’. Particles bound to the host verb are often used to denote various grammatical meanings (such as tense, aspect, modality, etc.) in Cantonese. Thus, these post-verbal elements are better seen as participating with the verb in

a ‘complex predicate’. As Matthews and Yip remark, although directional particles basically denote direction, many of them have ‘additional, figurative or metaphorical meanings which are not predictable from the combination of verb and particle’ (2011a: 245). In this respect, these particles resemble those found in English phrasal verbs such as *up*, which denotes direction in *pick up* and completion in *eat up*. Consider (3)–(5) below.

- (3) 佢拎起本書。  
*Keoi5 ling1 hei2 bun2 syu1.*  
 s/he pick *hei2* CL book  
 ‘S/he picked up the book.’
- (4) 我諗起佢個名。  
*Ngo5 nam2 hei2 keoi5 go3 meng2.*  
 I think *hei2* s/he CL name  
 ‘I recalled his name.’
- (5) 我寫起份報告。  
*Ngo5 se2 hei2 fan6 bou3gou3.*  
 I write *hei2* CL report  
 ‘I wrote up the report.’

In (3)–(5), the function of *hei2* is very similar to that of *up* in English.<sup>34</sup> While *hei2* in (3) denotes the directional movement ‘up’, the meanings it expresses in (4) and (5) are not clearly directional, implying ‘recall’ in (4) and ‘completion’ in (5). As seen in here, originating from the directional meaning ‘up’, *hei2* has been grammaticalized to give other non-directional, idiosyncratic meanings.

In traditional Chinese grammar, *hei2* in (3)–(5) is always assigned the function ‘complement’ as it supplements the information of the preceding verb (see discussion in Kwok 1971: ch. 6; Zhu 1982: Ch. 9; Cheung 2007: Ch. 3). In (3) and (4), *hei2* is considered a ‘directional complement’, indicating a physical/concrete upward movement in (3), and a more abstract kind of upward movement in (4). However in (5), *hei2* is often treated as a ‘resultative complement’, denoting the completion of the report as resulting from the writing. A further piece of evidence suggesting *hei2*’s syntactic status as a complement is that it passes the traditional test

34. Another piece of evidence supporting the status of the items concerned as directional ‘particles’ came from studies of bilingual children. Yip and Matthews (2007) show that the Cantonese constructions that are being investigated here interact systematically with the English verb-particle constructions, further suggesting that labelling the post-verbal directional morpheme as directional ‘particle’ is appropriate. For instance, it is found that bilingual children tend to choose the ‘non-split’ order as in *pick up the phone* following the Cantonese order, whereas monolinguals overwhelmingly prefer *pick the phone up*, as in native English (ibid: 216).

for verb-complement constructions in Chinese – the ability to occur in a potential construction (i.e. with the insertion of potential markers *dak1* ‘able’ or *m4* ‘not’), as exemplified below.

- (3') 佢拎得/唔起本書。  
*Keoi5 ling1 dak1/ m4 hei2 bun2 syu1.*  
 s/he pick able/not *hei2* CL book  
 ‘S/he can/can’t pick up the book.’
- (4') 我諗得/唔起佢個名。  
*Ngo5 nam2 dak1/ m4 hei2 keoi5 go3 meng2.*  
 I think able/not *hei2* s/he CL name  
 ‘I can/can’t recall his name.’
- (5') 我寫得/唔起份報告。  
*Ngo5 se2 dak1/ m4 hei2 fan6 bou3gou3.*  
 I write able/not *hei2* CL report  
 ‘I can/can’t write up the report.’

However, as will be discovered in subsequent chapters, not all post-verbal uses of directional morphemes have this complement function. Consider (6)–(8) below, in which the post-verbal morpheme is not compatible with *dak1* ‘able’ or *m4* ‘not’.

- (6) 我早餐飲(\*得/\*唔)開咖啡。( *hoi1* used as a habitual marker)  
*Ngo5 zou2caan1 jam2 (\*dak1/\*m4) hoi1 gaa3fe1.*  
 I breakfast drink (able/not) *hoi1* coffee  
 ‘\*I can/can’t be used to drinking coffee at breakfast (as a habit).’
- (7) 我做(\*得/\*唔)過文員。( *gwo3* used as an experiential marker)  
*Ngo5 zou6 (\*dak1/\*m4) gwo3 man4jyun4*  
 I do (able/not) *gwo3* clerk  
 ‘\*I can/can’t have worked as a clerk.’
- (8) 你沖(\*得/\*唔)返個涼啦! ( *faan1* used as a positive evaluative marker)  
*Nei5 cung1 (\*dak1/\*m4) faan1 go3 loeng4 laa1!*  
 you wash (able/not) *faan1* CL shower PRT  
 ‘\*You can/can’t go enjoy a shower!’

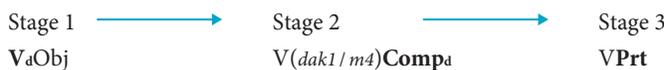
Syntactically, the post-verbal morphemes in (6)–(8) are so closely bound to the host verb that they can no longer be described as ‘complements’. Semantically, these examples do not denote directional meanings of any kind, but various other, more abstract kinds of meaning. These include tense-aspect meanings, as in (6) and (7), and even subjective evaluative meanings, as in (8). Since the present study mainly focuses on the many diverging, idiosyncratic meanings of these post-verbal

directional morphemes away from their original use as directional verbs, the label ‘directional particle’ is considered a more flexible cover term based on semantic and syntactic considerations. As long as the item has its source as a directional verb, it falls within the scope of the present study regardless of its compatibility with the potential construction.

Now, by making clear this terminological choice, the category of linguistic items that this book aims at has become very clear – they are those that originate in directional verbs, but have become grammatical markers of various kinds via grammaticalization. In fact, a directional particle can also ‘function’ as a complement. For instance in (5) above, *zou6-hei2* do-*hei2* ‘finished doing’ is considered a verb-complement construction because the post-verbal morpheme *hei2* is supplementing more information to the verb. It denotes the result (i.e. ‘the completion’) of the corresponding action as suggested by the verb. Judging by its function, *hei2* in *zou6-hei2* is identical to *jyun4* in *zou6-jyun4* do-finish ‘finished doing’; both *hei2* and *jyun4* are labeled ‘resultative complements’ in traditional grammar. However, this treatment overlooks the very fundamental difference between *hei2* and *jyun4*. *Jyun4* is a lexical item which bears in its own right the meaning ‘completion’ while *hei2* is a grammaticalized item indicating the meaning ‘completion’. By treating *hei2* as a directional particle, it has become very clear that it originates as a directional morpheme no matter what its function is. It can be used post-verbally to give concrete directional meanings, to indicate abstract directional meanings, or other derived non-directional grammatical meanings. As will be explored later in this book, *hei2*’s completive meaning is much more restricted than that of *jyun4*. Such differences can only be accounted for if we take into account the origin of *hei2* as a directional verb. This diachronic link would be missed if it is treated in terms of its surface function alone.

The same rationale also applies to the treatment of the post-verbal morphemes in (6)–(8) above. They are often regarded as particles in the literature because they are incompatible with potential constructions and they normally denote idiosyncratic, grammatical meanings which are non-compositional. In this study, they are also treated as ‘directional particles’ because of their origin as directional verbs.

In response to the particle/complement puzzle raised at the beginning of this section, it becomes clearer now why the label ‘directional particle’ is a better justified description. The development of directional verbs from full verbs to particles can be schematized in the chart below.



Originating as full verbs denoting directional movement (Stage 1), directional verbs have undergone grammaticalization, occurring in the post-verbal position to express directional meanings (Stage 2). Directional verbs at this stage are often understood as ‘directional complements’ in traditional grammar since they indicate the direction (either concrete or abstract) of motion denoted by their host verb, and they are compatible with the potential construction. Syntactically, they cannot stand on their own and have become dependent on the main verb. Semantically, however, the meanings expressed are still primarily directional. This stage of having directional verbs in a post-verbal position is very important as it provides the syntactic foundation for these directional morphemes to undergo further grammaticalization. At a later stage, the directional morphemes have become more dependent on the preceding verb (more like an inseparable affix), with a grammaticalized, empty meaning (Stage 3). In most cases they are incompatible with the potential construction (i.e. the insertion of *dak1/m4* is prohibited), having become pure grammatical markers with an increasingly abstract meaning.

### 2.3.2 Complex directional complement

Although the focus of this book is not on complements, the formation of complex directional complements in Cantonese is worthy of a mention. As many previous studies have pointed out, a sequence of up to three directional verbs is allowed to occupy a single slot in the post-verbal position to provide additional information about the direction of the action as denoted by the main verb.<sup>35</sup> In fact, this phenomenon of forming complex directional complements is distinctive to Cantonese. Not all Chinese dialects license a directional verb functioning as a directional complement, let alone a *sequence* of directional verbs, as in Cantonese. For instance, locative directional verbs (i.e. those requiring a locative object as the deictic centre) can be used as a complement in Cantonese and Standard/Beijing Mandarin to introduce a locative NP for the preceding verb, but this is not allowed in Wu dialects (Liu 2008: 63). The Cantonese example (9) and the corresponding Mandarin example (10) below are grammatical, but corresponding examples would be ungrammatical in Wu dialects.

- (9) 佢跳上舞台。  
*Keoi5 tiu3 soeng5 mou5toi4.*  
 s/he jump soeng5 stage  
 ‘He jumped onto the stage.’

35. The potential infix *dak1/m4* ‘able/not’ can be inserted between the main verb and the sequence of directional verbs, if these directional verbs form a complex directional complement occupying a single slot.

- (10) 他跳上舞台。  
*Tā tiào shàng wǔtái.*  
 s/he jump shàng stage  
 'He jumped onto the stage.'

Compared with other Chinese dialects, Cantonese imposes fewer restrictions on its directional verbs functioning as directional complements. As Yiu (2005: 229) suggests, 'the development of the three-directional complement strings seems to be unique to Cantonese as the use of these strings is not reported in other Chinese dialects'. Thus, (11) below is perfect in Cantonese whereas its correspondence in Mandarin is ungrammatical, illustrated in (12).

- (11) 佢行返過嚟。  
*Keoi5 haang4 faan1 gwo3 lai4.*  
 s/he walk return across come  
 'He walked back over to here.'

- (12) \*他走回過來。  
 \**Tā zǒu huí guò lái.*  
 s/he walk return across come  
 'He walked back over to here.'

Cantonese grammar books, in particular, emphasize that the sequence in which the directional verbs combine to form the complex directional complement follows a particular order. Cheung (2007a: 116–125) and Li et al. (1995: 436–441) suggest that in forming complex directional complements (both two/three-directional strings), the last member of the sequence must be either *lai4* 'come' or *heoi3* 'go', and, the first directional verb in a three-directional string must be *faan1* 'return'. As Matthews and Yip also state, 'the last verb in this construction is always *heoi3* 'go' or *lai4* 'come', the choice depending on one's point of reference, much as in English; other verbs cannot be substituted' (2011a: 163–164). As with single directional complements, aspect markers and other grammatical markers must also be used before the sequence of directional verbs that function as a complex directional complement. The directional complement is considered as a unified whole that cannot be interrupted.

The findings so far have revealed an important feature of complex directional complements in Cantonese, namely that the complement constructions share the same VV underlying structure regardless of the number of directional verbs combining together to form a directional complement. This point is better understood if the three cases of forming verb-complement constructions are taken into account.

Case 1: V<sub>main</sub> + V<sub>d</sub> (simple directional complement)

Case 2: V<sub>main</sub> + [V<sub>d</sub> + *lai4/heoi3*] (complex directional complement)

Case 3: V<sub>main</sub> + [*faan1* + V<sub>d</sub> + *lai4/heoi3*] (complex directional complement)

In all three cases, the structures conform to the basic abstract template of VV. The first V is the main verb while the second V represents the directional verb/sequence of directional verbs, functioning as a complement in a post-verbal position to supplement the main verb with directional information. If we look into the internal structure of the complex directional complement in case 2 and case 3, we find that they also share the same underlying structure (i.e. the VV structure). In case 2, the directional verbs *lai4* ‘come’ and *heoi3* ‘go’ (i.e. the second V of the complex directional complement) supplement the preceding directional verb with the deictic centre of the movement (i.e. whether the movement is directed towards or away from the speaker). In case 3, the directional string Vd + *lai4/heoi3* actually forms a complex complement to the preceding verb *faan1* ‘return’, by specifying the deictic centre and the type of directional movement carried out by this ‘return’.

Yiu’s (2005) finding on *faan1* also suggests that the internal structure of the complex directional complement in case 3 is *faan1* + (Vd + *lai4/heoi3*), rather than (*faan1* + Vd) + *lai4/heoi3*. Taking into account some diachronic data, she suggests that the use of a complex directional complement with two directional verbs emerged earlier than a complement string with three directional verbs; the three-directional complements did not appear regularly until the late nineteenth century.<sup>36</sup> In other words, *faan1* is an entity which merges with the complex directional complement in case 2.

The structure of a complex directional complement can then be abstracted as the following formula:

Case 2 + Case 3: Vmain + [*faan1*(Vd(*lai4/heoi3*))]

As noted in previous studies, a series of directional verbs has to follow a particular order when functioning as a complex directional complement. As to why they have to be in such a sequence, Lord remarks that ‘the order of verbs is typically iconic with respect to temporal order. The action, event or state named by the first verb typically precedes that of the second verb insofar as the two are separable pragmatically’ (1993: 237). A similar point has been made in previous works on different languages, that is, that verb serialization is an indication of temporal sequence (e.g. Diller 1993 on Thai; Englebretson 2003 on Indonesian; Lynch 2004 on Anejom; Heine and König 2005 on North Khoisan; among others).

This observation about the ordering of verbs is also true for complex directional complements in Cantonese. As Yiu suggests, ‘when simple directional complements are combined together, they observe a certain ordering rule. It is demonstrated that the principle of temporal sequence governs the ordering of the simple

36. Yiu’s diachronic analysis of *faan1* in Cantonese is based on an examination of fourteen texts compiled between 1828 and 1955. For a detailed discussion of compound directional complements in Cantonese, see Chapter 5 of Yiu (2005).

directional complements in a compound directional complement' (2005: 275). In other words, the syntactic ordering of the directional complements reflects the temporal sequence of the components of a physical movement. Precisely, the sequence 'source-path-goal' is always specified (Yiu 2005: 226). If we consider (11) again, for instance, the ordering of the complex directional complement *faan1gwo3lai4* actually reflects the temporal sequence of the actions which constitute the overall movement denoted by the verb (i.e. the walking). That is to say, when one moves *faan1gwo3lai4* 'back-over-come', the mover first starts in the direction of back to the source (i.e. *faan1*), and moves along a certain path (i.e. *gwo3*), then arrives at a location where the speaker situates (i.e. *lai4*).

Since the meaning given by these complex directional complements (a string of either two/three directional verbs) is largely the combination of the meanings given by their component directional verbs (i.e. their meaning is compositional), complex directional complements will not specifically be investigated further in this book.

### 2.3.3 Directional use and resultative use

When a directional verb functions as a directional complement, it can always be used to specify the direction of the movement denoted by the preceding verb. The theme subject often involves a change of location with respect to the locative object, exemplified in (13)–(14) below.

- (13) 佢行出間房。  
*Keoi5 haang4 ceot1 gaan1 fong2.*  
 s/he walk *ceot1* CL room  
 'He walked out of the room.'

- (14) 佢企開一邊。  
*Keoi5 kei5 hoil jat1 bin1.*  
 s/he stand *hoil* one side  
 'He stood off to one side.'

Besides the directional use, a directional complement is often described as having another use – the resultative use. A directional complement can also specify the resultative state of the theme object as caused by the directional movement it has undergone, illustrated in (15) and (16) below. The theme (i.e. the book/the cup) is in a different location as a result of the directional movement as denoted by the verb (i.e. being taken *out*/moved *away*).

- (15) 擰出本書。  
*Ling1 ceot1 bun2 syu1.*  
 take *ceot1* CL book  
 'Take out the book.'

- (16) 移開隻杯。  
*Ji4 hoi1 zek3 bui1.*  
 move *hoi1* CL cup  
 ‘Move the cup away.’

Both the directional use and the resultative use have been consistently observed throughout the data. The function that a directional complement serves depends on the syntactic environment. That is, whether the subject-object relationship is of a theme-location kind or a causer-causee kind. From a semantic point of view, the directional meaning given by the directional complement is not affected by the environment it appears in. However, it is often the resultative construction which provides the environment for further grammaticalization to take place. In other words, it is often in the environment where the object is the causee that the directional morpheme gets grammaticalized. Consider *ceot1* ‘move out’ in (17)–(20) as an illustration.

- (17) 擰出本書。 = (15)  
*Ling1 ceot1 bun2 syu1.*  
 take *ceot1* CL book  
 ‘Take out the book.’
- (18) 擰出你嘅勇氣。  
*Ling1 ceot1 nei5 ge3 jung5hei3.*  
 take *ceot1* you LP courage  
 ‘Take out your courage.’
- (19) 睇出你嘅陰謀。  
*Tai2 ceot1 nei5 ge3 jam1mau4.*  
 see *ceot1* you LP conspiracy  
 ‘(I can) see your conspiracy.’
- (20) 食出你嘅手勢。  
*Sik6 ceot1 hai6 nei5 ge3 sau2sai3.*  
 eat *ceot1* BE you LP style  
 ‘(I can) taste that it is cooked by you.’

*Ceot1* in (17) is in its resultative use, specifying that the book (i.e. the theme object) is caused to be moved out as a result of taking. The object position in this resultative construction can be filled with different types of object when co-occurring with *ceot1*, indicating that different things are being moved out in an abstract sense. In (18), the thing which is taken out is no longer a concrete object, but an abstract one – the courage. Further in (19) and (20), the objects are not things (no matter concrete or abstract) which can be taken out physically or metaphorically, but something which can be *recognized*, as if they are being taken out from a covered space.

In (19), the theme object refers to an intention and the whole phrase means that the intention is uncovered and recognized. However in (20), it does not mean that *your* cooking style is uncovered, but rather that some unique features of *your* cooking style are recognized so that *I* can tell that the food is in fact made by *you*. As illustrated in (18)–(20), *ceot1* does not denote any physical movement; it has gradually lost its ability to signal directionality and has become a marker with relatively little lexical content. Notice that for (19) and (20) the subject must be ‘I’, echoing the strong tendency ‘nonsubjective’ > ‘subjective’ in grammaticalization and semantic change.

The proposal that the resultative construction provides the context for the grammaticalization of directional particles is also observed in Mandarin. Xu noticed that when the motion verbs *lái* ‘come’ and *qù* ‘go’ in Mandarin function as directional complements, they have more of the verbal properties preserved than when they are in their resultative use. Consider (21) and (22) quoted from Xu (2008: 177).

- (21) 他向車站跑來/去。  
*Tā xiàng chēzhàn pǎo lái/qù.*  
 s/he towards station run *lai/qu*  
 ‘He is running toward the station.’ (with *lái*, the speaker is at the station; with *qù*, the speaker is not at the station)
- (22) 別忘了把錢帶來/去。  
*Bié wàng le bǎ qián dài lai/qu.*  
 not forget PERF BA money carry *lai/qu*  
 ‘Don’t forget to bring the money.’

In (21) it is the subject which moves towards a locative goal, while in (22), it is the object (i.e. ‘money’) which is caused to undergo the movement. Xu suggests that *lái* ‘come’ and *qù* ‘go’ keep more verbal properties when the agent is the theme, while they lose their verbal properties when the patient is the theme moved by an outside force. He adds that when *lái* ‘come’ and *qù* ‘go’ are used in a resultative construction (i.e. the agent is the causer and the patient is the causee), they have lost their ability to give directionality and have become path morphemes. Another piece of evidence supporting their loss of verbal features is their tonality: the tone is full in (21) while it is lost in (22). In other words, the causative use of *lái* ‘come’ and *qù* ‘go’ is more grammaticalized than the directional use, both losing their directional meaning at the semantic level and their tone at the phonetic level.<sup>37</sup>

37. As discussed earlier, Cantonese does not have the distinction between a full tone and a reduced tone. Although there could be subtle phonetic differences between more and less grammaticalized usages in isolating tonal languages, phonetic consideration does not play a crucial role in determining the particle/complement distinction in Cantonese.

Xu's findings on the Mandarin motion verbs *lái* and *qù* echo our proposal on directional particles that the resultative use, rather than the directional use, is a better environment for further grammaticalization to take place. A resultative construction allows some flexibility in the type of object, thus preparing the directional particles to take on more general meanings. In any case, the object is seldom a locative object because it is more static and not affected by the action. Rather, the object is often a kind of theme object which is somehow affected by the movement as denoted by the verb. In the subsequent chapters, the different ways that a directional particle can interact with the host verb and its object to suggest different meanings, will be explored.

### 2.3.4 The verb-particle construction

In this and the next section, we shall shift to explore the morphosyntactic features of the verb-(directional)particle construction in greater detail. In particular, this section clarifies how the verb-particle construction used in this book is understood with respect to other, superficially similar, structures/constructions. These include the serial verb construction and the coverb construction, all of which look alike in appearing to be a surface string of two verbal elements.

#### 2.3.4.1 *The serial verb construction*

In a broad sense, the term 'serial verb construction' is used to refer to constructions comprised of a sequence of two (or more) verbs (or verb phrases) in which there are no overt conjunctions to indicate a coordinate/subordinate relationship between the verbs. Serial verb constructions are especially common in African languages (see Givón 1975; Lord 1989, 1993) and Asian languages (see Li and Thompson 1974, 1981; Bisang 1992), which are consequently often labeled as 'serializing languages'. Verb serialization is especially common in isolating languages as a response to the dearth of grammatical morphology. As Xu claims, 'the Chinese language has always been a serial verb construction language. Almost all prepositions originated from verbs. Some conjunctions also came from verbs' (2008: 4). Xing has offered a similar view that 'it is safe to assume that all prepositions, aspect markers, and auxiliaries in modern Chinese are derived from verbs' (2003: 27). The point being made here shows why a VV series is particularly important in Chinese – the construction is so pervasive that it is the source of many other constructions.

However, it should be borne in mind that not every VV sequence or multi-verb structure can be regarded as a serial verb construction. Different classificational criteria have been proposed to tease apart these structurally similar constructions.

The recognition of a serial verb construction is often based on a combination of formal and semantic properties. Although it is difficult to formulate a cross-linguistic definition applicable to all languages, scholars seem to agree on several properties of a serial verb construction. The essence is that serial verb constructions should act as a syntactic whole occupying one functional slot in one clause and that the verbs should share their arguments and other grammatical features such as tense/aspect, mood, modality and polarity values. Serial verb constructions are often described to express one event, or simultaneous/consecutive actions which are conceptualized as a single event (cf. Sebba 1987: 86–87; Lord 1993: 1–3; Aikhenvald and Dixon 2006: ch. 1; among others).

Examples (23a) and (24a) below are typical examples of a serial verb construction in Cantonese, where the two events show a relationship of ‘purpose’ in (23a) and one of ‘consecutive action’ in (24a).

- (23) a. 我去餐廳食晏。

Ngo5 *heoi3 caan1teng1 sik6 aan3.*

I go restaurant eat lunch

‘I go to the restaurant and have lunch.’

- (24) a. 我每日朝頭早都刷牙洗面。

Ngo5 *mui5 jat6 ziu1tau4zou2 dou1 caat3 ngaa4 sai2 min6.*

I every day morning also brush teeth wash face

‘Every morning I brush my teeth and wash my face.’

Some simple syntactic tests can show that the multi-verb structures in (23a) and (24a) are not in a simple coordination structure, but constitute serial verb constructions. For instance in (23a), the two verb structures (i.e. *heoi3 caan1teng1* go-restaurant and *sik6 aan3* eat-lunch) must share the same subject. A string with two distinct subjects (one with the first person pronoun and one with the second person) is unacceptable, as illustrated in (23b).

- (23) b. ?我去餐廳你食晏。

?Ngo5 *heoi3 caan1teng1 nei5 sik6 aan3.*

I go restaurant you eat lunch

‘I go to the restaurant; you have your lunch.’

(23b) is not normally acceptable. On occasions where one wants to express *heoi3 caan1teng1* go-restaurant and *sik6 aan3* eat-lunch as two separate events, a sentence final particle, or at least a pause, would be needed. (23c) below is a way to express this idea.

- (23) c. 我去餐廳嘞,你食晏啦。  
 Ngo5 heoi3 caan1teng1 laak3, nei5 sik6 aan3 laa1.  
 I go restaurant PRT you eat lunch PRT  
 ‘I go to the restaurant; you have your lunch.’

Another useful test for a serial verb construction is that grammatical words like adverbs or sentence final particles often have scope over the two verb structures. Consider (24b) below.

- (24) b. 我每日朝頭早都一定刷牙洗面。  
 Ngo5 mui5 jat6 ziu1tau4zou2 dou1 jat1ding6 caat3 ngaa4  
 I every day morning also definitely brush teeth  
 sai2 min6.  
 wash face  
 ‘Every morning I definitely brush my teeth and wash my face.’

In (24b) above, the inserted adverb *jat1ding6* ‘definitely’ has scope over the whole double ‘VO’ phrase *caat3ngaa4 sai2min6* ‘brush-teeth wash-face’, so one probably cannot say something like (24c) below.

- (24) c. <sup>1</sup>我每日朝頭早都一定刷牙洗面,但係其實我唔一定洗面。  
<sup>1</sup>Ngo5 mui5 jat6 ziu1tau4zou2 dou1 jat1ding6 caat3 ngaa4 sai2  
 I every day morning also definitely brush teeth wash  
 min6, daan6hai6 kei4sat6 ngo5 m jat1ding6 sai2 min6.  
 face but actually I not definitely wash face  
 ‘Every morning I definitely brush my teeth and wash my face, but actually I don’t definitely wash my face.’

There are also other simple tests which can help identify a multi-verb structure as a serial verb construction. For instance, topicalization and insertion of aspect markers are also useful tests. In a serial verb construction, it is the whole multi-verb string (not a part of it) which is topicalized, and under the same scope of the aspect marker. These properties are illustrated in the following examples.

- (24) d. 刷牙洗面,我每日朝頭早都一定做。  
 Caat3 ngaa4 sai2 min6, ngo5 mui5 jat6 ziu1tau4zou2 dou1  
 brush teeth wash face I every day morning also  
 jat1ding6 zou6.  
 definitely do  
 ‘Brush my teeth and wash my face, what I’ll definitely do every morning.’
- e. 你刷牙洗面未呀?  
 Nei5 caat3 zo2 ngaa4 sai2 zo2 min6 mei6 aa3?  
 you brush PERF teeth wash PERF face not PRT  
 ‘Have you brushed your teeth and washed your face?’

- e'. 你刷緊牙洗咗面未呀?  
<sup>1</sup>Nei5 caat3 gan2 nɡaa4 sai2 zo2 min6 mei6 aa3?  
 you brush PROG teeth wash PERF face not PRT  
 'Are you brushing your teeth and have you washed your face?'

It is the whole string *caat3nɡaa4 sai2min6* 'brush-teeth wash-face' which is topicalized in (24d), and questioned in (24e). It is ungrammatical for parts of this construction to be used within the scope of distinct aspect markers, as in (24e'). These tests all show that the string *caat3nɡaa4 sai2min6* is a genuine serial verb construction.

#### 2.3.4.2 The coverb construction

After describing the serial verb construction and some of its major features, we now turn to discuss the properties of coverb constructions – another similar construction which is also comprised of two verbal elements in a string.

In Cantonese, the term 'coverb' is referred to as 'a set of transitive verbs that have preposition-like relational meanings and typically occur in serial verb constructions with one or more other verbs' (Matthews 2006: 70–71; see also Francis and Yuasa 2008: 62). In other words, coverb constructions are considered a kind of serial verb construction, with the coverb phrase (i.e. the coverb plus its object) modifying the following verb phrase in the serial construction. Matthews (2006: 71) describes this as an 'asymmetric serial construction'.

Coverbs in Cantonese are grammaticalized from transitive verbs and most have both a prepositional use and a verbal use in the contemporary language; for only a few has the verb use become obsolete. In most cases, coverbs in Cantonese can be regarded as representing both a verb and a homonymous preposition (Ansaldò 1999; Matthews 2006; Francis and Yuasa 2008; Matthews and Yip 2011a). Matthews (2006: 71) gives a table of twelve common coverbs, listing both their verbal and prepositional interpretations. All of them co-exist with their main verb usage in modern Cantonese, with the exception of *tung4* 'with' and *wai6* 'for the sake of', which can only be used as coverbs today. Below are some examples illustrating the prepositional function of coverbs.

- (25) a. 我宜家喺餐廳食緊晏。  
 Ngo5 ji4ɡaa1 hai2 caan1teng1 sik6 gan2 aan3.  
 I now at restaurant eat PROG lunch  
 'I am now having lunch in a restaurant.'
- b. 我宜家喺餐廳。(hai2 used as a main verb)  
 Ngo5 ji4ɡaa1 hai2 caan1teng1.  
 I now at restaurant  
 'I am now in a restaurant.'

- (26) a. 我跟佢寫論文。  
*Ngo5 gan1 keoi5 se2 leon6man2.*  
 I follow s/he write thesis  
 ‘I’m writing my thesis under his direction’
- b. 我跟佢。(gan1 used as a main verb)  
*Ngo5 gan1 keoi5.*  
 I follow s/he  
 ‘(As a student,) I study with him (as my teacher)’
- (27) a. 我同你去圖書館。  
*Ngo5 tung4 nei5 heoi3 tou4syu1gun2.*  
 I with you go library  
 ‘I go to the library with you.’
- b. \*我同你。(tung4 used as a main verb)  
 \**Ngo5 tung4 nei5.*  
 I with you  
 ‘I am with you.’

Examples (25)–(27) demonstrate the use of three coverbs, *hai2* ‘at’, *gan1* ‘follow’, and *tung4* ‘with’, with examples (a) illustrating the prepositional function and examples (b) the main verb use. The coverbs in these examples actually retain the lexical meaning of their verbal counterparts even when they are serving prepositional functions. In a coverb construction, as with a basic serial verb construction, both verb phrases share the same syntactic subject and the action expressed by the verb is interpreted as a semantic whole. The special feature of coverb constructions is what Matthews (2006) describes as the ‘asymmetric relationship’ between the two verb phrases, where the coverb phrase precedes and modifies the main verb phrase, supplying additional information (e.g. location, path, benefactive, and similar notions) about the event denoted by the other verb.

It becomes clear how a serial verb construction and a coverb construction (as subsumed under the same category) are understood in Cantonese. It is important not to confuse these constructions with our verb-(directional)particle construction, which also ‘appears’ on the surface as a VV sequence. As exemplified earlier, the relationship between the host verb and the directional particle in a verb-(directional)particle construction is very close. Unlike in a serial verb construction where the two verbs can take an optional object (i.e. V(O)V(O), as in *heoi3 caan1teng1 sik6 aan3* go-restaurant eat-lunch), a directional particle is bound closely to its preceding verb, prohibiting the intervention of grammatical markers. At later stages of its grammaticalization, a directional particle will lose its properties as a directional verb and become a pure grammatical marker. Thus, a verb-(directional)particle construction is not a genuine VV sequence, even though on the surface it seems to

be made up of a verb and a directional verb. Unlike Mandarin, which can have an object before a directional particle (e.g. *shàng bān qù* up-work-go ‘go to work’); an insertion of an object between a directional particle and its host verb is virtually impossible in Cantonese.

### 2.3.5 Monosyllabic preference

It is shown in the database that nearly all host verbs of directional particles are monosyllabic. This raises the possibility that there might be a morphosyntactic constraint imposed on directional particles, so that they prefer to be attached to verbs which are monosyllabic. Consider (28)–(29) below.

- (28) a. 隻馬成日揀埋啲懸崖邊行。  
*Zek3 maa5 sing4jat6 gaan2 maai4 di1 jyun4ngaai4 bin1 haang4.*  
 CL horse always choose *maai4* CL cliff edge walk  
 ‘The horse always chooses to walk at the cliff edge (which I consider troublesome).’ (HKCanCor)
- b. ?隻馬成日選擇埋啲懸崖邊行。  
 ?*Zek3 maa5 sing4jat6 syun2zaak6 maai4 di1 jyun4ngaai4 bin1 haang4.*  
 CL horse always choose *maai4* CL cliff edge walk  
 ‘The horse always chooses to walk at the cliff edge (which I consider troublesome).’
- (29) a. 個價錢諗落都抵。  
*Go3 gaa3cin4 nam2 lok6 dou1 dai2.*  
 CL price consider *lok6* also worth  
 ‘After some thought, I consider it a good price.’ (HKCanCor)
- b. ?個價錢考慮落都抵。  
 ?*Go3 gaa3cin4 haau2lei6 lok6 dou1 dai2.*  
 CL price consider *lok6* also worth  
 ‘After some thought, I consider it a good price.’

The verbs in (a) and (b) within each pair are synonymous, only differing in whether the verbs are monosyllabic or disyllabic. Originating from directional verbs, both *maai4* and *lok6* have grammaticalized into evaluative markers expressing the speaker’s subjective evaluation.<sup>38</sup> In (28), the particle *maai4* originated from its verb counterpart *maai4* ‘move towards’ and has developed into a pejorative marker, expressing the speaker’s negative evaluation towards a certain situation. In (29),

38. Their pathways of grammaticalization will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

the particle *lok6* grammaticalized from its verb counterpart *lok6* ‘descend’ into a grammatical marker marking the speaker’s subjective conclusion after some deliberate consideration. In both pairs, example (b) is less readily accepted than its corresponding example (a). From a semantic point of view, the verb in (b) does not differ very much from that in (a). Also, the fact that the verbs in example (b) (i.e. *syun2zaak6* ‘choose’ and *haau2leoi6* ‘consider’) can stand on their own without the particle further confirms that the oddness in (b) actually comes from the verb-particle combination. Consider examples (30) and (31) below taken from the contemporary database HKCanCor.

- (30) 好多人都會選擇漫畫喇。  
*Hou2 do1 jan4 dou1 wui5 syun2zaak6 maan6waa2 laa1.*  
 very many person also will choose comic PRT  
 ‘A lot of people will also choose comic books.’ (HKCanCor)
- (31) 除非份工好好,我先會考慮。  
*Ceoi4fei1 fan6 gung1 hou2 hou2, ngo5 sin1 wui5 haau2leoi6.*  
 unless CL job very good I only will consider  
 ‘Unless the job is very good, I will not consider it.’ (HKCanCor)

Examples (30) and (31) are perfectly acceptable in contemporary Cantonese, suggesting that both verbs *syun2zaak6* ‘choose’ and *haau2leoi6* ‘consider’ are fine when used on their own, but are not entirely acceptable when used as hosts for a directional particle. The phenomenon described here is referred to as the ‘monosyllabic requirement’ in Tang (2003), in a discussion of the verbal particle *ngaang6* ‘must’. He suggests that *ngaang6* ‘must’ as a colloquial particle can only attach to monosyllabic verbs. He adds that this constraint is in fact common among Cantonese particles: many of them are also subject to the monosyllabic requirement, including the focus particle *dak1* ‘only’. While Tang judges monosyllabicity as a ‘requirement’ for many colloquial Cantonese particles, he also makes the important observation that ‘if the context is “colloquial” enough, *ngaang6* ‘must’ can be attached to some disyllabic verbs’ (2003: 254). He goes on to explain, ‘as *ngaang6* ‘must’ is a new and colloquial expression in Cantonese, it may be compatible with new and creative loanwords and colloquial native words and hence it can break some sound rules’ (2003: 254). Thus, both (32a) and (32b) below are perfectly good, though *promote* is a verb with two syllables.

- (32) a. 佢升硬。  
*Keoi5 sing1 ngaang6.*  
 s/he rise must  
 ‘He must be promoted.’ (Tang 2003: 254)

- b. 佢 promote 硬。  
*Keoi5 promote ngaang6.*  
 s/he promote must  
 ‘He must be promoted.’

(Tang 2003: 254)

Tang’s observation about colloquialism is indeed very important. It actually suggests that monosyllabicity is not really a ‘requirement’, but more of a ‘preference’. It is the linguistic register which matters more, not the number of syllables. If we go back to look at examples (28) and (29) again, we find that there is another difference between the verbs in a set, namely formality. The particles *maai4* and *lok6* are more compatible with *gaan2* ‘choose’ and *nam2* ‘consider’ because they are colloquial Cantonese verbs. By contrast, the verbs *syun2zaak6* ‘choose’ and *haau2leoi6* ‘consider’ are comparatively more formal as they are calques from Mandarin Chinese. These verbs are often used in situations with a high register, or in the written register; native Cantonese verbs such as *gaan2* and *nam2* are never used in writing standard Chinese.

A relevant finding is reported in Luke and Lau (2008). They have examined a 1,400-word corpus of Cantonese loan words and the study reveals that loan verbs (including adjectives) are far more prone to truncation to a monosyllable. They hypothesize that this is because of the noun-verb asymmetry in the native language and monosyllabic words tend to be more fundamental and basic and are thus preferred by native speakers of Cantonese. Their hypotheses are proved and confirmed by their investigation of a Cantonese translation of the Swadesh word list that more than 90% of the translated verbs are monosyllabic by nature (as opposed to 72% of nouns).<sup>39</sup>

With supportive findings from Tang (2003) and Luke and Lau (2008), it is no surprise that the particles under our current investigation incline to go with monosyllabic verbs. This is particularly true when these particles are at their later stages of grammaticalization, with their meanings becoming more diverse, serving different functions in different grammatical domains. When they have a choice, speakers of Cantonese would prefer the more native, colloquial Cantonese verb over the formal one inherited from Mandarin Chinese. This does not necessarily mean that the more formal verbs are less acceptable in Cantonese (these verbs are perfectly good in Cantonese), it only means that it is less acceptable when they are used *together with* colloquial Cantonese particles, which are *peculiar* to Cantonese.

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39. The Swadesh (1955) list was a list constructed to represent a language’s most basic vocabulary, i.e., words which are the least likely to have been borrowed from another language. It is widely used in linguistic fieldwork to test whether words in different languages are derived from the same historical sources.

The co-occurrence of these more formal verbs and particles with relatively new and colloquial uses might result in a clash in semantics and the linguistic register.

In the HKCanCor, only eight instances are found with a disyllabic verb co-occurring with a grammaticalized directional particle. The verb-particle combinations in these examples are considered acceptable because the disyllabic verbs involved in these examples are either ‘colloquial’ enough (i.e. the point already noticed in Tang 2003), or this is the only choice that the speaker has (i.e. a local, colloquial monosyllabic equivalent does not exist). Consider below some examples.

- (33) 要 promote 返我哋銀行 嗰個形象囉。(faan1 used as a positive evaluative marker)  
*Jiu3 promote faan1 ngo5 dei6 ngan4hong4 go2 go3 jing4zoeng6 lo1.*  
 need promote faan1 I PL bank that CL image PRT  
 ‘We certainly should promote the image of our bank.’ (HKCanCor)
- (34) 我幫襯開嗰間買貓糧嘅。(hoi1 used as an habitual marker)  
*Ngo5 bong1can3 hoi1 go2 gaan1 maai5 maau1 loeng4 ge3.*  
 I patronize hoi1 that CL buy cat food PRT  
 ‘I used to buy the cat food from that shop.’ (HKCanCor)
- (35) 完成埋個比賽啦。(maai4 used as a completive marker)  
*Jyun4sing4 maai4 go3 bei2coi3 laa1.*  
 finish maai4 CL race PRT  
 ‘Finish off the rest of the race.’ (HKCanCor)

Examples (33)–(35) are all good, despite the fact that the host verbs of the particle are all disyllabic in nature. The reason why *promote* can be used in (33) is the same as that we gave for example (32) above, namely the verb and the context are ‘colloquial’ enough. In (34), the disyllabic verb *bong1can3* ‘patronize’ is itself a colloquial verb unique to Cantonese and thus is compatible with the habitual marker *hoi1*. The situation in (35) is the other way round. The verb *jyun4sing4* ‘finish’ is licensed to co-occur with the completive *maai4* simply because the speaker does not have a choice of other colloquial alternatives; a more local, colloquial version of *jyun4sing4* is simply not available. In other words, the verb *jyun4sing4* is considered neutral in terms of formality and can be used in different contexts.

It has become clearer by now that the number of syllables that a verb possesses is not the only factor determining its compatibility with a directional particle. In fact, factors such as speaker’s preference, formality, and availability of a colloquial variant together play a more important role. Disyllabic verbs should not be automatically judged incompatible with colloquial Cantonese particles and rejected out of hand as hosts for directional particles. Although on the surface it appears that Cantonese particles are more compatible with monosyllabic verbs and consequently

are believed to be subject to a ‘monosyllabic requirement’, this is in fact not a ‘requirement’ but a ‘preference’. Apparently colloquial Cantonese particles ‘prefer’ monosyllabic host verbs because colloquial Cantonese verbs tend to be monosyllabic. Most of the grammaticalized uses of Cantonese directional particles are unique to Cantonese, thus it is not surprising to see that these particles are more compatible with informal and colloquial Cantonese verbs, which in most cases are monosyllabic.

A similar observation is also made in other languages. English words with different origins often behave differently when they are used in the phrasal verb construction when expressing similar meanings. For instance, *start* and *commence* are synonymous in the sense of ‘begin’. However, we can say *to start up*, but never *\*to commence up*. This is due to the difference in their origins – *commence* is a borrowed word from French. This is also true for Japanese. Synonymous verbs from a different origin (i.e. whether it is a native Japanese word ‘和語’ or a word from Chinese ‘漢語’) often behave differently. These examples show that synonymous words which do not have the same origin often have an effect on their compatibility with other words. It thus comes with no surprise that Cantonese particles with recent and innovative uses are shown to be more compatible with verbs which have their source in colloquial Cantonese, which are mostly monosyllabic.



## Mechanisms in grammaticalization

### Semantic-pragmatic perspectives

#### 3.1 Introduction

As is often understood, grammaticalization refers to a change from A to B via a stage in which A and B are both present, represented schematically as  $A > (A, B) > B$ , where (A,B) is a stage understood as being involved in a ‘bridging context’ (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 49). Previous studies have often focused on the input and output of grammaticalization, enquiring what A is and then what B is. As Traugott suggests, approaches to semantic change in grammaticalization often focus on ‘cognitive structures, on sources and targets of change’ (Traugott 2003a: 632). More recently, however, considerable effort has been made to investigate the precise ‘pathways’ of such grammaticalization processes. More attention has been paid to the discovery of these ‘arrows’, so as to answer the questions like: (1) *What* processes do these arrows indicate? (2) What motivates these grammaticalization processes (3) *How* do the various changes actually come about? In other words, we are concerned about *what* the bridging contexts are and *how* the meanings shift gradually from A to B. These questions also form a major part of the puzzle that the present study attempts to solve – *clarifying* the mechanisms that are at work along the evolution pathways of the twelve directional particles, and *specifying* their roles in the grammaticalization of these particles.

Yap and Chor (forthcoming) provides a review of some robust and recurrent pathways of grammaticalization in Chinese, among them three types of pathways have been focused on in their study: (i) the indexical pathway, (ii) the nominal pathway, and (iii) the verbal pathway. The indexical pathway refers to how indexicals such as demonstratives and possessive markers can be good sources for the development of grammatical markers (see, for example, Yap and Chor 2016 for the development of *go2di1* ‘that.CL’ construction in Cantonese). The nominal pathway mostly involves the evolution of subjective markers via the nominalization constructions (see, for example, Yap and Grunow-Hårsta 2010 and Yap et al. 2011 for discussion on the nominalization phenomenon in Asian languages). The verb-based sources are by far the most common sources from which grammatical markers, particularly stance markers, develop within the Sinitic language family. A good range of grammaticalized pragmatic markers have been found to have

developed via the serial verb construction, the complement-taking verb construction, and the transfer verb construction (see, for example, Lu and Su 2009 for the Mandarin *V-liao* construction; Lim 2011 and Yap et al. 2014 for the *wǒ juédé* ‘I think’ and (*wǒ*) *kǒngpà* ‘I’m afraid’ constructions respectively; Lord et al. 2002, Matthews et al. 2005, and Chen and Yap forthcoming for discussion on ‘give’ verbs in different Chinese varieties). This book complements these studies by suggesting how, via the verbal pathway, Cantonese directional particles can develop into grammatical markers performing different functions. Particularly, special attention is paid to the kind of discourse-pragmatic functions these markers serve, and the subjective meanings they add to utterances in an interactional context.

Based on the analysis of the twelve Cantonese directional particles, three mechanisms are found to be at work in the grammaticalization pathways of these particles, following this specific order of operation: metaphorical extension > pragmatic enrichment > subjectification. The sequence of mechanisms observed conforms to some general tendencies proposed in the literature, with metaphor always perceived as a fundamental mechanism involved in language change. It allows meaning transfers from a concrete to an abstract domain, so that words with lexical meanings can be used to express non-literal, figurative meanings. Discourse-pragmatic forces like pragmatic enrichment and subjectification are often found to occur at a later stage of grammaticalization, always after metaphorical extension. They are only triggered after the meanings of the particles have become more abstract, pushing the semantic development of these particles further along the typical pathway, from the lexical, objective end, to the grammatical, and finally speaker-oriented end.

### 3.2 Metaphorical extension

En route to developing into subjective pragmatic markers, many of the directional particles also develop into tense-aspect markers via metaphorical extension. As Tang (2015: 76) also remarked, the majority of verbal particles in Cantonese are used to serve aspectual functions. It is also generally accepted in the literature that metaphor is fundamental to semantic change and that it plays an important role in grammaticalization, especially in the early stages (Heine et al. 1991: 151). As cognitive linguists, Lakoff and Johnson have argued that our cognition and hence our language operates metaphorically (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987). One crucial observation is that metaphor is primarily a form of cognitive manipulation rather than purely a ‘figure of speech’; it is not simply used as an ornament to a text. Lakoff and Johnson suggest that ‘metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language, but in thought and action...the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another’

(1980: 5). Metaphor always involves a transfer from concrete domains of human experience (physical objects/motions/states) to more abstract domains of time, mood, emotions, and other relations. In this sense, a metaphor may be understood as ‘a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system’ (Lakoff 1993: 203). As a historical linguist taking a cognitive approach to semantic change, Sweetser also suggests that most changes of lexical meaning to grammatical meaning involve a metaphorical process. She considers meaning to be rooted in human cognitive experience: experience of the cultural, social, mental, and physical worlds (1990: 12). These more fundamental human experiences later form the basis for the understanding of more abstract categories such as time, emotion, or events.

Metaphor has also been described in a number of slightly different ways. From a broader point of view, a metaphorical relation is one based on a perceived analogy, conceptualizing the target domain (typically more abstract) in terms of the original source domain, preserving those aspects of the structural relations which are present in the original meaning (or keeping the same *profile*, in Langacker’s (1987–91) terminology). This working definition is important to the present study because it addresses the fundamentals of metaphor and it helps us understand how meaning change through metaphor actually takes place and why a particular change is metaphor but not other mechanisms. With this definition as the basis, metaphor in the grammaticalization of Cantonese directional particles can be understood as a cognitive transfer from the spatial domain to other domains based on a perceived similarity between the two structures, in which both conceptualizations can be accounted for by the *same* image schema.

The remainder of this section looks at the important role of image schemas and how they are used as a heuristic tool to understand different metaphorical extensions. The reason why metaphor is observed to be the first and most commonly attested mechanism in the grammaticalization of Cantonese directional particles is also attempted. Towards the end, we shall also look at how telicity factors interact with directionality to yield different types of tense-aspect markers (e.g. the experiential *gwo3* and the progressive/continuative *hoi1*).

### 3.2.1 The importance of an image schema

Cross-linguistic evidence has shown that one of the most pervasive metaphorical mappings is from the spatial domain to other domains. There are strong parallels between space and other semantic domains, reflected in the fact that the same expressions often take spatial, temporal, and other, more abstract meanings. Jespersen (1922) remarked on the fact that spatial metaphor is especially pervasive in natural languages. Whorf (1956) also believed that spatial metaphors determine how one conceptualizes abstract domains in language.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have described many different transfers via spatial metaphors. They take the view that our ordinary conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical in nature, and so metaphors are not merely literary devices in the realm of language, but modes of conceptual organization. They posit the existence of basic, abstract cognitive structures called ‘image schemas’, based upon our direct, kinesthetic experience of the world. Lakoff (1987: 283) has put forward what he calls the ‘spatialisation of form’ hypothesis.<sup>40</sup> He suggests that spatial image schemas are important in structuring individual concepts (from whatever domain) in our cognition, as well as our conceptual scheme as a whole. According to Lakoff, image schemas organize what can be perceived and visualized, allowing us to categorize what we perceive. He maintains that ‘image schemas define most of what we commonly mean by the term “structure”’ (Lakoff 1987: 283).

Johnson (1987) also notes that the essence of an image schema is *structure*. He states that there can be no meaning without some form of structure that establishes relationships. He defines an image schema as ‘a recurring dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that give coherence and structure to our experience’ (1987: xiv). In metaphorical mappings, the cognitive schematic structure of the source domain should be preserved consistently with the structure of the target domain. Johnson asserts that image-schematic structures are constantly operating in our perception, our bodily movement through space, and our physical manipulation of objects. He reiterates the point that a metaphorical transfer of meaning requires the formation of an intermediate image schema. Oakley puts forward another analogy which sees image schemas as ‘distillers’. These distilled experiences are ‘what Cognitive Linguistics regards as the basis for organizing knowledge and reasoning about the world’ (Oakley 2007: 215). The image schema is thus proposed by cognitive linguists as an important supporting structure for human thought and language.

Lakoff (1987) has proposed a number of spatial image schemas, including CONTAINER, FORCE, SOURCE-PATH-GOAL, UP-DOWN, FRONT-BACK, among others. These image schemas are used to explain other ideas by highlighting the spatial components which, in Lakoff’s view, the nonspatial concepts have. For instance, the CONTAINER schema is derived from our sense that our body is a container with an inside and an outside; the UP-DOWN schema is used to explain ideas relating to a linear quantity scale, and the FRONT-BACK schema is used to explain ideas relating to a foreground-background structure. The types of schemas

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40. An earlier source of this ‘spatialisation of form’ hypothesis is the localist hypothesis (Gruber 1965). This hypothesis suggests that there are only two basic event types – motion and location. In other words, it is assumed that we conceptualize all events via spatial metaphors.

that Lakoff proposed show how he thinks about the types of mental model of non-spatial domains which have spatial characteristics from the perspective of metaphor.

The notion of ‘image schema’ introduced here is very important in understanding the types of metaphorical transfer that have occurred in the grammaticalization of Cantonese directional particles. For a particular meaning change in the process of grammaticalization, we know that it is metaphor (but not other mechanisms) that is at work if both conceptualizations (concrete and abstract) can be accounted for by the same image schema. Below are some examples of image schemas representing the directional meanings that some of the directional particles express.



The essence of metaphor is that the metaphorical use and the source use share the same image schema. Croft and Cruse (2004: 44) describe image schemas as schematic, but representing the most essential qualities in an exact way. For instance, *lai4* ‘come’ and *heoi3* ‘go’, and *jap6* ‘move into’ and *ceot1* ‘move out’ form two pairs of directional particles in Cantonese. Within each pair, the two members differ in only one aspect, namely whether the movement is directed towards/away from a reference point. The kind of reference (i.e. a person, a location, etc.) in each case might also be different. In the case of *lai4* ‘come’ and *heoi3* ‘go’, the reference location is where the speaker is situated (i.e. the location of the speaker is considered the deictic centre of the movement, represented by the smiley face), while in the case of *jap6* ‘move into’ and *ceot1* ‘move out’, the reference is specified as a three-dimensional space. The image schema of *faan1* has also revealed the most important aspect of its directional meaning – the indication of a movement towards a goal which is *also the source* from which the mover started. Although image schemas are only simple patterns, they represent the most basic features of the source domain. Newly derived meanings via metaphorical extension can always be traced back to the source meaning via the same image schema. For a more in-depth discussion of theoretical issues concerning the nature of image schemas, including this notion’s terminological history and applications to areas of studies in linguistics, see Oakley (2007).

### 3.2.2 Metaphor as the first and most common mechanism

Metaphor is found to be particularly important to the grammaticalization of Cantonese directional particles. It is found to be involved in the evolution of *each* directional particle under investigation. This ubiquity of metaphor reinforces the

basis of the claim that metaphor is pervasive in our everyday life and that our cognition and hence our language operates metaphorically – a claim which many cognitive linguists hold (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Paprotté and Dirven 1985; Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987; Sweetser 1990; among others). Traugott (1982: 248–251) considers many examples of English grammaticalization involve a metaphorical shift from concrete to abstract. Bybee and Pagliuca (1985) argue that metaphor is the primary motivating force in grammaticalization. Sweetser (1988) also maintains that grammaticalization is characterized by metaphorical transfers, in which image-schematic structures are mapped from one domain (a concrete one), onto another domain (an abstract one). As a basic domain of human conceptualization, spatial/directional concepts are thus often an ideal source for metaphorical extensions.

Besides being the most common mechanism in the evolution of Cantonese directional particles, metaphor is also observed to be the first one to operate on these particles. The observation here supports the view that metaphor is fundamental to semantic change and it plays an important role in grammaticalization, especially in the early stages (Heine et al. 1991: 151). This might also suggest that metaphor is more basic when compared with other mechanisms that are also at work in the evolution of these Cantonese particles. As described earlier, metaphor often involves a cognitive transfer from a concrete domain to an abstract domain. Other mechanisms, such as pragmatic enrichment and subjectification, do not require a concrete source and can operate on comparatively more abstract meanings, including meanings which are already grammaticalized. This seems a possible explanation for why metaphor is the first mechanism to operate in the grammaticalization of Cantonese directional particles.

When investigating into the metaphorical transfers involved in this study, it is found that the temporal domain is the most common target domain into which directional meanings develop. This transfer from space to time is often understood as a kind of conceptual metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999; Claudi and Heine 1986; Lakoff 1987; Grady 1997, 1999; Evans 2003). This tendency is so widespread that the use of spatial notions to express temporal notions is attested in all of the fifty languages surveyed by Haspelmath, who emphasizes that ‘human languages again and again express temporal and spatial notions in a similar way’ (1997: 1). He adds that the peculiar relatedness of space and time is so widespread in different languages across the world, that ‘we have to conclude that space and time are linked to each other in human thinking as well’ (ibid: 1). One reason why a space-to-time transfer is powerful might be that, in many cases, time can be ‘spatialized’ readily and be represented as a one-dimensional line. Consider examples (1)–(3) below taken from Haspelmath (1997).

- (1) a. The priest stood **before** the altar. (orientation)<sup>41</sup>  
 b. St. Michael's day is **before** Christmas. (sequence)
- (2) a. Pepito is **going to** the village to help his granny. (movement)  
 b. The rain is **going to** help the farmer. (future)
- (3) a. We are still far from the **end** of the queue. (extreme part)  
 b. You will be tired at the **end** of the day. (last moments)

Findings on Cantonese directional particles also echo this cross-linguistic tendency. Some particles have developed to give temporal meanings, which has resulted in them being called aspect markers in some previous studies.<sup>42</sup> Detailed analyses will be given in the next three chapters. Meanwhile, a few examples in which metaphor is involved are given to illustrate how the 'space > time' transfer works in Cantonese.

Consider the development of *hoi1* 'move away' and *gwo3* 'move across' as ready illustrations. The directional meaning of *hoi1* can be illustrated by the image schema in Diagram 3.1. It denotes a movement directed away from a reference point, which is often the starting point of the movement.



Diagram 3.1 The image schema of *hoi1*

Starting from a directional particle denoting a concrete spatial movement of 'away', as in (4), *hoi1* has developed to mark a more abstract kind of 'away', as illustrated in (5) below. Both movements involve a starting point, and a path which extends from this starting point.

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41. The OED online (2000) suggests that the word *before* appeared in OE and the meaning 'of sequence in time' developed from the meaning 'of sequence in space' around mid 13C. In modern conversational interactions, we often bias the temporal use of *before*, as in (1b), over its spatial use, and we favour the phrase *in front of* over *before* when we want to express the locative, spatial sense. In other words, we prefer using *in front of* to *before* in (1a). This suggests that *in front of* has gradually taken over the locative use of *before* after it was calqued from French in the late 13C, so that *before* can become specialized in giving the temporal meaning. This split/division of labour is a good indication that meanings do not occur in isolation; they are determined in relationship to one another. When two or more words are in competition for the same meaning, each will develop into a direction so that their meanings become specialized and complement one another in the language.

42. The term 'temporal' here is used in a more general sense, which includes not only meanings related to temporal relations between events (i.e. 'time'), but also meanings related to the internal structure of events (i.e. 'aspect').

- (4) 推開隻大銀碟。  
*Teoi1 hoi1 zek3 daai6 ngan4 dip2.*  
 push *hoi1* CL large silver plate  
 ‘Push away that large silver plate.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (5) 將呢個道理推開講。  
*Zoeng1 nei1 go3 dou6lei5 teoi1 hoi1 gong2.*  
 take this CL principle push *hoi1* talk  
 ‘Take this principle and extend its application to other things.’ (Ball 1894)

Besides these directional meanings of ‘away’ (either concrete or abstract), *hoi1* has acquired the function to mark in the temporal domain the starting point and the path extending from this point in order to express the inception and continuation of a particular event. *Hoi1* being used in this way is commonly described as a marker of ‘continuation’, stressing that the event has started and continued for some time. This *hoi1* is first attested in the 1950s data, illustrated in (6). Here, *hoi1* suggests that the action (i.e. the writing of the letter) had started and continued for a considerable amount of time in the past.

- (6) 你有信俾我,我連寫開俾你個封信都抔埋。  
*Nei5 mou5 seon3 bei2 ngo5, ngo5 lin4 se2 hoi1 bei2 nei5 go2*  
 you no letter give me I even write *hoi1* give you that  
*fung1 seon3 dou1 dam2 maai4.*  
 CL letter also throw also  
 ‘Since you have sent me no letters, I have thrown away the letter which I actually started writing a while ago.’ (Butterfly 1954)

An important point has been illustrated in examples (4)–(6) above. The movements denoted by *hoi1* in these examples can all be represented by the same image schema, indicating a movement directed away from a source or reference point; they are only different actual realizations of the same schema. The object which undergoes the movement denoted by *hoi1* in (4) is a real object (i.e. the silver plate), travelling in a real space; while the object in (5) is a more abstract one (i.e. a principle), being extended to a wider range of applications. In (6), the path marked by the movement is more appropriately considered as a temporal path – an event (i.e. the writing of the letter) started at a certain point of time (i.e. the reference point) which has continued for some time (i.e. the temporal path). Although *hoi1* can be used in different contexts to mean ‘away’, this does not hinder our understanding of it via the same image schema, as illustrated in Diagram 3.1 earlier.

*Gwo3* ‘move across’ is another directional particle which demonstrates a metaphorical transfer from space to time in its development, briefly exemplified in (7)–(8) below.

- (7) 兩邊行過  
*loeng5 bin1 haang4 gwo3*  
 both side walk *gwo3*  
 ‘have walked on both sides’ (Bonney 1853)
- (8) 嚟過好幾勻咯。<sup>43</sup>  
*Lai4 gwo3 hou2 gei2 wan4 lok3.*  
 come *gwo3* good several time PRT  
 ‘He has been here several times.’ (Ball 1883)

Starting off with the more concrete meaning of ‘move across’ in (7), *gwo3* has developed into a marker of experience, expressing the aspectual meaning ‘have V-ed/have experienced V-ing’. In (8), *gwo3* shows that the person has encountered the experience (i.e. coming here) at least one time in the past. It is not difficult to understand why the meaning of experience could have derived from the basic ‘move over’ sense of *gwo3* if we take into account its basic image schema, illustrated in Diagram 3.2.



**Diagram 3.2** The image schema of *gwo3*

When *gwo3* is used in the spatial domain, the reference is always a physical object; it is used to denote a movement going past a physical object. However, when this meaning of ‘move across’ is mapped onto the temporal domain, the movement is no longer across space, but time. Thus, (8) can be understood as a person moving from one point to another on the time axis, going past the event of ‘being here’. The reference is mapped onto an event that the person has encountered in that temporal path. By moving in the temporal domain, the event that the person encountered has become a part of his or her experience. This use of *gwo3* has been labeled the ‘experiential *gwo3*’ in the Cantonese literature because it can be understood as meaning ‘I experienced event E’. In fact, this meaning can be used with inanimate subjects too, in which case *gwo3* can be understood as a general aspectual marker meaning ‘have undergone V-ing’. Consider example (9) below.

- (9) 度們爛過幾次咯。  
*Dou6 mun4 laan6 gwo3 gei2 ci3 lok3.*  
 CL door break *gwo3* several time PRT  
 ‘The door has been broken several times.’

43. The word 好 *hou2* in example (8) is more appropriately considered as an emphatic marker, stressing that it is *more than one* time.

Through metaphorical extension, *gwo3*'s meaning of 'move across' has been extended from the spatial domain to the temporal domain, expressing the aspectual meaning 'have undergone V-ing' (for inanimate subjects) or 'have experienced V-ing' (for animate subjects). As illustrated in (7)–(9), both the spatial meaning and the temporal meaning of *gwo3* can be accounted for by the same image schema. The only difference is that the reference for the temporal movement is no longer a physical object, but a state/event which the subject has encountered in the past.

The transfer from space to time, though considered common cross-linguistically, is not the only kind of metaphorical transfer involved in the development of directional particles. Directional meanings in the spatial domain are also transferred to other domains, giving rise to a number of other metaphorical meanings. The types of target meaning are diverse. Sometimes, it is difficult to be precise about exactly what kind of meaning is expressed in each situation. Consider the development of *hei2* 'raise (something) up' as an illustration.

- (10) 使隻簍挂起佢。  
*Sai2 zek3 lei1 gwaa3 hei2 keoi5.*  
 use CL tray hang *hei2* it  
 'Use a tray to hang it up.' (Bridgeman 1841)
- (11) 我添起工錢你。  
*Ngo5 tim1 hei2 gung1cin4 nei5.*  
 I add *hei2* wage you  
 'I will increase your wages.' (Bonney 1853)
- (12) 或者記起唔定呀。  
*waak6ze2 gei3 hei2 m4 ding6 aa3.*  
 perhaps remember *hei2* not certain PRT  
 'you might perhaps remember (them) again' (Ball 1912)

The meaning of *hei2* in these three examples can all be understood by considering the image schema as illustrated in Diagram 3.3.



Diagram 3.3 The image schema of *hei2*

In (10), *hei2* denotes a physical upward movement, while in (11) and (12), the kind of upward movement is more abstract. In (11), *hei2* is used to mean an 'increase' through the simple orientation metaphor MORE IS UP, while in (12), *hei2* is

more appropriately considered as denoting an abstract upward movement in one's mind – something is brought up (i.e. 'recalled') in the speaker's mind. These uses of *hei2* are considered 'metaphorical extensions' because they can all be understood by the same image schema. However, unlike the cases of *hoi1* and *gwo3* where the meanings are easier to explicate and we can actually label their metaphorical uses as marking 'continuation' or 'experience', it is not so easy to label the function of *hei2* in (12).

Although in some cases it is difficult to tell exactly what 'domain' a particular metaphorical meaning has developed into, or what 'label' could be assigned to a particular metaphorical use for easy reference, this does not hinder our understanding of the various extended meanings. Hence, the importance of metaphor in the early development of Cantonese directional particles cannot be denied. The fact that metaphor operates on more concrete, physical meanings prepares it to be the first and most pervasive mechanism at work in the evolution of Cantonese directional particles, and perhaps in grammaticalization studies generally.

### 3.3 Pragmatic enrichment

After the directional meanings have been generalized via metaphorical extension, some of the directional particles have become the sources for further grammaticalization to take place, developing into grammatical particles with more abstract meanings, performing different discourse-pragmatic, as well as subjective, functions. These new meanings are often induced in particular contexts via the process of pragmatic enrichment – a process which involves the coding of pragmatic implicature, which is essentially associative in nature and occurs in a specific communicative situation.

One important line of recent research has put emphasis on the pragmatic component of grammaticalization, stressing that meaning change in grammaticalization requires *specific contexts* to take place and is largely motivated by language use in real communicative situations (Traugott 1989; Heine et al. 1991; Traugott and König 1991; Hopper and Traugott 2003; Traugott 2010a among others). As has already been observed in numerous studies, a new grammatical function does not arise in all uses of the item concerned, but is often bound to specific linguistic contexts or constructions (e.g. Bybee et al. 1994: 11; Bisang 1998: 20; Heine 2002; Noël 2007). As Heine (1993) remarked, the conceptual shifts in the process of grammaticalization are often due to the particular circumstances giving rise to new grammatical meanings, which are derived from existing meanings through the conventionalization of inferences or conversational implicatures. This overall process is called

context-induced reinterpretation by Heine et al. (1991: Ch. 3) because it is the specific contexts that invite new inferences and ultimately lead to the emergence of grammatical meanings.

Starting from the analysis of context-induced reinterpretation as advanced in Heine et al. (1991), many subsequent studies have discussed the important role of discourse-pragmatic factors in grammaticalization. Many fundamental mechanisms that constitute the process of grammaticalization are found to be cognitive in nature (like metaphor), and sensitive to context. Grammaticalization should not be narrowly seen as the recruitment of lexical material for grammatical function, but should be broadened to ‘the change whereby lexical material in highly constrained pragmatic and morphosyntactic context is assigned functional category status’ (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 81; Traugott 2003a: 645). In this respect, changes involved in grammaticalization do not occur in isolation, but are closely linked with contextual conditions.

Echoing the findings in many previous studies on language change, contextual stimulus is also found to be very important for the kind of semantic reinterpretations taking place in the grammaticalization of directional particles in Cantonese. On most occasions, the appearance of a new grammatical meaning depends crucially on the linguistic context in which the discourse takes place. The issues of how pragmatic enrichment actually operates in grammaticalization, and how the evolution of a grammatical meaning can be context-driven, are explored below.

### 3.3.1 The notion of ‘implicature’

Levinson considers ‘implicature’ as one of the single most important ideas in pragmatics because implicatures help to close the gap between what is literally said and what is actually meant (1983: 97). Unlike many other topics in semantic change and pragmatic studies, ‘implicature’ does not have an extended history. The key ideas go back to the proposals by Grice in the 1970s (Grice 1975, 1978), in which the term ‘implicature’ is used as a general term intended to contrast with terms such as ‘logical implication’, ‘entailment’ and ‘logical consequence’, which are generally used to refer to inferences that are derived solely from logical or semantic content (cf. Levinson 1983: 103). Grice dubs those inferences based on pragmatic content as implicatures, or more properly, conversational implicatures. The information is inferred, rather than literally expressed, in the utterance; the implicature is context-dependent.<sup>44</sup>

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44. Not all implicatures, however, are either logical or conversational; there is another kind of implicature called the ‘conventional implicature’, which will be explored later in this section.

The notion of conversational implicature is closely tied to Grice's maxims and the Cooperative Principle. An implicature is derived from a simple assumption that the speakers are cooperative and are observing his 'maxims of conversation'. Semanticists have been interested in the study of these maxims as they generate inferences *beyond* the semantic content of the sentences uttered. According to Levinson, 'such inferences are, by definition, conversational implicatures' (1983: 103). A typical example of an instance of conversational implicature would be the following, taken from Brown and Levinson (1987: 58).

- A: What is the time?  
 B: The milkman's been here already.

Assuming B is cooperative, his violation of the maxim of Relevance (since B's response does not seem to be relevant to A's question) must mean something to A so that A will be able to deduce the approximate time. Levinson (1983: 107) gave a very detailed description of how the inference is worked out in this particular context, as repeated below.

Assume B's utterance is relevant; if it's relevant then given that A asked a question, B should be providing an answer; the only way one can reconcile the assumption that B is co-operatively answering A's question with the content of B's utterance is to assume that B is not in a position to provide the full information, but thinks that the milkman's coming might provide A with the means of deriving a partial answer. Hence A may infer that B intends to convey that the time is at least after whenever the milkman normally calls.

So far we have been using the term 'implicature' to refer to what Grice designates as conversational implicature (i.e. those calculated on the basis of Grice's maxims). In fact, this notion of conversational implicature is also appealed to in works by Bernd Heine and his associates on grammaticalization and semantic change, which they attribute to inferences which highlight or select in certain contexts particular components of a word sense or lexical concept. The development of many grammatical words is highly context-bound and often arises out of the implicatures in the speaker-hearer communicative situation.

As Kearns also remarked, much of the discussion of implicature in semantic change has been in the context of grammaticalization research (Kearns 2002). Semantic change in grammaticalization has always been seen as involving, in the terminology characterized by Grice, the change from conversational to conventional implicatures (Traugott 1988: 409–11, 1989: 50–51; Traugott and König 1991: 191–92; Hopper and Traugott 2003: 81–83; among others). In other words, it is about how an implicature arising in certain local discourse contexts becomes

‘semanticised’ or ‘conventionalized’, and then is reinterpreted as part of the meaning of the grammaticalized word.<sup>45</sup> Traugott and König (1991: 210–13) propose that implicature is generally understood as a process in which the implicated meaning of an utterance is associated with the literal meaning by being covertly present in the discourse context. It follows from this that if a semantic change is to be attributed to implicature, there must be a stage in which the original meaning and the new meaning are both present in the same context – the ‘bridging context’. This ‘bridging context’ can also be understood as some kind of ‘specialized context’ that allows a specific ambiguity to be found.

Numerous examples of the role of conversational implicature in grammaticalization have been adduced by Traugott, primarily from the history of English. A frequently cited example of such a semantic shift is the change from temporal to causal meaning in the grammaticalization of OE *sibþan* ‘since’ from an adverb meaning ‘from the time that’ to a conjunction meaning ‘because’, which results from the conventionalizing of a conversational implicature of ‘cause’ which arises in certain contexts. Consider the set of examples below as a demonstration (Traugott and König 1991: 194).

- (13) a. I have done quite a bit of writing *since* we last met. (temporal)  
 b. *Since* Susan left him, John has been very miserable. (temporal, causal)  
 c. *Since* you are not coming with me, I will have to go alone. (causal)

As illustrated here, *since* began as a temporal connective meaning ‘after’, as in (13a). However, in a certain context, *since* is employed to express causality together with its temporal meaning, as in (13b). It means ‘*From the time that* Susan left him, John has been very miserable’, and at the same time also implies ‘*It is because* Susan left him, John has been very miserable’. The result that ‘John has been miserable’ is triggered by the cause that ‘Susan left him’; the two clauses must be related in some way for the causality reading to be possible. This stage in which the original meaning and the new meaning are both present is often labeled as the ‘bridging

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45. Some authors would distinguish the sense of a word from the conventional implicature of the word. In this study, a conventionalized implicature would be treated as a new sense of the directional particle if it can stand alone in its own right, without another meaning coexisting with it. In other words, the newly derived meaning no longer depends on the context, constituting an independent grammatical meaning. In fact, there is another view that conventional implicatures should be treated as irrelevant to pragmatics since they are, so to speak, ‘automatic’ and unavoidable. As Levinson remarked, ‘conventional implicatures are non-truth-conditional inferences that are *not* derived from superordinate pragmatic principles like the [Gricean] maxims, but are simply attached by convention to particular lexical items’ (1983: 127).

context', considered an important criterion for the emergence of an implicature.<sup>46</sup> When the implicature arising out of the bridging context becomes part of the conventional meaning of the word, the new meaning has been conventionalized (or 'semanticised'). The word becomes truly polysemous with the new sense when it can occur in a linguistic context in which the original meaning of the word would not make sense, as in (13c).

The study of implicature as an important notion in grammaticalization does not make as much reference to principles like the Cooperative Principle or Grice's maxims as the traditional pragmatics literature did. In fact, the focus is more on the conventionalization of the implied meaning in a particular context. That is, the interest is more on finding out how the implicature, being encoded implicitly in the context, can become part of the word's meaning. This is similar to a 'conventional implicature' in the sense that it is about the 'conventionalization' of implicature. However, this implicature in grammaticalization is not understood as an inference deriving from simply observing/violating Grice's maxims, but as an implied meaning which has arisen in a particular context (i.e. the 'bridging context'), coexisting with the original meaning of the word. In order to avoid any potential confusion between the kind of implicature that is understood with respect to Gricean maxims and the one understood in the context of grammaticalization, the label 'pragmatic implicature' is used in the present study, highlighting its nature as being triggered by the pragmatic context.

### 3.3.2 Pragmatic implicature in grammaticalization

The essence of pragmatic implicature centres around an implied meaning arising in a particular linguistic context (i.e. the bridging context) which has become conventionalized and has been reinterpreted as part of the meaning of that item/construction (i.e. the conventionalization of implicature). As Traugott suggested in

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46. Besides 'bridging context', serving as an intermediate stage between the stage where only the source meaning is possible and the stage where the target meaning is conventionalized and interpreted as a new sense independent of context, Heine (2002) introduced a further stage which he refers to as a 'switch context' stage. In other words, he distinguishes four developmental stages along the pathways of grammaticalization (initial stage → bridging context → switch context → conventionalization). In a switch context, only the target meaning is acceptable and the source meaning is ruled out. A 'switch context' stage is distinguished from a 'conventionalization' stage in one major respect – target meanings appearing in switch contexts are constrained by a specific context while target meanings in conventionalization contexts are freed from contextual constraints. The analysis in this book will make more reference to 'bridging context' – a stage which is more established in the grammaticalization literature and, as we will see, more relevant to the grammaticalization of the Cantonese particles under investigation.

her 1989 work (and similarly elsewhere in her other works), ‘the process of coding pragmatic implicature is used in the speaker’s attempt to regulate communication with others. [...] Pragmatic strengthening and relevance as I use the terms largely concern strategic negotiation of speaker-hearer interaction and, in that connection, articulation of speaker attitude’ (ibid: 51). Thus, for Traugott and others in the field who follow her view and usage, the coding of ‘pragmatic implicature’ (i.e. ‘pragmatic enrichment’) is not simply a matter of reinterpretation of an implied, context-associated meaning as part of an item’s semantic meaning, but rather a specific process through which a particle has also gained its discourse-pragmatic weight in facilitating the speaker-hearer communication. The role of pragmatic implicature in the grammaticalization of Cantonese directional particles can be illustrated further by looking at examples (14) and (15) below.

Similar to the description of the development of the English *since* illustrated in (13), examples (14) and (15) below show how *hoi1* ‘move away’ and *maai4* ‘move towards’ have gone through the bridging context (i.e. the context in which the old and the newly developed meaning coexist) for a new meaning to emerge. As discussed earlier, *hoi1* has developed from a particle denoting a movement directed away from a reference point, into a temporal marker of ‘inception and continuation’ via the process of metaphorical extension, exemplified in (14a) below.

- (14) a. 你有信俾我,我連寫開俾你嗰封信都抆埋。( *hoi1* – inceptive & continuous)  
 =(6) *Nei5 mou5 seon3 bei2 ngo5, ngo5 lin4 se2 hoi1 bei2 nei5*  
 you no letter give me I even write *hoi1* give you  
*go2 fung1 seon3 dou1 dam2 maai4.*  
 that CL letter also throw as-well  
 ‘Since you have sent me no letters, I have thrown away the letter which I actually started writing a while ago.’ (Butterfly 1954)

In a suitable context, this meaning of ‘continuation’ has been reinterpreted as ‘habitual’, illustrated in (14b)–(14c) below.

- (14) b. 我郊外仲打理開個病人。( *hoi1* – inceptive & continuous, habitual)  
*Ngo5 gaau1 ngoi6 zung6 daa2 lei5 hoi1 go3 beng6 jan4.*  
 I countryside still look-after *hoi1* CL patient  
 ‘I have a patient waiting in the countryside whom I have been looking after for some while (so that I can’t stay any longer).’ (Woman 1955)
- c. 我啲貓食開個隻牌子。( *hoi1* – habitual)  
*Ngo5 dil maau1 sik6 hoi1 go2 zek3 paai4 zi2.*  
 I CL cat eat *hoi1* that CL brand  
 ‘My cats are used to eating that brand (of cat food).’ (HKCanCor)

Similarly to its use in (14a), the use of *hoi1* in (14b) suggests that the action had started and continued for a considerable amount of time in the past. However, unlike ‘writing a letter’, ‘looking after a patient’ for a period of time will naturally consist of more than a single visit. The use of *hoi1* in contexts like this would have an implied habitual reading. It is assumed that an action performed consistently and repeatedly in the past would become a habit. This context is understood as the ‘bridging context’ as this is the stage in which the original meaning (i.e. continuation) and the new meaning (i.e. habit) are both present. More importantly, it offers the implied meaning a chance to be reinterpreted as part of *hoi1*’s meaning. On occasions where *hoi1* is not used with a single event, but with an action of a certain ‘type’ which has occurred repeatedly in the past, the habitual reading has become so salient that it can be considered as reinterpreted as a separate sense associated with the particle, as in (14c). The notion of ‘type’ reinforces the habitual reading that ‘my cats are used to eating *that brand* of cat food, as opposed to *other brands*.’

*Maai4*, the opposite of *hoi1*, is used to denote a movement directed towards a reference point. Via metaphorical extension, *maai4* has developed into an additive marker which corresponds to the meaning ‘also/as well’, as in (15a).<sup>47</sup>

- (15) a. 你搵得好人,帶埋佢嚟。( *maai4* – additive)  
*Nei5 wan2 dak1 hou2 jan4, daai3 maai4 keoi5 lai4.*  
 you find able good person bring *maai4* s/he come  
 ‘If you can get a good chair bearer, bring him along with.’ (Ball 1912)

The particle *maai4* in (15a) suggests something like ‘*in addition to* just yourself coming, bring the person along *as well*’. In a suitable context, *maai4* as an additive marker has been reinterpreted as a completive marker, exemplified in (15b)–(15c) below.

- (15) b. 重有呀,我講埋你聽。( *maai4* – additive, completive)  
*Zung6 jau5 aa3, ngo5 gong2 maai4 nei5 teng1.*  
 still have PRT I speak *maai4* you listen  
 ‘There are more. Wait and I will tell you the rest.’ (Ball 1912)
- c. 先生講埋啦。( *maai4* – completive)  
*Sin1saang1 gong2 maai4 laa1.*  
 sir speak *maai4* PRT  
 ‘Finish what you have to say, sir.’ (Ball 1912)

The particle *maai4* in (15b) can be seen as an additive marker because the whole utterance means something like ‘*in addition to* what I have told you, there is more to come’. However, besides the ‘additive’ meaning, the utterance also bears an implied

47. The development ‘direction > addition’ will be elaborated in Chapter 6.

‘completive’ meaning. Although *maai4* here does not bear the meaning ‘finish’ on its own, the fact that this part of the conversation, which is about to come, is also the last part of the conversation has nevertheless created the ground for *maai4* to be reinterpreted as a completive particle.

When *maai4* occurs frequently enough in this kind of context and the implicature has become more established, the completive meaning is then reinterpreted as one of *maai4*’s senses. In (15c), the completive meaning outweighs the additive meaning and *maai4* is more appropriately interpreted as expressing the meaning ‘completion’, but not ‘addition’.

As reflected in these examples, changes in grammaticalization do not occur in isolation, but are closely linked with different contextual conditions. The essence of pragmatic enrichment (i.e. the encoding of pragmatic implicature) is about how an implied meaning, which is salient and easily called to mind in a certain context, through frequent use, is reinterpreted as part of the particle’s semantics. Pragmatic implicature undoubtedly plays a crucial bridging role in the grammaticalization of many of the directional particles. It bridges the gap between meanings which are comparatively static (as resulting from metaphorical extensions) and meanings which are more dynamic, taking into account the interaction between the speaker and the context.

### 3.4 Subjectification

Subjectification is found to be the last mechanism that operates in the grammaticalization of the twelve Cantonese directional particles under investigation. As has often been pointed out (e.g. Benveniste 1971[1958]; Lyons 1982; Langacker 1985, 1990; Traugott 1995), natural languages should fulfill the fundamental need of speakers to convey and assess their feelings, moods and attitudes. One cannot possibly say or write anything without expressing some aspect of one’s personal beliefs or point of view. Similarly, Stubbs has pointed out, ‘whenever speakers (or writers) say anything, they encode their point of view towards it: whether they think it is a reasonable thing to say, or might be found to be obvious, irrelevant, impolite, or whatever’ (1986: 1). This is exactly what subjectivity is about – ‘the expression of self and the representation of a speaker’s perspective or point of view in discourse – what has been called a speaker’s imprint’ (Finegan 1995: 1).

While subjectivity is pervasive in language use, not all elements in natural languages serve to express it explicitly. In fact, only a subset of elements or constructions is used to mark subjectivity explicitly. Contrasting with syntactic expressions like ‘I think’ or ‘In my opinion’, which overtly express the speaker’s subjective feelings and opinions, most linguistic elements come to express subjectivity through the process of subjectification, understood as ‘the structures and strategies that

languages evolve in the linguistic realization of subjectivity or to the relevant processes of linguistic evolution themselves' (Finegan 1995: 1).

Subjectivity must not be confused with subjectification. As Athanasiadou et al. (2006) rightly pointed out in their book *Subjectification: Various Paths to Subjectivity*, subjectification is the *process* in language change while subjectivity is a pervasive phenomenon, the *goal* of the process; there could be various paths leading to this goal. The discussion below takes a closer look at these two notions, particularly how subjectivity and subjectification are relevant to the theory of grammaticalization. Traugott's line of research on subjectification, focusing on how meanings tend to become increasingly based in the speaker's subjective belief, state or attitude toward what is being said and how it is being said, is adopted. How this framework is understood and fits into the context of the current study is investigated. Some concrete ways to test whether a linguistic element has undergone subjectification and hence is employed to express subjectivity are also presented.

### 3.4.1 Subjectivity and subjectification in grammaticalization

As Lyons remarked, 'Modern Anglo-American linguistics, logic, and philosophy of language has been dominated by the intellectualist prejudice that language is, essentially, if not solely, an instrument for the expression of propositional thought' (1982: 103). However, speakers also need language to express their feelings and attitudes. Subjectification should be treated from a fundamentally heuristic perspective which speakers can make use of to encode, or externalize, their beliefs and attitudes.

Although subjectivity is deeply embedded in language (Bréal (1964[1900])), it did not become a significant topic of research within the community of linguists until Benveniste raised the question whether a language devoid of the expression of subjectivity could still be called 'a language' (1971[1958]: 225).<sup>48</sup> He remarked that 'a language without the expression of a person cannot be imagined' (ibid: 226). As Langacker has also suggested, the speaker is the privileged partner in language change since 'it is speakers who use language creatively' (1977: 107). Moreover, in this view, speakers do not simply possess a language in their mind but rather are seen as active participants in processes of a dynamic language (Croft et al. 1990). Speakers in a discourse must take a perspective and encode their point of view towards what they express and this inevitably involves subjectivity.<sup>49</sup>

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48. This should be limited to natural languages as nowadays we do talk about computer languages, which are in fact constructed languages.

49. The role of hearers is also important in discourse interactions as they are the ones who take on the meanings expressed by the speakers. However, this is seldom studied under the topic 'subjectification'.

Subjectivity has been a central notion in discourse and pragmatic studies as speakers' subjective beliefs and point of view always have an effect in shaping the ongoing discourse. Consequently, subjectification is a vital area in the study of conversation/discourse analysis and language change. As one of the pioneer explorers of subjectivity, Traugott, in her works on semantic and pragmatic change, has repeatedly shown how closely connected subjectification is with grammaticalization. In her analyses, 'subjectification in grammaticalization' is, broadly speaking, understood as a historical process whereby meanings become increasingly based in the speaker's subjective belief state, or attitude toward what is said (Traugott 1989, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2003b, 2010b, among her other works).

Most of Traugott's analyses have attempted to establish general characteristics of grammaticalization, focusing on the semantic-pragmatic aspect. One of her goals is to find out 'the actual types of semantic-pragmatic shifts that occur in the process of grammaticalization' (Traugott 1982: 247). This early work has sowed the seeds for the formulation of various hypotheses about semantic-pragmatic shifts in grammaticalization. One is the proposal of a unidirectional path of semantic change, characterized as 'propositional > (textual >) expressive' (ibid: 257). According to this proposal, some of the original, often relatively concrete, semantic components of a word or phrase may be 'attenuated', or even lost, but abstract pragmatic meanings might be gained in the process. The development of the discourse markers *well*, *right*, and *why* are examples of morphemes moving from propositional to textual to interpersonal meaning (Traugott 1982: 251, 252, 255). Traugott sees this shift as involving an increase in the expression of subjectivity, or speaker's point of view. She considers this shift regular enough to allow predictions to be made about 'paths of change, or constraints on the directionality of semantic change' (Traugott 1989: 33), subsequently refining this framework to yield three major tendencies of semantic change (ibid: 34–35).

- Tendency 1 meanings based in the external described situation > meanings based in the internal (evaluative/perceptual/cognitive) described situations
- Tendency 2 meanings based in the external or internal described situation > meanings based in textual and metalinguistic situation
- Tendency 3 meanings tend to become increasingly based in the speaker's subjective belief state/attitude toward the proposition

The third tendency is the most relevant to subjectification. Subjectification is often viewed as an intrinsically unidirectional phenomenon: a trend towards a higher degree of encoding of the speaker's point of view, not *vice versa*. It is considered a strong tendency in semantic change and is supported by Traugott's subsequent works (Traugott 1995, 1997, 1999, 2003b, 2010b), as well as other studies on subjectification and grammaticalization (see, for example, König 1991;

J. Smith 1993; Carey 1995; Company 1995; Brinton 1996; R. Suzuki 1998). Davidse et al. (2010) comprises a good collection of works on (inter)subjectification and grammaticalization.<sup>50</sup>

In English, there are many examples which show an increase in subjectivity. For instance, Traugott (1989) presents a range of instances of semantic change which she identifies as involving an increase in subjectivity (i.e. ‘speaker-orientation’), including the development of English modals *shall*, *must* and *will*, and speech act verbs like *insist* and *suggest*. She also discusses the development of epistemic meanings for adverbs such as *possibly*, *probably*, *evidently*, *apparently* and *obviously*, which were originally used as adverbs of manner modifying the verb. At first, the epistemic meanings of these adverbs were only weakly subjective. Later, their uses developed as clear expressions of speaker attitude. For example, *apparently* was originally a manner adverb meaning ‘openly, in appearance’. It was then developed into a sentential adverb having properties of weak epistemicity (‘to all appearances’), and only later into a sentential adverb expressing the speaker’s assessment of the validity of the proposition (ibid: 47).

Developing her earlier work on subjectification, Traugott (1995) further illustrates how certain expressions that initially articulate concrete, lexical, and objective meanings have come to serve abstract, pragmatic, interpersonal, speaker-based functions. In this 1995 paper, she has identified eight concrete examples of subjectification in English grammaticalization, suggesting that all of them originated in a form with nonsubjective meaning. This supports the direction of semantic change from nonsubjective to subjective. The development of *let us*, as exemplified in (16) and (17), will illustrate the point.

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50. Traugott in her 2003 work introduced the notion of intersubjectification, which parallels her notion of subjectification. While subjectification is more centred on the speakers, intersubjectification cares more about the addressees. Intersubjectification concerns ‘the explicit expression of the speaker/writer’s attention to the “self” of addressee/reader in both an epistemic sense (paying attention to their presumed attitudes to the content of what is said), and in a more social sense (paying attention to their “face” or “image needs” associated with social stance and identity)’ (2003b: 128). In other words, moving from subjectification to intersubjectification involves a shift from paying attention to the ‘self’ of the speaker to caring about the ‘self’ of the addressee, and intersubjectification involves the production of addressee-oriented meanings. Traugott (2010b) provides a very good reassessment of the notions (inter)subjectivity and (inter)subjectification as advanced in Traugott’s previous works. Davidse et al. (2010) have included other works on intersubjectification that are also worthy of our attention. The mechanism of intersubjectification will not be discussed further in this study as it does not relate very closely to the grammaticalization of Cantonese directional particles (though it will be touched upon in the discussion of *faan1* in Chapter 6, as the grammaticalization of *faan1* demonstrates a further shift towards expressing intersubjective, hearer-oriented meanings).

Traugott claims that grammaticalization always involves the strengthening of the expression of speaker involvement. She observes that there is a shift of perspectives from objective to subjective in (16)–(17) below, taking the speaker’s perspective into more account.

(16) Let us go, (will you?)

(17) Let’s go, (shall we?)

In (16), the subject of *let* is *you* while the subject of *go* is *us* (not including *you*). However in (17), the subject of *let* and *go* has been extended to include *both* the speaker and the hearer. In other words, the speaker has included himself as part of the subject giving permission and thus (17) is considered more subjective. Also, the speech act has changed from a request directed to the hearer to a suggestion involving both the speaker and the hearer. Traugott claims that only the structure *let us go* appeared in Old English, with no attested examples of the precursor of modern *let’s go*. The phrase *let’s go* only started to appear in Middle English. The development of *let us* to *let’s* is thus consistent with the tendency toward increasing subjectivity.

Besides examples in English, cases of subjectification are also well-documented cross-linguistically. Many of these works have been inspired by Traugott’s framework. They include studies on non-Indo-European languages such as Japanese (Matsumoto 1988; Iwasaki 1993; Onodera 1995; R. Suzuki 1998, 2007; S. Suzuki 1999), Korean (Song 1996; Kim 2005, 2011), as well as Taiwanese Min (Chang 1998). For instance, Onodera (1995) suggests that the Japanese adversative conjunctions *demo* and *dakedo* also follow Traugott’s proposed unidirectional tendency, changing from ideational > textual > expressive, both moving from less to more personal. Both S. Suzuki (1999) and R. Suzuki (2007) have identified that *tte* as a quotative marker has been reanalyzed as a pragmatic marker when occupying a sentence-final position, expressing a wide range of speaker-oriented meanings. Song (1996) has provided evidence in support of Traugott’s proposal by suggesting that the manner function (or expressive function) has developed from the purposive function (or propositional/textual function), on the basis of a detailed comparison between the *-ke* derived manner adverb and the *-ke* marked subordinate clause of purpose in Korean. Works by Kim (2005, 2011) on evidentiality have found that hearsay evidential markers such as *tamye* and *tako* can be used by speakers to express their subjective stance, in particular to negotiate their epistemic footing in an interactional discourse. Turning to Taiwanese Min, Chang (1998) has suggested that the functions of the say verb *kong* has been extended from the propositional domain to the expressive domain at a later stage of grammaticalization, when it serves as an utterance-final particle encoding the speaker’s subjective attitude towards the proposition.

With Shen's (2001) work introducing subjectivity/subjectification into Mandarin Chinese, research from this perspective has started to increase (Y. Zhang 2005; J. Li 2005; Zeng 2005; Lu and Su 2009; Lim 2011; Q. He 2014; among others). However, research in Cantonese from the subjectification perspective is sparse, with only a few studies started to appear in early 2010s (e.g. C. Wong 2010; Chor 2010, 2013; Yap and Chor 2014). By suggesting some general tendencies and pathways involved in the development of speaker-oriented meanings, the present study hopefully can take an initial step in contributing to the study of subjectification in Cantonese.

### 3.4.2 Tests for subjectification in the grammaticalization of Cantonese directional particles

Numerous examples in subjectification studies have been found in support of the tendency that meanings have become more 'speaker-based', or have mostly involved an increase in 'speaker involvement'/'expressing of speaker's attitude' in the course of grammaticalization. Surprisingly, however, little attention has been paid to the interpretation of these terms/phrases, which are on their own rather vague and difficult to quantify. In most previous studies, a linguistic item is said to have undergone subjectification if its meaning has become more 'personal'/'speaker-based'. However, not much has been said about *how* and *why* the meaning has become more personal. Whether a certain meaning is considered objective or subjective is on a relative basis; it is insufficient to rely only on a native speaker's personal judgment on whether a linguistic item has become 'more subjective' or 'more expressive'. What is required are some concrete tests to help demonstrate whether a linguistic item has actually undergone subjectification.

Traugott's treatment of *let us* given above is perhaps a good place to start. She suggested that the involvement of speaker is strengthened in the development of *let us* in *Let us go* > *Let's go*, because the subject of *let* and *go* has been extended to include both the speaker and the hearer. That is to say, the pronoun used in a tag is no longer a second person pronoun, but a first person plural pronoun (i.e. *Let us go, will you?* > *Let's go, shall we?*). This suggests that a pronoun test might be a good way to justify whether a linguistic item has undergone subjectification.

When Cantonese directional particles have undergone subjectification and become expressive particles marking the speaker's subjective judgment, they become incompatible with pronouns other than the first person pronoun. This is because if the particle has been 'subjectified', it cannot be used to announce the judgments or thoughts of 'others'. Consider the directional particle *lok6* 'descend' as an example. In the course of its evaluation, it has developed into a subjective marker encoding the settlement of the speaker's subjective conclusion.

(18) 個價錢諗落都抵。

Go3 gaa3cin4 nam2 lok6 dou1 dai2.

CL price think lok6 also worth

'After some thought, (I think) it is actually a good price.' (HKCanCor)

Example (18) inevitably involves the speaker's subjective assessment of a situation – to arrive at a conclusion that 'the price is actually good' after some deliberate consideration (i.e. the 'thinking' process). Here, *lok6* is essentially a *subjective* marker because it can only be used to announce the *speaker's* conclusion, not *someone else's* conclusion. If the subject has to be expressed explicitly, it must be the first person, but not the second, or third person.

(19) a. 個價錢我諗落都抵。

Go3 gaa3cin4 ngo5 nam2 lok6 dou1 dai2.

CL price I think lok6 also worth

'After some thought, I think it is actually a good price.'

b. ?個價錢佢諗落都抵。

?Go3 gaa3cin4 keoi5 nam2 lok6 dou1 dai2.

CL price s/he think lok6 also worth

'After some thought, he thinks it is actually a good price.'

c. ?個價錢人人諗落都抵。

?Go3 gaa3cin4 jan4 jan4 nam2 lok6 dou1 dai2.

CL price person person think lok6 also worth

'After some thought, everyone thinks it is actually a good price.'

As exemplified in (19a)–(19c), *lok6* is only used to announce the speaker's own evaluation, not that of the other's. In other words, the 'evaluator' is always the speaker. Thus, the pronoun test is practical in justifying the subjectification of a linguistic element in some contexts.

Another useful way to test a particle for subjectification is whether it can be used in a narrative (i.e. in a context where the character is a third person). This can be illustrated with another subjective particle, *faan1* 'move back'. Via subjectification, *faan1* is used to mark a subjective, pleasurable feeling towards a situation, as illustrated in (20).

(20) 沖返個涼。

Cung1 faan1 go3 loeng4.

wash faan1 CL shower

'Let me just enjoy a shower.'

(Gamblers 1974)

In (20), *faan1* is used with a fairly strong subjective colour; it is used to mark the *speaker's* subjective assessment of the act of 'taking a shower' as pleasurable. The evaluation made is based on the speaker's perspective only, not necessarily on any circumstantial factors. Without *faan1*, (20) is absolutely grammatical, with the same propositional content. The particle is solely used to show the speaker's enjoyment of the action concerned. Thus, it would be rather unacceptable to use *faan1* in a narrative context, as in (21) below.

- (21) ?...跟住,佢去沖返個涼...  
 ?... *gan1zyu6, keoi5 heoi3 cung1 faan1 go3 loeng4.*  
 then s/he go wash *faan1* CL shower  
 'After that, he went to enjoy a shower.'

If we want to describe that the person really 'enjoys' taking that shower, we need to make use of other explicit means such as the use of an adjectival. For instance:

- (21') ...跟住,佢去沖個靚涼...  
 ... *gan1zyu6, keoi5 heoi3 cung1 go3 leng3 loeng4.*  
 then s/he go wash CL beautiful shower  
 'After that, he went to take a lovely shower.'

The same thing also applies to the particle *lok6*. It would be expected that it cannot be used in a narrative context and that other structural or lexical means would be needed to express the same function of 'marking conclusion'. For instance, (22a) below is rather unacceptable if used in a narrative. The same idea can only be expressed by explicitly spelling out the meaning of *lok6*. One way of doing this is to make use of the adjective *kok3ding6* 'confirm', as in (22b).

- (22) a. ?個價錢佢諗落都抵。  
 =(19b) ?*Go3 gaa3cin4 keoi5 nam2 lok6 dou1 dai2.*  
 CL price s/he think *lok6* also worth  
 'After some thought, he concluded it was actually a good price.'  
 b. 諗咗一陣,佢確定個價錢都抵。  
*Nam2 zo2 jat1 zan6, keoi5 kok3ding6 go3 gaa3cin4 dou1 dai2.*  
 think PERF one while s/he confirm CL price also worth  
 'After some thought, he confirmed that it was actually a good price.'

The pronoun test and the narrative test are handy and useful ways to verify whether subjectification has taken place. When a particle is said to have undergone subjectification in grammaticalization, its meaning would have become 'more subjective' in the sense that it always goes with a first person subject and it can seldom be used in a narrative context. When a particle has undergone subjectification, it also means that

this subjective component has been reinterpreted as part of the particle's semantics and the subjective meaning is non-cancellable. Consider example (23) below.

- (23) a. 有時我食完晏會飲杯咖啡。  
*Jau5si4 ngo5 sik6 jyun4 ngaan3 wui5 jam2 bui1 gaa3fe6.*  
 sometimes I eat finish lunch would drink CL coffee  
 'Sometimes I'd have a cup of coffee after my lunch.'
- b. 有時我食完晏會飲返杯咖啡。  
*Jau5si4 ngo5 sik6 jyun4 ngaan3 wui5 jam2 faan1*  
 sometimes I eat finish lunch would drink *faan1*  
*bui1 gaa3fe6.*  
 CL coffee  
 'Sometimes I'd enjoy a cup of coffee after my lunch.'

Both sentences describe what the speaker sometimes does after lunch, which is to have a cup of coffee. They only differ in the presence/absence of the particle *faan1*. While (23a) suggests the *act* that the speaker does after lunch, the use of *faan1* in (23b) further suggests that this act of drinking coffee is *essentially enjoyable*. Both (23a) and (23b) are compatible with a positive comment.

- (24) 有時我食完晏會飲(返)杯咖啡,我最鍾意嘞。  
*Jau5si4 ngo5 sik6 jyun4 ngaan3 wui5 jam2 (faan1) bui1*  
 sometimes I eat finish lunch would drink (*faan1*) CL  
*gaa3fe6. Ngo5 zeoi3 zung1ji3 laak3.*  
 coffee I most like PRT  
 'Sometimes I'd have a cup of coffee after my lunch – this is what I like most.'  
 'Sometimes I'd love a cup of coffee after my lunch – this is what I like most.'

When *faan1* grammaticalized into a subjective marker, its subjective sense of 'good' has become part of the particle's meaning, which is not cancellable. Thus, (23b) cannot be used with a negative comment, although the same sentence is acceptable without *faan1*. See example (25) below.

- (25) 有時我食完晏會飲(?返)杯咖啡,但係我唔算太鍾意。  
*Jau5si4 ngo5 sik6 jyun4 ngaan3 wui5 jam2 (?faan1) bui1*  
 sometimes I eat finish lunch would drink (*faan1*) CL  
*gaa3fe6, daan6hai6 ngo5 m4 syun3 taai3 zung1ji3.*  
 coffee but I not consider very like  
 'Sometimes I'd have a cup of coffee after my lunch – but actually I'm not very fond of it. (without *faan1*)' /  
 '?Sometimes I'd love a cup of coffee after my lunch – but actually I'm not very fond of it. (with *faan1*)'

Examples (23)–(25) demonstrate quite clearly that in the process of subjectification within grammaticalization, we are dealing with a semantic meaning rather than solely a pragmatic inference. In Chapter 6, we will explore more deeply the details of how subjectification is actually involved in the grammaticalization of individual particles.

### 3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has described in some detail the three mechanisms that are found to be consistently at work in the grammaticalization of the twelve Cantonese directional particles. It is also suggested that these mechanisms of change always follow this invariant sequence ‘metaphorical extension > pragmatic enrichment > subjectification’. Metaphorical extension is always the first while discourse-pragmatic forces like pragmatic enrichment and subjectification are found to occur at later stages. Although the fact that this sequence applies to each particle in the present study does not guarantee its cross-linguistic applicability, it has nevertheless provided important insights into the order in which these mechanisms are likely to occur in the grammaticalization of a linguistic item in general.

Metaphorical extension always occurs first because it is more basic than the other two mechanisms. It does not occur at once in a local context, but over a longer period of time to allow the conceptual shift towards the more abstract, cognitive domain. As Pagliuca (1994) suggests, the path to a new polysemy is always towards an increasingly general and abstract reference, never vice versa.

While metaphorical extension is concerned with a ‘macro’ shift cutting across boundaries between two cognitive domains, pragmatic enrichment, understood as the encoding of pragmatic implicature, operates at the ‘micro’ level. Pragmatic enrichment is a process through which a particle might lose semantic weight but at the same time gain pragmatic weight. It can account for small meaning adjustments resulting from a lexical item being used in a particular context, understood as the ‘bridging’ context, in which both the new and the old meanings coexist. Numerous works on grammaticalization have already pointed out that the evolution of grammatical categories is, to a large extent, context-induced. From a discourse-pragmatic perspective, a particle which has been pragmatically enriched has now become more flexible and can be used in a wider range of contexts to facilitate communication and to regulate speaker-hearer negotiation. When this newly induced pragmatic meaning as associated with the particle has become conventionalized through frequent use, it can eventually be reinterpreted as part of the particle’s core semantics, which no longer relies on the specific context for its presence.

After the meanings have become conventionalized, the particles are ready to undergo a further shift towards the subjective end to indicate speaker-oriented meanings – a process labelled ‘subjectification’ in the Traugottian framework. This process plays an important, in fact dominant, role in the latter stages of grammaticalization (Traugott 1982, 1989, 1995; among her other works). Within her framework, Traugott puts forward subjectification as an intrinsically unidirectional phenomenon: a trend towards a higher degree of encoding of the speaker’s point of view, not vice versa. It is a shift from meanings grounded in objectively identifiable extralinguistic situations to meanings grounded in the speaker’s attitude toward or belief about what is said. There is also a very strong unidirectional tendency for subjective markers to further develop intersubjective functions that are hearer-oriented (Traugott 2003b, 2010b). Research in this area has started to gain attention in the past decade, and remains an interesting area that is worthy of further attention.

Undoubtedly there are different pressures on language change, simply because there are different kinds of meaning that language users want to express (e.g. concrete ideas, abstract thoughts, awareness of the hearer’s needs, etc.). Language users thus need to employ different mechanisms in language change so that they have enough linguistic resources to express what they intended to. A clear understanding of the three mechanisms would allow us to make more sense of the role they play in grammaticalization.

The next three chapters form the core of this book – a detailed description of the actual steps that each directional particle has taken along its path of grammaticalization. Each chapter highlights one of the three mechanisms. Chapter 4 discusses those particles which involve only metaphor in their grammaticalization. They are *lai4* ‘come’, *heoi3* ‘go’, *ceot1* ‘move out’, *jap6* ‘move into’, and *dou3* ‘arrive’. Chapter 5 investigates the particles *gwo3* ‘move across’ and *hei2* ‘raise (something) up’ by highlighting the role of pragmatic implicature in their grammaticalization. The remaining particles, namely *soeng5* ‘ascend’, *lok6* ‘descend’, *hoi1* ‘move away’, *maai4* ‘move towards’, and *faan1* ‘return’, are discussed in Chapter 6, where more emphasis is put on the relationship between subjectification and grammaticalization. Individual grammaticalization pathways are spelt out clearly in these three subsequent chapters.

# Metaphor

## The fundamental mechanism

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the grammaticalization of five particles, namely *lai4* ‘come’ and *heoi3* ‘go’, *ceot1* ‘move out’ and *jap6* ‘move into’, and *dou3* ‘arrive’. Four of these particles form two pairs while the fifth lacks a counterpart.<sup>51</sup> Despite the fact that they display different degrees, and different paths of grammaticalization, their developments all involve metaphorical extension, with all the extended meanings being able to be conceptualized in terms of the same shared image schema. The development of *lai4* ‘come’ and *heoi3* ‘go’ is first explored in Section 4.2, followed by the analysis of *ceot1* ‘move out’ and *jap6* ‘move into’ in Section 4.3. The grammaticalization of *dou3* ‘arrive’ is then discussed in Section 4.4. For each particle, both its directional uses and metaphorical uses are discussed.

### 4.2 *Lai4* ‘come’ and *heoi3* ‘go’

As full verbs, both *lai4* and *heoi3* can introduce a locative NP object, illustrated in (1) and (2) below.<sup>52</sup>

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51. Cantonese has expressions like 出出入入 *ceot1 ceot1 jap6 jap6* ‘ins and outs’ and 嚟嚟去去 *lai4 lai4 heoi3 heoi3* ‘comings and goings’, reinforcing their status as directional antonyms.

52. Occasionally the character 來 (the standard Chinese character for ‘come’, pronounced *loi4* in Cantonese) is used instead of the Cantonese character 嚟 *lai4*. This variation is mostly found in texts from earlier periods (Morrison 1828; Bridgman 1841; and Bonney 1853). Morrison (1828) consistently used 來 *loi4* and 嚟 *lai4* interchangeably. For instance, Morrison gave the following two examples to explain how ‘he has come’ can be expressed.

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| (i) 佢來了。                | (ii) 佢嚟囉。              |
| <i>Keoi5 loi4 liu5.</i> | <i>Keoi5 lai4 lo3.</i> |
| s/he <i>loi4</i> PERF   | s/he <i>lai4</i> PRT   |
| ‘He has come.’          | ‘He has come.’         |

This pair of examples shows that, as far as Morrison was concerned, *lai4* and *loi4* can be used interchangeably (i.e. in free variation) without affecting the meaning. The fact that *loi4* goes with the Mandarin perfective marker 了 *liu5*, and *lai4* goes with the Cantonese sentence particle

- (1) 佢去咗學校。  
*Keoi5 heoi3 zo2 hok6haau6.*  
 s/he *heoi3* PERF school  
 ‘He went to school.’
- (2) 佢嚟咗學校。  
*Keoi5 lai4 zo2 hok6haau6.*  
 s/he *lai4* PERF school  
 ‘He came to school.’

However, the directional verbs *lai4* and *heoi3* differ from other directional verbs in one important aspect – they take the location of the speaker as the deictic centre of movement. In this example of ‘going to school’, *hok6haau6* ‘school’ is where the speaker of (2) is located, but where the speaker of (1) is not located. If other directional verbs are substituted for *lai4* and *heoi3* in the above sentences, the orientation of the movement is indicated only with respect to the locative goal (i.e. *hok6haau6* ‘school’); speaker orientation is not encoded. It is because of this special feature, *lai4* and *heoi3* are often distinguished from other directional verbs in previous studies. The two verbs are referred to as ‘verbs of motion’ in Matthews and Yip (2011a), and ‘deictic directional verbs’ (as opposed to ‘locative directional verbs’) in Xu (2008).

Evidence from Mandarin and other Chinese dialects also suggests that verbs of coming/going deserve a status slightly different from that of other directional verbs. In Mandarin Chinese, the directional verbs *lái* and *qù* (counterparts of *lai4* and *heoi3* in Cantonese) can also take a locative NP object. However, this function did not become a regular function of Mandarin deictic directional verbs until a few decades ago, despite the fact that it has long been a basic function of locative directional verbs (i.e. directional verbs taking a locative object, such as *jìn* ‘enter’, *chū* ‘move out’, *shàng* ‘ascend’, etc.) (Xu 2008: 63). The use of deictic directional verbs is even more restricted in Wu dialects. In Wu dialects, only locative directional verbs are licensed to take locative objects, and it is ungrammatical for deictic directional

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囉 *lo3* shows that there is at least some consistency in terms of formality. Turning to Bridgman (1841), the character 嚟 *lai4* is used in nearly all cases, although a few instances of the standard character 來 *loi4* are still found. Again, consistency is observed in examples where 來 *loi4* is used; the terms which go with it are those considered more formal and mostly from Mandarin Chinese. The reason for using 來 *loi4* might be ‘hyper-correction’. That period of time was exactly when the Guangzhou area was the administrative centre and there was a need to interact with the government officials. People might thus prefer to speak more ‘highly’ or ‘correctly’ so as to sound more ‘high-class’. Also, those officials might not be good at Cantonese, so it might be easier for them to stick with terms and structures which were close to Mandarin. In any case, the use of 來 *loi4* and 黎 *lai4* were consistent and they did not appear to show any difference in meaning.

As far as our data is concerned, none of the work published after the mid-nineteenth century uses the character 來 *loi4* consistently. This suggests that the use of the character 嚟 *lai4* had become established in written Cantonese and the development of 嚟 *lai4* > 來 *loi4* is very unlikely.

verbs to do so. In other words, the verbs of coming/going are intransitive in Wu (ibid.: 63).

The essence of *lai4* and *heoi3* is best understood and captured by the image schemas in 4.1 below. The smiley faces represent the most important feature of *lai4* and *heoi3* which differentiates them from other directional verbs, namely the location of the speaker being the deictic centre of the movement.



Diagram 4.1 The image schema of *lai4* and *heoi3*

As we shall see, the fact that *lai4* and *heoi3* in Cantonese make reference to the speaker's location has played a special part in their development into grammatical markers via metaphor. The semantic features of *lai4* and *heoi3* as full verbs would also affect the degrees of grammaticalization when they came to function as particles in the post-verbal position – something that is further explored in the rest of this chapter.

#### 4.2.1 Directional uses

As with its verb counterparts, *lai4* as a directional particle requires the speaker's deictic centre as the goal of motion while *heoi3* can take any location as its goal as long as the speaker is not situated in that place. Both particles imply opposite directions with respect to the speaker (i.e. the deictic reference point).

- (3) 佢話挨晚至擰嚟和。  
*Keoi5 waa6 ngaai1maan1 zi3 ling1 lai4 wo3.*  
 s/he say evening then carry *lai4* PRT  
 'He promised to bring it (here) this evening.' (Bridgman 1841)
- (4) 叫佢翻去嚟。<sup>53</sup>  
*Giu3 keoi5 faan1 heoi3 laa3.*  
 tell s/he back *heoi3* PRT  
 'Tell him to go back.' (Ball 1883)

As observed in these examples, *lai4* and *heoi3* as directional particles can be used with common verbs, such as *ling1* 'carry' in (3), as well as other directional verbs, such as *faan1* 'move back' in (4). Among the common verbs, only a small number of host verbs are found to have co-occurred with *lai4* and *heoi3*. These verbs are mostly

53. The characters 叫 is no longer in use. It equals to the character 叫 in modern Cantonese.

verbs of movement involving a ‘change of location’ from one point to another. For instance, *lai3* is mostly used with verbs such as *daai3* ‘carry’, *cau1* ‘carry’ and *ling1* ‘carry’, while *heoi3* mostly attaches to verbs like *fei1* ‘fly’, *sung3* ‘deliver’, *gei3* ‘send’, *diu1* ‘throw’, *nim1* ‘carry’ and *ceoi1* ‘blow’.

The directional uses of *lai4* and *heoi3* as observed in more contemporary data (i.e. film data and contemporary corpus data) are more or less the same as those found in early Cantonese data. Both particles can be attached to other directional verbs, or verbs which intrinsically involve a shift from one place to another, to indicate the direction of the movement with respect to the location of the speaker.

#### 4.2.2 Metaphorical uses

Besides indicating physical, speaker-oriented movements, both *lai4* and *heoi3* have developed into purposive particles, linking the preceding clause to its purpose. *Lai4* has also evolved into a transfer particle via the process of metaphorical extension. The two functions are exemplified in examples (5) and (6), and example (7), respectively for a quick reference.

- (5) 煮米糊嚟餵仔。  
*Zyu2 mai5wu2 lai4 wai3 zai2.*  
 boil gruel *lai4* feed baby  
 ‘Boil some rice gruel to feed the baby.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (6) 挽弓籃去買送。  
*Waan5 gung1laam2 heoi3 maai5 sung3.*  
 carry market basket *heoi3* buy provision  
 ‘Take the market basket on your arm and go and buy some provisions.’  
 (Bridgman 1841)

Both *lai4* and *heoi3* can be used to express the purpose of the action denoted by the host verb phrase. In (5), *lai4* links the act of boiling the rice gruel to its purpose of feeding the baby, while *heoi3* in (6) links the act of carrying the basket to its purpose of going shopping. Sometimes, the two particles can actually be used interchangeably, without affecting the meaning. The particle *heoi3* can substitute for *lai4* in (5) and the particle *heoi3* in (6) can actually be replaced by *lai4*, with the meanings remain the same in both cases.

In addition to this purposive function, *lai4* is regularly observed in Bridgeman (1841) to function as a transfer particle, which is now obsolete in modern Cantonese. It had developed into a grammatical particle comparable to the preposition *to* in English, as in (7) below. The only feature which differs between the Cantonese *lai4* and the English *to* is that the NP object after *lai4* is restricted to the first person pronoun (i.e. *ngo5* ‘me’). An explanation will be given in detail later in this chapter.

- (7) 拈條頸巾嚟我。

*Nim1 tiu4 geng2 gan1 lai4 ngo5.*

bring CL neck cloth *lai4* me

'Bring me a neckcloth.'

(Bridgman 1841)

Besides the purposive function and the transfer function, *lai4* is used with the perception verb *tai2* 'see' to introduce an evaluation made by the speaker based on the circumstantial evidence, exemplified in (8) below.

- (8) 我哋照咁樣睇嚟, 可知舊社會以金錢結合嘅婚姻, 並不健全。

*Ngo5 dei6 ziu3 gam2joeng2 tai2 lai4, ho2 zi1 gau6 se5wui2*

I PL according such see *lai4* can know old society

*ji5 gam1cin4 git3hap6 ge3 fan1jan1, bing6 bat1 gin6cyun4.*

use money combine LP marriage indeed not healthy

'From our point of view, it looks like that the way of using money to bring together a marriage is indeed not healthy.'

(Blessings 1950)

Matthews and Yip (2011a: 150) consider this usage an idiomatic use linked with the perception verb *tai2*. In other words, *tai2-lai4* is more appropriately considered a fixed expression than a simple verb-particle combination. This *lai4* is not at all productive, but is bound to the verb *tai2* to express an inference based on circumstantial information. The phrase *tai2-lai4* will be explored again in Chapter 6, along with the use of *tai2* with another directional particle – *lok3* 'descend'.

In the discussion below, the actual steps that *lai4* and *heoi3* have taken in their grammaticalization into purposive particles, and the way in which *lai4* is also used as a transfer particle, are examined.

#### 4.2.2.1 *Lai4* 'come' and *heoi3* 'go' used as purposive particles

In Cantonese, *lai4* and *heoi3* can be used to introduce the purpose of an action, as illustrated in (5) and (6) above. In fact, it is also observed in Mandarin that both *lái* 'come' and *qù* 'go' can be used to introduce a purpose. Consider the Mandarin examples (9) and (10) below.

- (9) 我拿張刀來切肉。

*Wǒ ná zhāng dāo lái qiē ròu.*

I bring CL knife *lái* cut meat

'I brought a knife for cutting the meat.'

- (10) 我打電話去買票。

*Wǒ dǎ diànhuà qù mǎi piào.*

I make phone *qù* buy ticket

'I made a call to buy the ticket.'

Using ‘come to’/‘go to’ phrases to express purpose is not only observed in Mandarin, but is also attested in different languages of the world. In fact, the path ‘go to’ > ‘purpose’ is attested in many languages cross-linguistically (see Heine and Kuteva 2002: 163–165). An important question is: how have these verbs of coming/going developed from markers of direction in space, into grammatical markers denoting the purpose for which an action is carried out?

C. Jiang (1998) suggested that *lái* and *qù* in Mandarin can be used to introduce a purpose because they both contain the concept of ‘goal’ (as quoted in Yiu 2005: 125). However, it is also observed that directional verbs like 回 *huí* ‘move back’ in Mandarin and 返 *faan1* ‘move back’ in Cantonese cannot be used to introduce a purpose, despite the fact that they also express a ‘goal’. Examples (11) and (13) are both acceptable in meaning the person took some sweets for eating, but (12) and (14), in which *huí* and *faan1* are used instead, are ungrammatical.

- (11) 佢攞咗啲糖嚟/去食。  
*Keoi5 lo2 zo2 di1 tong2 lai4/heoi3 sik6.*  
 s/he take PERF CL sweet *lai4/heoi3* eat  
 ‘He took some sweets to eat.’
- (12) \*佢攞咗啲糖返食。  
 \**Keoi5 lo2 zo2 di1 tong2 faan1 sik6.*  
 s/he take PERF CL sweet back eat  
 ‘He took back some sweets to eat.’
- (13) 他拿了些糖來/去吃。  
*Tā ná le xiē táng lái/qù chī.*  
 s/he take PERF CL sweet *lái/qù* eat  
 ‘He took some sweets to eat.’
- (14) \*他拿了些糖回吃。  
 \**Tā ná le xiē táng huí chī.*  
 s/he take PERF CL sweet back eat  
 ‘He took back some sweets to eat.’

The inability of *huí* and *faan1* to link an action to its goal or purpose suggests that the possession of a goal-taking feature is not the sole pre-condition for a motion verb to grammaticalize into a purposive marker; another explanation is therefore needed.

Yiu (2005) has also made the observation about *lai4* and *heoi3*’s ability to introduce the purpose of the action denoted by the verb phrase. She suggested that when these particles are seemingly used to link the verb phrase to a purpose phrase, the locative object predicated by the argument structure of the motion verbs should

be seen as deleted (ibid.: 125). In other words, (11) above can be reinterpreted as having the structure of (11') below.

- (11') 佢攞咗啲糖嚟/去(學校)食。  
*Keoi5 lo2 zo2 di1 tong2 lai4/heoi3 (hok6haau6) sik6.*  
 s/he take PERF CL sweet *lai4/heoi3* school eat  
 'He took some sweets (to school) to eat.'

Directional particles in their spatial uses normally require a locative goal as object. What Yiu (2005) suggested is that *lai4* and *heoi3* as purposive particles still take a locative object, but a hidden or understood one. Yiu attributed this special property of *lai4* and *heoi3* to the fact that they have a built-in speaker orientation point which other directional verbs lack (2005: 172).<sup>54</sup> Thus, while the omission of the locative object *hok6haau6* 'school' in (11') is perfectly acceptable, it is ungrammatical to have directional particles other than *lai4* and *heoi3* linked directly to the purpose, with their locative objects omitted. Yiu's argument would predict the ungrammaticality of (12') and (14'), when the objects of *faan1* and *huí* are deleted.

- (12') 佢攞咗啲糖返\*(學校)食。  
*Keoi5 lo2 zo2 di1 tong2 faan1 \*(hok6haau6) sik6.*  
 s/he take PERF CL sweet back school eat  
 'He took back some sweets to school to eat.'
- (14') 他拿了些糖回\*(學校)吃。  
*Tā ná le xiē táng huí \*(xuéxiào) chī.*  
 s/he take PERF CL sweet back school eat  
 'He took back some sweets to school to eat.'

Yiu went on to suggest that when *lai4* and *heoi3* are used to introduce a purpose, they 'no longer convey a deictic meaning and can be used interchangeably without a difference in meaning' (2005: 125). However, this does not seem to be true for all occasions; there are examples in which only *lai4* can be used to introduce the purpose, but not *heoi3*. For instance, both *lai4* and *heoi3* are licensed to be used in (15) to introduce the reason for taking the sweets without affecting the meaning; only *lai4*, but not *heoi3*, can be used in (16) to explain one's reason for eating sweets.<sup>55</sup>

54. Although Yiu's analysis is mainly on Cantonese, we believe this also applies to *lái* 'and *qù* in Mandarin Chinese.

55. This is also true for Mandarin Chinese. In this same context, only *lái* 'come' can be used to explain the reason for eating sweets, but not *qù* 'go'.

- (15) 佢攞咗啲糖嚟/去食。  
 =(11) *Keoi5 lo2 zo2 di1 tong2 lai4/heoi3 sik6.*  
 s/he take PERF CL sweet *lai4/heoi3* eat  
 'He took some sweets to eat.'
- (16) 我食糖嚟/?去減壓。  
*ngo5 sik6 tong2 lai4/?heoi3 gaam2 aat3.*  
 I eat sweet *lai4/heoi3* reduce stress  
 'I eat sweets to reduce stress.'

This difference between *lai4* and *heoi3* as a purposive marker is also reflected in the examples from the database. In (17)–(19) below, only *lai4* is licensed to introduce the purpose of the action as denoted by the verb phrase, but never *heoi3*.

- (17) 你問嚟/\*去做乜呢?  
*Nei5 man6 lai4/\*heoi3 zou6 mat1 ne1?*  
 you ask *lai4/heoi3* do what PRT  
 'What is your purpose in asking?' (Couple 1952)
- (18) 啲錢我用嚟/\*去買晒個堆嘢。  
*Di1 cin2 ngo5 jung6 lai4/\*heoi3 maai5 saai3 go2 deoi1 je5.*  
 CL money I use *lai4/heoi3* buy all that CL thing  
 'I've used all the money to buy those things.' (Fight II 1992)
- (19) 呢招要嚟/\*去識女仔用嘅。  
*Nei1 ziu1 jiu3 lai4/\*heoi3 sik1 nei5zai2 jung6 ge3.*  
 this trick need *lai4/heoi3* know girl use PRT  
 'This trick is needed for getting to know girls.' (HKCanCor)

As far as the early Cantonese data (i.e. the pedagogical texts) is concerned, on all occasions where *lai4* is used as a purposive particle to introduce the purpose, *heoi3* can also be used without affecting the meaning (and vice versa). However, in data from the 1950s and onwards, examples in which only the particle *lai4* can be used to introduce the purposive clause but not *heoi3* started to emerge. However, the interesting observation is, on all occasions where *heoi3* is used as a purposive particle, it can still be replaced by *lai4*, without affecting the sentence's meaning. In other words, *lai4*'s grammatical function of marking the purpose is broader compared to that of *heoi3*. In fact, this is also reflected in examples given in contemporary Cantonese dictionaries.

Among the three Cantonese dictionaries in which the purposive use of *lai4* is mentioned (Rao et al. 1996; Cheng 1997; Bai 1998), only Bai (1998) has *also* mentioned the purposive use of *heoi3*, as illustrated in (20) and (21). In Rao et al. (1996) and Cheng (1997), only *lai4* is treated as having the ability to introduce a purpose.

- (20) 買啲生果嚟食。

*Maai5 di1 saang1gwo2 lai4 sik6.*Buy CL fruit *lai4* eat

Buy some fruits to eat.'

(Bai 1998)

- (21) 佢擔住一擔水去淋菜。
- <sup>56</sup>

*Keoi5 daam1 zyu6 jat1 daam3 seoi2 heoi3 lam4 coi3.*s/he carry DUR one CL water *heoi3* water vegetable

'S/he carries a bucket of water to go out to water the vegetables.' (Bai 1998)

The above lexicographical coverage suggests that the purposive function of *lai4* is more salient than that of *heoi3*. A similar observation is also made in *Hànyǔ dà zìdiǎn* 'The Chinese Character Dictionary' (1995) with respect to Mandarin Chinese.<sup>57</sup> In this dictionary, the function of introducing the purpose of the preceding clause is found only in the entry for *lái*, but never *qù*. This use of *lái* is attested as early as in the eighteenth century, illustrated in (22) and (23) taken from 'The Chinese Character Dictionary'. This is another good clue that *lái* as a purposive marker is more established and it has been used in such a way for a considerable period of time.

- (22) 燉了肉脯子來吃酒。

*Dùn le ròufūzǐ lái chí jiǔ.*stew PERF dried meat *lái* take wine

'Have the dried meat stewed to accompany wine-drinking.'

(Honglou Meng, late 18C)

- (23) 喚起他們來愛國。

*Huàn qǐ tā men lái ài guó.*summon up s/he PL *lái* love country

'To arouse their spirits so they love the motherland.'

(Keai de Zhongguo, 1935)

It appears that a further explanation is needed to justify why *lai4* is a more established purposive marker. The previous account that both *lai4* and *heoi3* have a built-in orientation does not seem to account for why *lai4*'s function as a purposive particle is more salient than that of *heoi3*'s. *Lai4* must possess some other feature(s) which *heoi3* lacks.

As a pair of opposites, both *lai4* and *heoi3* have a built-in orientation. The movement is either towards or away from the deictic centre, which is always the

56. 住 *zyu6* here is considered a durative marker.

57. *Hànyǔ dà zìdiǎn* [The Chinese Character Dictionary]. 1995. Chengdu: Sichuan Cishu Chubanshe; Wuhan: Hubei Cishu Chubanshe.

location of the speaker. They can be used to introduce a purpose in cases like (24) because both allow the omission of the following locative object. However, it seems more acceptable to use *lai4* rather than *heoi3* in (25).

- (24) 佢攞啲糖嚟/去(學校)食。  
 =(11') Keoi5 lo2 zo2 di1 tong2 lai4/heoi3 (hok6haau6) sik6.  
 s/he take PERF CL sweet lai4/heoi3 school eat  
 'He took some sweets (to school) to eat.'
- (25) 我食糖嚟/?去減壓。  
 =(16) ngo5 sik6 tong2 lai4/?heoi3 gaam2 aat3.  
 I eat sweet lai4/heoi3 reduce stress  
 'I eat sweets to reduce stress.'

The ungrammaticality of using *heoi3* in (25) is probably due to one feature of *lai4* which *heoi3* lacks, that is, *lai4* not only specifies the orientation (i.e. towards the speaker), but also the specific goal (i.e. where the speaker is located). The fact that *lai4*'s orientation is with respect to the goal (i.e. where the speaker is situated or 'located') suggests that not only does it have a built-in orientation, but also a built-in goal (whereas *heoi3* only has a built-in orientation, but not a built-in, specific goal). This helps to explain why *heoi3* is not acceptable in (25).

Both *lai4* and *heoi3* have a speaker orientation, and both require a goal and a source. Since both license the omission of the following locative object, they can take a purposive clause on occasions where they can be understood as taking an implicit locative object, as in (24) above, in which case their requirement of having a goal is fulfilled. In (25), however, it is semantically anomalous for either *lai4* or *heoi3* to take a locative object; it does not make any sense to utter (25').

- (25') \*我食糖嚟/去學校減壓。  
 \*Ngo5 sik6 tong2 lai4/heoi3 hok6haau6 gaam2 aat3.  
 I eat sweet lai4/heoi3 school reduce pressure  
 '\*I eat sweets to the school reduce stress.'

On occasions where *lai4* and *heoi3* seem to take a purpose directly, there is actually an understood locative goal. The fact that semantically neither *lai4* nor *heoi3* can take a locative goal should have prevented them from introducing a purposive clause in (25) above. However, the use of *lai4* is still perfect in situations like (25). It possesses a built-in goal to fulfill its need for a goal. It is exactly because of this special property, *lai4* can move a step further in its grammaticalization and become a true grammatical marker of purpose. This point is made clear when we consider example (26) below.

(26) 我嚟學校嚟減壓。

*Ngo5 lai4 hok6haau6 lai4 gaam2 aat3.*

I lai4 school lai4 reduce pressure

‘I came to school to reduce stress.’

In (26), the first *lai4* is the main verb. The fact that the location (i.e. *hok6haau6* ‘school’) is explicitly spelt out suggests that the second *lai4* takes no hidden object and thus is best interpreted as a pure purposive particle, linking the preceding clause and its purpose. As mentioned earlier, while instances of purposive *lai4* in the early Cantonese data can be replaced by *heoi3* (and vice versa), most instances of purposive *lai4* in the contemporary data (i.e. film data and corpus data) cannot be substituted by *heoi3*. This suggests that the use of *lai4* as a purposive particle has been extended to a larger variety of contexts, and has become more established as a grammatical marker of purpose.

#### 4.2.2.2 *Lai4* ‘come’ used as a transfer particle

Besides functioning as a purposive particle, *lai4* is also observed in Bridgeman (1841) to have developed into a transfer particle. This function of *lai4* is comparable to that of the preposition *to* in English, though it has become obsolete in contemporary Cantonese.<sup>58</sup> Consider (27) and (28) from early Cantonese texts.

(27) 拈條頸巾嚟我。

*Nim1 tiu4 geng2 gan1 lai4 ngo5.*

bring CL neck cloth lai4 me

‘Bring me a neckcloth.’

(Bridgman 1841)

(28) 請你遞塊火腿嚟我。

*Cing2 nei5 dai6 faai3 fo2teoi2 lai4 ngo5.*

please you pass CL ham lai4 me

‘May I ask you to help me to pass a slice of that ham?’

(Bridgman 1841)

In modern Cantonese, *lai4* has to be replaced by 俾 *bei2* ‘give’ for (27) and (28) to be grammatical. As a main verb, *bei2* has undergone grammaticalization to become a preposition meaning ‘to’, as illustrated in (29) and (30).<sup>59</sup>

58. Another directional verb, 過 *gwo3* ‘move across’, has exhibited similar behaviour in the early Cantonese data. In both (27) and (28), *lai4* ‘come’ can be replaced by *gwo3* ‘move across’ to express exactly the same meaning, which again is no longer licensed in modern Cantonese. We will return to this point when the analysis of *gwo3* ‘move across’ is presented in Chapter 5.

59. This change is also attested in many languages of the world, such as Thai, Vietnamese, and Khmer (see Heine and Kuteva 2002: 154–155).

- (29) 俾塊火腿我。(bei2 as a verb)  
*Bei2 faai3 fo2teoi2 ngo5.*  
 give CL ham me  
 ‘Give me a slice of ham.’
- (30) 遞塊火腿俾我。(bei2 as a preposition)  
*Dai6 faai3 fo2teoi2 bei2 ngo5.*  
 pass CL ham give me  
 ‘Pass a slice of ham to me.’

One can also utter (31) below, with the purposive *lai4*, to stress that the purpose of passing the slice of ham is to give it to the speaker.<sup>60</sup> However, in any case, *bei2* ‘give’ cannot be left out.

- (31) 遞塊火腿嚟俾我。  
*Dai6 faai3 fo2teoi2 lai4 bei2 ngo5.*  
 pass CL ham *lai4* give me  
 ‘Pass a slice of ham to me.’

It is observed that when *lai4* functions as a transfer particle meaning ‘to’, it is only used with the first person pronoun (i.e. *ngo5* ‘me’), but never *nei5* ‘you’ or *keoi5* ‘s/he’. (i.e. it is always the construction V-NP-*lai4*-*ngo5*). This is easily understood if the intrinsic semantic feature of *lai4* is taken into account – its goal is always the speaker’s location. This construction *lai4*-*ngo5* is found only in Bridgeman (1841), but not other historical texts. The construction found in Ball (1883) is already the same as the one in contemporary Cantonese, as illustrated in (32) and (33) below.

- (32) 擰筆墨嚟俾我。  
*Ling1 bat1 mak6 lai4 bei2 ngo5.*  
 take pen ink *lai4* give me  
 ‘Bring me a pen and ink.’ (Ball 1883)
- (33) 擰張椅俾我。  
*Ling1 zoeng1 ji2 bei2 ngo5.*  
 bring CL chair give me  
 ‘Bring me a chair.’ (Ball 1883)

It might be plausible to suggest that the use of *lai4* in the sense of ‘to’ had vanished by the mid-nineteenth century. It might also be possible that this use of *lai4* is just an idiolect of the speakers that Bridgeman had observed. In any case, this indicates the possibility of using *lai4* as the preposition *to* in that period of time. In fact,

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60. In this case, *lai4* is more appropriately interpreted as a purposive particle to introduce the purpose of an action.

its development is not without motivation; it marks the path of the movement of transfer and has made the goal explicit as the speaker himself.

### 4.3 *Ceot1* ‘move out’ and *jap6* ‘move into’

The directional particles *ceot1* ‘move out’ and *jap6* ‘move into’ form another pair of opposites. As a directional verb, *jap6* is used to denote an entity moving *into* a confined space or restricted area, while *ceot1* is used to express the opposite movement – to move *out of* a confined space or area. Examples (34)–(37) below are taken from early Cantonese texts to illustrate their directional uses.

- (34) 入監  
*jap6 gaam1*  
*jap6* prison  
 ‘to put in prison’ (Morrison 1828)
- (35) 入豬籠  
*jap6 zyu1 lung4*  
*jap6* pig cage  
 ‘go into the pig cage’ (Bonney 1853)
- (36) 佢出街。  
*Keoi5 ceot1 gaai1.*  
 s/he *ceot1* street  
 ‘He goes out street.’ (Morrison 1828)
- (37) 禍從口出。  
*Wo6 cung4 hau2 ceot1.*  
 disaster from mouth *ceot1*  
 ‘Mischievous proceeds from the mouth.’ (Bridgman 1841)

In these examples the theme subject is always moving into or out of a *confined*, three-dimensional space. In other words, this space must be in some sense *bounded*, and capable of *containing the entity* inside of it. The movements which *jap6/ceot1* denote can be understood by considering the following image schema – moving either (1) from a larger, unconfined area, to a smaller, bounded space, or (2) from a narrow space to a more open space.



Diagram 4.2 The image schema of *ceot1* and *jap6*

The rest of this section is devoted to the discussion of the different meanings associated with *jap6* and *ceot1* when they grammaticalize into particles. The directional meanings are first explored (4.3.1), followed by a discussion of their metaphorical meanings (4.3.2).

### 4.3.1 Directional uses

When the verbs *jap6* and *ceot1* grammaticalize into directional particles, they are also capable of denoting movements *into* or *out of* a certain confined space, as illustrated by these examples from early Cantonese.

- (38) 客踏入轎扛內。  
*Haak3 daap6 jap6 giu2 gong1 noi6.*  
 visitor step *jap6* sedan chair pole inside  
 ‘The visitor steps in between the shafts.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (39) 朝頭早熱頭晒得入房唔呀?  
*Ziu1tau4zou2 jit6tau4 saai3 dak1 jap6 fong2 m4 aa3?*  
 morning sun shine able *jap6* room not PRT  
 ‘Can the morning sun shine into the room?’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (40) 客告辭主人送出門外。  
*Haak3 gou3ci4 zyu2jan4 sung3 ceot1 mun4 ngoi6.*  
 guest leave host send *ceot1* door outside  
 ‘When the visitor says he will take leave, the master of the home accompanies him to the outer gate.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (41) 隻牙我必要脫出。  
*Zek3 ngaa4 ngo5 bit1 jiu3 tyut3 ceot1.*  
 CL tooth I must need extract *ceot1*  
 ‘I must extract this tooth.’ (Bonney 1853)

When *jap6* and *ceot1* are attached to action verbs, they denote a movement oriented *into*, as in (38) and (39), or *out of*, as in (40) and (41), a certain physical space. These directional meanings of *jap6* and *ceot1* are still in use in contemporary Cantonese. Compared to *jap6*, the particle *ceot1* seems to have gone farther in its path of grammaticalization. Despite denoting movement out of a physical, or sometimes more abstract, space, *ceot1* is also used to express other meanings. Details are illustrated in the following section.

## 4.3.2 Metaphorical uses

Besides denoting a movement oriented into a physical space, *jap6* can also give a more abstract meaning of ‘moving into’, but with the reference of the movement restricted to something which can be metaphorically understood as a confined space of some kind. Also, these more ‘abstract’ uses of *jap6* are not attested until fairly recently, as reflected in our database.

- (42) 分佈圖我已經set咗入電腦。  
*Fan1bou3 tou4 ngo5 ji5ging1 set zo2 jap6 din6nou5.*  
 distribution graph I already set PERF *jap6* computer  
 ‘I’ve already set the distribution graph into the computer.’ (Cookery 1996)
- (43) 我嘅仔都俾佢哋踢埋入黑社會。  
*Ngo5 ge3 zai2 dou1 bei2 keoi5 dei6 tek3 maai4 jap6 hak1 se5wui2.*  
 I LP son also PASS s/he PL kick also *jap6* black society  
 ‘My son has also been kicked into the triad by them.’ (Cookery 1996)

In (42) and (43), both object NPs (i.e. *din6nou5* ‘computer’ and *hak1se5wui2* ‘triad society’) can be understood as some kind of confined space, considering that *din6nou5* ‘computer’ is a physical object with a three-dimensional boundary and *hak1se5wui2* ‘triad society’ is an organization which always has an association with a ‘closed, semi-secret criminal society’. In any case, the use of *jap6* is fairly transparent.

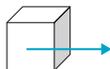
While *jap6* has not gone far along the grammaticalization path and remains a particle denoting only the directional meaning ‘move into’, *ceot1* has developed into a particle giving various senses of ‘moving out’, including the more abstract sense of recognizing something perceived to be salient, standing out against other things in that context. Consider examples (44) and (45) below from early Cantonese texts.

- (44) 寫得出唔寫得呢?  
*Se2 dak1 ceot1 m4 se2 dak1 ne1?*  
 write able *ceot1* not write able PRT  
 ‘Are you able to write them?’<sup>61</sup> (Bridgman 1841)
- (45) 顯出佢嘅權能  
*hin2 ceot1 keoi5 ge3 kyun4nang4*  
 show *ceot1* s/he LP power  
 ‘revealing his power’ (Ball 1894)

61. It might be more appropriate to translate (44) as ‘Are you able to write it out?’ The words that the person is going to write might already be in his brain, but just need to be externalized.

- (46) 揀出好嘅地方  
*gaan2 ceot1 hou2 ge3 dei6fong1*  
 pick *ceot1* good LP place  
 ‘select a good place’ (Ball 1912)
- (47) 講得出個樣?  
*Gong2 dak1 ceot1 go3 joeng2?*  
 say able *ceot1* CL face  
 ‘Can you say what they are like?’ (Ball 1912)

*Ceot1* in (44)–(47) does not denote any physical movement out of a physical space. Rather, it is more appropriately interpreted as expressing the meaning ‘to reveal/show’. In these examples, the use of *ceot1* stresses the appearance or existence of a certain thing that emerges and comes into view. Although the main verbs *se2* ‘write’, *hin2* ‘show’, *gaan2* ‘pick’, and *gong2* ‘say’ in (44)–(47) already express the meaning ‘to produce’ or ‘to bring something into existence’, the use of *ceot1* nevertheless reinforces the manifestation and prominence of that particular object to be revealed. This more abstract use of *ceot1* can also be explained by the image schema seen earlier in Diagram 4.2, repeated below.



When an entity *ceot1* ‘moves out’ from a confined space, it is moving from a covered space to an uncovered area. In other words, it is moving from a place in which it is hidden and unseen or covert, to a place where it is disclosed and overt. This meaning of ‘to show/manifest/display’ is more salient when *ceot1* is used with verbs of perception, which on their own do not involve production or manifestation. Consider below more examples from early Cantonese texts.

- (48) 唔聽得出<sup>62</sup>  
*m4 teng1 dak1 ceot1*  
 not listen able *ceot1*  
 ‘cannot hear distinctly’ (Bonney 1853)
- (49) 你聽得出?  
*Nei5 teng1 dak1 ceot1?*  
 you listen able *ceot1*  
 ‘Do you hear understandingly?’ (Bonney 1853)

62. The word order is different in contemporary Cantonese. Instead of *m4-V-dak1-ceot1* (literally ‘not V able out’), the negative counterpart of *V-dak1-ceot1* in contemporary Cantonese is *V-m4-ceot1* (literally ‘V not out’). It is suspected that (48) represents a genuine language shift as it is attested in other early Cantonese texts (see A. Yue 2004b for details).

(50) 睇得出佢好肚餓。

*Tai2 dak1 ceot1 keoi5 hou2 tou5ngo6*

see able *ceot1* s/he very hungry

‘You can see they were very hungry.’

(Ball 1894)

In (48)–(50), *ceot1* is used with the perception verbs *teng1* and *tai2* to mean that something appears clearly and is made explicit. Here, the cognitive processes of hearing and seeing can also be seen as represented by the path in the image schema above – some features or intentions are uncovered so that they are now heard and seen. That is to say, the phrases ‘see *ceot1*’ and ‘hear *ceot1*’ mean that there is something more salient than other things and it has become perceptible. This is also reflected in the original translation of (48), which describes that something cannot be heard ‘distinctly’. For instance, (48) and (49) can be uttered in the context of listening to an orchestra. Suppose that as a member of the string family, the violin is part of the orchestra. However, the speaker can still utter (48) to show that he cannot differentiate the violin from the rest of the orchestra; he cannot pick out (i.e. ‘hear *ceot1*’) the sound of the violin. In fact, he can utter (49) as a question in reply, or even a rhetorical question, showing his doubt about the possibility of picking out the violin sound. Presupposing its actual existence, this use of *ceot1* tells whether something can be differentiated, or made out as distinct from other things. This function of *ceot1* is also found in the film data, illustrated in (51).

(51) 佢兩個咁似樣，我都分唔出。

*keoi5 leong5 go3 gam3 ci3 joeng2, ngo5 dou1 fan1*

s/he two CL so alike appearance I also differentiate

*m6 ceot1.*

not *ceot1*

‘They look so alike, I cannot differentiate them.’

(Wedding 1954)

While *ceot1* is sometimes found to have shared some similar features with the Cantonese accomplishment particle 倒 *dou2*, they are in fact quite different. Consider the following pair of examples.

(48’) 聽唔出有小提琴聲。

*Teng1 m4 ceot1 jau5 siu2tai4kam4 seng1.*

Hear not *ceot1* have violin sound

‘cannot hear that there is a violin sound’

(48’’) 聽唔倒有小提琴聲。

*Teng1 m4 dou2 jau5 siu2tai4kam4 seng1.*

hear not ACC have violin sound

‘cannot make out whether there is a violin sound’

In (48'), the phrase *teng1 m4 ceot1* suggests that, although it is very likely the sound of violin is present; the speaker just cannot catch it. It might even be the case that the speaker actually sees the violin player playing on the stage. On the other hand, the phrase *teng1 m4 dou2* in (48'') reflects the actual fact that the sound of violin cannot be heard (it may be because there is no violin, or the sound is so low that it can hardly be heard). (48'') can be used to respond to the question *Can you hear if there is any violin sound?* In other words, (48') as a response stresses the speaker's inability to make out a certain feature (in this case the violin sound), while (48'') as a response focuses on the actual existence of a certain feature (in this case whether or not there is the violin sound).

*Ceot1* is not only used with more concrete features like the sound of violin; it can also be used to encode the speaker's perception of something abstract, such as an intention. In fact, quite a few contemporary Cantonese dictionaries have mentioned this use of *ceot1*, describing this sense as revealing or externalizing the object of the lexical verb (Cheng 1997; Bai 1998). Matthews and Yip (2011a) have also talked about the use of *ceot1* with perception verbs, suggesting that when *dak1 ceot1* (literally 'able out') occurs with verbs of perception, the whole phrase denotes 'the ability to "tell" in the sense of recognizing what is perceived' (ibid.: 149). Consider some examples taken from these sources:

(52) 一啲都睇唔出佢會噉。

*Jat1di1 dou1 tai2 m4 ceot1 keoi5 wui3 gam2.*

some also see not *ceot1* s/he will such

'Really cannot tell that he'd do something like that!'

(Cheng 1997)

(53) 你食唔食得出入便有啲乜嘢呀?

*Nei5 sik6 m4 sik6 dak1 ceot1 jap6bin6 jau5 di1 mat1je5 aa3?*

you eat not eat able *ceot1* inside have CL what PRT

'Can you taste what's in this?'

(Matthews and Yip 2011a: 149)

Originally a directional particle meaning to 'move out' from a confined space, *ceot1* has gained a number of more abstract uses in different contexts via metaphorical extension. These manifestations of *ceot1* were already well-established in the mid-nineteenth century, and they are still prevalent in contemporary Cantonese. In other words, the usage of *ceot1* does not appear to have changed for nearly 150 years, despite the fact that it is linked with more types of verbs now. In fact, as reflected in Matthews and Yip's example above, *ceot1* is not restricted to verbs of perception for the meaning of 'recognition', but other verbs (e.g. *sik6* 'eat') as well. As the contemporary data also suggests, *ceot1* can actually be attached to many more verbs to show that the subject is capable of performing a certain action so that something salient or special would be created or come into existence. Further consider examples (54)–(56).

- (54) 只有佢可以打出咁靚嘅牛丸。  
*Zi2jau5 keoi5 ho2ji3 daa2 ceot1 gam3 leng3 ge3*  
 only s/he can beat *ceot1* so good-looking LP  
*ngau4 jyun2.*  
 beef ball  
 ‘Only he can knock up such fantastic meatballs.’ (Cookery 1996)
- (55) 佢可以煮出堪稱火之藝術嘅超級菜式。  
*Keoi5 ho2ji3 zyu2 ceot1 ham1cing1 fo2 zi1 ngai6seot6 ge3*  
 s/he can cook *ceot1* worth call fire POSS art LP  
*ciu1kap1 coi3sik1.*  
 super dish  
 ‘He can cook up this wonderful dish worthy of being called the “art of fire”’  
 (Cookery 1996)
- (56) 劈友,佢做得出嚟真係。<sup>63</sup>  
*Pek3 jau2, keoi5 zou6 dak1 ceot1 gaa3 zan1hai6.*  
 chop people s/he do able *ceot1* PRT really  
 ‘Brawling on the street – he can really do it.’ (HKCanCor)

In (54)–(56), *ceot1* is mainly used to show that something literally ‘emerges’ via the action named by the lexical verb. For instance, the meatballs in (54) and the dish ‘art of fire’ in (55) do not come into existence before the action of *knocking* and *cooking*. In (56), *zou6 dak1 ceot1* (literally ‘do-able-out’) emphasizes that the person is really capable of getting into a brawl (lit. ‘chopping people’).

It has already been found that *ceot1* can be used to denote quite a few kinds of abstract movement. When used with verbs of perception, *ceot1* always stresses the recognition of a particular feature of the object perceived, or the intention. In addition, *ceot1* can also be used with a variety of verbs to show that something salient, or something which stands out against other things in the context, is produced by the accompanying action. It is observed that when *ceot1* is used with action verbs involving an end-result, very often the result is something difficult to produce, or at least perceived as uncommon.

For instance, the object of *zyu2 ceot1* ‘cook *ceot1*’ is always a special dish, or at least something which is not easy to cook. One probably cannot say:

- (57) ?我可以煮出煎蛋。  
*?Ngo5 ho2ji3 zyu2 ceot1 zin1 daan2.*  
 I can cook *ceot1* fry egg  
 ‘I can do fried eggs.’

63. 劈友 *pek3jau2* is a slang expression used especially within triad societies.

However, it is perfect to replace *ceot1* with the accomplishment particle *dou2* in (57).

- (58) 我可以煮倒煎蛋。  
*Ngo5 ho2ji3 zyu2 dou2 zin1 daan2.*  
 I can cook ACC fry egg  
 ‘I can do fried eggs.’

The difference in acceptability between (57) and (58) is probably due to the general perception of the degree of difficulty in doing a dish of fried eggs. The particle *dou2* is a simple accomplishment marker, marking the successful completion of virtually any action. However, *ceot1* does not express the completion of any task, but rather the accomplishment of a task that always stands out against others. It seems more acceptable to use *ceot1* if it is not fried eggs to be cooked, but egg curry, for example. A dish of egg curry is always considered a challenging dish which stands out among other egg dishes. Consider:

- (57') 我可以煮出印度咖哩蛋。  
*Ngo5 ho2ji3 zyu2 ceot1 Jan3dou6 gaa3lei1 daan2.*  
 I can cook *ceot1* Indian curry egg  
 ‘I can do Indian egg curry.’

While fried eggs are considered normal and ordinary, Indian egg curry is comparatively uncommon. By itself, *ceot1* does not indicate whether the action accomplished is good or bad. It can be used with any action as long as it is considered exceptional and requires some effort. Hence, although (57) cannot be uttered under normal circumstances, it is definitely more acceptable if it is uttered by a person with a disability (e.g. with a broken arm) because in this case some effort would be required in order to make an ordinary dish of fried eggs.

#### 4.4 *Dou3* ‘arrive’

The last directional particle to be examined in this chapter is *dou3* ‘arrive’. Originating as a directional verb, *dou3* ‘arrive’ is used to denote the theme’s arrival at a certain location, as in (59)–(60) below. The examples here also show that the locative goal can be either an explicit one, as in (59), or an implicit one, as in (60).

- (59) 自駕三板到澳  
*zi6 gaa3 saam1baan2 dou3 Ngou3*  
 self sail gig *dou3* Macau  
 ‘employing his own gig, and goes to Macau’ (Bridgman 1841)

- (60) 有好風一日得到  
*jau5 hou2 fung1 jat1 jat6 dak1 dou3*  
 have good wind one day able *dou3*  
 ‘with a good wind can arrive in one day’  
 (Bonney 1853)

The kind of movement that *dou3* denotes is best understood in terms of the image schema below.



Diagram 4.3 The image schema of *dou3*

Based on this meaning of ‘arriving at a locative goal’, *dou3* has taken on a number of more abstract meanings in its grammaticalization from a verb to a particle, indicating the arrival at a state, a conversation topic, or even an ‘extreme’.

#### 4.4.1 Directional uses

As a directional particle, *dou3* is used to introduce the locative goal that is reached, or arrived at, via the action named by the main verb.

- (61) 入到二廳堂中。  
*Jap6 dou3 ji6 teng1tong4 zung1.*  
 enter *dou3* two hall middle  
 ‘He went to the middle of the second hall.’  
 (Bridgman 1841)
- (62) 埋到碼頭  
*maai4 dou3 maa5tau4*  
 approach *dou3* wharf  
 ‘come alongside the wharf’  
 (Bonney 1853)
- (63) 行到山墳呀。  
*Haang4 dou3 saan1fan4 aa3.*  
 walk *dou3* grave PRT  
 ‘They came to the grave.’  
 (Ball 1894)

In (61)–(63), *dou3* suggests the theme subject’s arrival at a physical location (i.e. *ji6teng1tong4* ‘second hall’, *maa5tau4* ‘wharf’, and *saan1fan4* ‘grave’). Besides a physical goal, *dou3* as a particle is also used to indicate arrivals involving goals of other kinds, demonstrating a metaphorical mapping of space to other domains.

## 4.4.2 Metaphorical uses

Via metaphorical extension, the particle *dou3* can also be used to show an arrival at goals other than a physical location. Examples of this more abstract use of *dou3* are first attested in one of the early twentieth-century texts.

- (64) 尾線要收到緊致得。  
*Mei5 sin3 jiu3 sau1 dou3 gan2 zi3 dak1.*  
 end thread need draw *dou3* tight extent proper  
 ‘You must fasten the ends of your thread very firmly.’ (Ball 1912)
- (65) 你唔曾講到燕窩。  
*Nei5 m4 cang4 gong2 dou3 jin3wo1.*  
 you not ever say *dou3* birds’ nests  
 ‘You have not spoken of birds’ nests.’ (Ball 1912)

Example (64) suggests the arrival/achievement of a certain state/condition (i.e. the ends being pulled tight) as resulting from the accompanying action of tugging on them, and (65) the arrival at a certain topic (i.e. the topic of ‘birds’ nests’). The function of *dou3* here can be understood if we take into account its image schema, and consider the goal as mapped onto other domains (i.e. a state and a topic) rather than the spatial domain. In other words, (64) can be understood as ‘after the *path/journey* of drawing the thread, the goal of the ends being pulled tight is reached,’ and (65) can be understood as ‘after the *path/journey* of the addressee’s speech, the topic ‘birds’ nests’ (i.e. the goal) still has not been reached.’

*Dou3*’s meanings of arriving at a physical location or some more abstract goals are all observed in the contemporary data with an even wider range of goals.

- (66) 我六點返到屋企。(goal = a location)  
*Ngo5 luk6 dim2 faan1 dou3 uk1kei2.*  
 I six o’clock back *dou3* home  
 ‘I returned home at six o’clock.’ (HKCanCor)
- (67) 我星期六返到一點。(goal = a time)  
*Ngo5 sing1kei4luk6 faan1 dou3 jat1 dim2.*  
 I Saturday work *dou3* one o’clock  
 ‘I work until one o’clock on Saturdays.’ (HKCanCor)

- (68) 個BB仔食到飽一飽。(goal = a state)<sup>64</sup>  
 Go3 BB zai2 sik6 dou3 baau2 jat1 baau2.  
 CL BB DIM eat dou3 full one full  
 ‘The baby has gotten very full (by eating).’ (HKCanCor)
- (69) 我由最初玩到呢個級數。(goal = an abstract level)  
 Ngo5 jau4 zeoi3 col waan2 dou3 nei1 go3 kap1sou3.  
 I from very beginning play dou3 this CL level  
 ‘I have played (this game) from the very beginning up to my present level.’  
 (HKCanCor)
- (70) 我哋仲未講到禮拜三去邊。(goal = a discussion topic)  
 Ngo5 dei6 zung6 mei6 gong2 dou3 lai5baai3saam1 heoi3 bin1.  
 I PL still not talk dou3 Wednesday go where  
 ‘We still haven’t touched on where to go on Wednesday.’ (HKCanCor)

Examples (66)–(70) have demonstrated the ‘arrival’ at a variety of goals, including a physical location, a time, a state, a level, as well as a discussion topic in a conversation (same as [65]). Semantically, these different goals in other domains can all be understood in terms of a physical goal in the spatial domain; all of these movements involve a similar image schema of ‘arrival’ – to go through a path or journey before reaching the goal. In terms of word classes, the object of *dou3* is not limited to NPs, but accommodates other types of lexical classes such as adjectives, as in (68), or even full sentences, as in (70).

All the examples above are just different exemplifications of the same sense of *dou3*, which is, to reach a certain goal via a path. This might explain why *dou3* has received relatively little attention in the past when compared to other directional particles. Very few previous works on Cantonese grammar have talked about the use of *dou3*, apart from brief mentions by Kwok (1971) and Matthews and Yip (2011a). Kwok describes *dou3* as expressing the function ‘accompletive’, while Matthews and Yip label it ‘a resultative particle meaning “arrival”’, exemplified below.

- (71) 嚇到我暈咗。  
 Haak3 dou3 ngo5 wan4 zo2.  
 frighten dou3 I faint PERF  
 ‘Frightened me so much that I fainted.’ (Kwok 1971: 138)

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64. 仔 *zai2* as a full lexical noun means ‘son’. When attaching to a noun, it functions as a diminutive suffix (represented as DIM in the gloss), comparable to *-let*, *-ling*, *-ie/-y*, etc. in English. In Cantonese, ‘Adj-one-Adj’ is an idiomatic construction meaning ‘very-Adj’.

(72) 幾點飛到三藩市呀?

*Gei2 dim2 fei1 dou3 Saam1faan4si5 aa3?*

what o'clock fly *dou3* San Francisco PRT

'What time do we arrive in San Francisco?' (Matthews and Yip 2011a: 252)

Examples (71) and (72) here are not very different from those which we have just seen; both indicate an arrival at a goal (i.e. a state in [71] and a location in [72]). Very similar examples regarding *dou3* have also been given in different Cantonese dictionaries; they just differ in the types of goals that are reached.<sup>65</sup>

On the basis of most previous studies, *dou3* does not seem to have gone very far in its grammaticalization from a verb to a particle as its use is still fairly transparent. However, when we look closely at the database, there are in fact some instances of *dou3* which have rarely been talked about in the literature. Consider (73) and (74) below.

(73) 佢講到啲大學生 好似好沙塵噉。

*Keoi5 gong2 dou3 di1 daai6hok6saang1 hou2ci3 hou2 saa1can4 gam2.*

s/he talk *dou3* CL university student seem very arrogant such

'S/he went so far as to say that university students seem (to her) very arrogant.'

(HKCanCor)

(74) 佢講到你好似得罪佢噉。

*Keoi5 gong2 dou3 nei5 hou2ci3 dak1zeoi6 keoi5 gam2.*

s/he talk *dou3* you seem offend s/he such

'S/he went so far as to say that you seem to have offended him/her.'

(HKCanCor)

In (73) and (74), although *dou3* is attached to the verb *gong* 'talk', the interpretation of *dou3* as meaning 'to arrive at a certain previous comment' is hardly possible. In other words, (73) does not mean that 'he was at the comment of university students being arrogant...', and (74) is not saying that 'he was up to his comment of your offending him...'. As reflected in HKCanCor, in cases where *dou3* is attached to *gong* 'talk' to mean where a person was up to previously in a conversation, the verb *waa6* 'say' is always present. That is to say, *dou3* always accompanies *waa6* 'say' if the clause following *waa6* is used to indicate where the person stopped in the previous conversation, as reflected in (75)–(77) taken from the corpus<sup>66</sup>

65. Among these Cantonese dictionaries, Bai (1998) has made an additional observation about the particle *dou3* that it can be used purely as an emphatic marker, with little semantic content. This point is discussed at the end of this chapter when we come to discuss the development of the emphatic function of *dou3*.

66. In (75) and (76), the particle at the end is used to keep the current turn (i.e. the speaker has more information to add).

- (75) 佢講到話做翻譯呢...  
*Keoi5 gong2 dou3 waa6 zou6 faan1jik6 ne1...*  
 s/he talk *dou3* say do translation PRT  
 ‘S/he’d got up to the part about doing a translation...’ (HKCanCor)
- (76) 頭先講到話同人聯絡喇...  
*Tau4sin1 gong2 dou3 waa6 tung4 jan4 lyun4lok3 laa1...*  
 just talk *dou3* say with people contact PRT  
 ‘S/he’d just got up to the part about contacting other people...’ (HKCanCor)
- (77) 佢講到話 佢老公涉嫌用咗個client嘅錢。  
*Keoi5 gong2 dou3 waa6 keoi5 lou5gung1 sit3jim4 jung6 zo2 go3*  
 s/he talk *dou3* say s/he husband suspected use PERF CL  
*client di1 cin2.*  
 client PL money  
 ‘She’d got up to the part about her husband being suspected to have used the client’s money.’ (HKCanCor)

In (75)–(77), the particle *dou3* is more appropriately interpreted as indicating where the conversation was up to previously. On the basis of the observation here, we would expect that in an actual conversational context, (73) and (74) would have been uttered as (73’) and (74’) below if *dou3* in fact is used to mark where the conversation was up to.

- (73’) 佢講到話 啲大學生好似好沙塵噃。  
*Keoi5 gong2 dou3 waa6 di1 daai6hok6saang1 hou2ci3 hou2*  
 s/he talk *dou3* say CL university student seem very  
*saa1can4 gam2.*  
 arrogant such  
 ‘S/he’d got up to the part about him/her saying that university students seem very arrogant.’
- (74’) 佢講到話你好似得罪佢噃。  
*Keoi5 gong2 dou3 waa6 nei5 hou2ci3 dak1zeoi6 keoi5 gam2.*  
 s/he talk *dou3* say you seem offend s/he such  
 ‘S/he’d got up to the part about your apparent offense to him/her.’

If the verb *waa6* ‘say’ is needed in (73) and (74) for *dou3* to be interpreted as a marker indicating where the conversation was up to; what, then, is the exact function of *dou3* in these two examples? Consider below two more similar examples taken from HKCanCor.

- (78) 你唔好講到好似就死㗎。<sup>67</sup>  
*Nei5 m4 hou2 gong2 dou3 hou2ci3 zau6 sei2 gam2.*  
 you not good talk *dou3* seem nearly dead such  
 ‘Don’t go so far as to say that you feel like you’re going to die!’ (HKCanCor)
- (79) 唉,我哋講到自己好似好慘㗎。  
*Aai3, ngo5 dei6 gong2 dou3 zi6gei2 hou2ci3 hou2 caam2 gam2.*  
 sigh I PL talk *dou3* myself seem very poor such  
 ‘Sigh, we’ve gone so far as to say that we seem to be in pretty bad shape.’  
 (HKCanCor)

In each of these examples, it is found that the VP always conforms to the same construction – *gong2-dou3-NP-hou2ci3-(negative)clause-gam2* (i.e. talk-*dou3*-NP-*seem*-(negative)clause-such). *Dou3* in these examples has a scalar meaning, best understood as ‘reaching some sort of extreme’. The phrase *gong2dou3* in some cases can actually be more idiomatically rendered as ‘even said ...’. In fact, this meaning of *dou3* can also be understood in terms of its more basic meaning of ‘arriving at a goal/destination’, but the kind of ‘arrival’ involved here is more abstract, seeing a scale as the path, and an extreme as the goal. Several additional features are observed when this ‘extreme’ *dou3* is used.

First, not only is the comment following *dou3* often related to a certain degree on a scale, this ‘extreme’ is always negative. In most cases, it indicates that the comment introduced involves reaching some kind of an unanticipated, or unpleasant, extreme on a scale. This ‘extreme’ could be made explicit by the use of adjectives, as in (73), (78), and (79). Both *saa1can4* ‘arrogant’ and *caam2* ‘poor’ can be understood as occupying one end of a scale. The scale can be considered as from humble to average, and to arrogant in (73); and, from good to average, and to poor in (79). Similarly in (78), the stage of ‘dying’ is also near one end of a scale, from alive to dead. Even if there is no explicit adjective, as in (74), the sense of ‘arriving at an extreme’ is still there, rendered by the other linguistic elements in the construction. In this example, ‘offending a person’ can also be considered as involving an extreme, from being courteous, to normal, and further to offensive.

Second, as already defined in the construction, the phrase *hou2ci3* ‘seem’ appears in every example. That is to say, it is only ‘apparent’ that a certain ‘extreme’ has been reached; it might not have gone that far on the ‘scale’ in the actual situation. For instance, by uttering (73), there is an implication that the speaker does not agree that the attitude/stand of university students has reached an extent to be considered ‘arrogant’. What the speaker wants to express would be something like ‘he went so

67. Though there is not an explicit NP after *dou3* in (78), it is understood that the theme who is nearly dead is ‘you’.

far as saying university students are very arrogant, but I do not think we should go this far as to label them as ‘arrogant’(maybe they are just too confident).’ This applies to other examples as well. The phrase *hou2ci3* functions as a kind of tone softener, which can deflect the directness of asserting ‘X is in fact Y’. The speaker in each example does not think that the situation has reached that extent, arriving at an end of one’s scale.

Third, each instance is accompanied by the sentence final *gam2*. This particle is often used in a discourse situation to emphasize that an extreme on a scale as ‘such’ has been reached.

On the basis of these observations, it seems reasonable to conclude that this function of *dou3* on its own is to mark the arrival at a certain ‘extreme’, which can be translated as something like ‘to go so far as to reach this extreme’. This function is not very different from its more basic function of attaining a goal via a path. All of these different exemplifications of *dou3* can be understood in terms of the more general image schema.

Before ending our discussion on *dou3*, its use as an emphatic marker is discussed. This use of *dou3* has been rarely mentioned. Among dictionaries of Cantonese, only Bai (1998) mentions it briefly. Bai suggests that this use of *dou3* is purely grammatical and can only be used in interrogatives, with the construction *jau5-mou5* ‘have-not-have’, marking the emphasis. Consider below (80 and 81).

- (80) 你有冇寫到信呀?  
*Nei5 jau5 mou5 se2 dou3 seon3 aa3?*  
 you have not-have write *dou3* letter PRT  
 ‘Have you managed to write the letter?’ (Bai 1998)
- (81) 有冇食到呢?  
*Jau5 mou5 sik6 dou3 ne1?*  
 have not-have eat *dou3* PRT  
 ‘Have you actually eaten it?’ (Bai 1998)

The particle *dou3* in (80) and (81) is in fact optional. Without it, the sentences are still grammatical and their meaning is not much affected. The presence of *dou3* puts emphasis on whether something has really been done. Existential constructions like (80) and (81) already focus on the attainment of an endpoint. In these circumstances, *dou3* works together with the existential markers (i.e. *jau5* ‘have’ and *mou5* ‘not have’), to reinforce whether a certain goal is reached/arrived, since arriving at a certain goal means the accomplishment of the action. In fact, besides interrogatives (as Bai claims), this kind of *dou3* can also be used in declaratives to emphasize that something has really been/not been done. The only condition for its use is the presence of the existential markers, as in (82) and (83).

(82) 我有寫到信。

*Ngo5 jau5 se2 dou3 seon3.*

I have write *dou3* letter

'I managed to write the letter.'

(83) 我有做到。

*Ngo5 mou5 zou6 dou3.*

I not-have do *dou3*

'I haven't managed to do it.'

The discussion above suggests that the function of *dou3* is more complicated than assumed by many previous studies. It has been extended from the more concrete meaning of 'arrival' (i.e. arriving at a certain goal), to some more abstract kinds of 'arrival'. It has been further grammaticalized and become a pure grammatical marker of accomplishment and emphasis.

## Pragmatic enrichment

### A context-based mechanism

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the process of pragmatic enrichment, especially the role of pragmatic implicature along the evolutionary pathways of the twelve Cantonese directional particles. Pragmatic implicature arises when there is an association between the implicated meaning and the literal meaning in a particular discourse context. It follows from this that, if a change is to be attributed to pragmatic implicature, there must be a stage in which the original meaning and the new meaning are both present in the same context, known as the ‘bridging context’. Thus, it is crucial to identify what the bridging context is in order to understand how a certain implicature has arisen. When this implicature becomes part of the conventional meaning of the word, then the new meaning is said to have conventionalized; the word now becomes truly polysemous.

The remainder of this chapter describes the development of two directional particles, namely *gwo3* ‘move across’ and *hei2* ‘raise (something) up’. Both particles involve metaphorical extension as well as pragmatic enrichment in their grammaticalization. Via the process of metaphorical extension, *gwo3* is found to have evolved into a marker of transfer, and further into two grammatical markers indicating ‘experience’ and ‘repetition’ respectively. Similarly, *hei2* also involves the process of metaphorical extension at its early stage of grammaticalization, denoting some abstract ‘up’ meanings derived from the directional *hei2*, such as ‘to increase’, ‘to recall’, ‘to mention’, as well as ‘to afford’ (when being used in potential constructions). Both particles have also taken on additional meanings via pragmatic enrichment in suitable context, with *gwo3* being able to imply the meaning ‘worthy of’ and *hei2* being able to suggest the meaning ‘completion’. The bridging contexts in which these implicatures have arisen are also explored in this chapter.

#### 5.2 *Gwo3* ‘move across’

*Gwo3* as a full-fledged directional verb means ‘to pass’ or ‘to move across’, illustrated in (1) and (2) below from early Cantonese texts.

- (1) 過頭  
*gwo3 tau4*  
*gwo3* head  
 ‘to pass ahead of boat’ (Morrison 1828)
- (2) 過橋  
*gwo3 kiu4*  
*gwo3* bridge  
 ‘cross the bridge’ (Bonney 1853)

In (1) and (2), the object denotes the path of the movement denoted by the verb *gwo3*. This can be understood by taking into account the image schema shown in Diagram 5.1.



Diagram 5.1 The image schema of *gwo3*

Besides taking an object which projects the path, as with other directional verbs, *gwo3* also takes a locative goal. Consider example (3), in which the verb *gwo3* takes the location *Honam* as its goal.<sup>68</sup>

- (3) 過河南葬  
*gwo3 Ho4naam4 zong3*  
*gwo3* Honam bury  
 ‘go over to Honam to bury’ (Bonney 1853)

As will be explored below, *gwo3*’s ability to take a goal and its emphasis on the sense ‘to pass/move across’ a certain path play an important role in its grammaticalization from verb to particle. The rest of this section details the directional meanings expressed by *gwo3*, and the grammatical, non-directional meanings derived via the various stages of its grammaticalization.

### 5.2.1 Directional uses

As a directional particle, *gwo3* can also express the meaning of ‘to pass over to’ as its verbal counterpart does, exemplified in (4)–(6) below.

- (4) 轉過橫廳個邊。  
*Zyun3 gwo3 waang4 teng1 go2 bin1.*  
 turn *gwo3* side hall that side  
 ‘He passed over to the side hall.’ (Bridgman 1841)

68. 河南 Honam is a province located in the eastern part of China.

- (5) 拋過東便  
*paau1 gwo3 dung1 bin6*  
 throw *gwo3* east side  
 ‘throw it on the east side’ (Bonney 1853)
- (6) 兩邊行過  
*loeng5 bin1 haang4 gwo3*  
 both side walk *gwo3*  
 ‘have walked on both sides’ (Bonney 1853)

Similar to the verb usage, *gwo3* as a particle can take a directional goal, as in (4) and (5), or a path, as in (6), in which the object is fronted and topicalized. In suitable contexts, *gwo3* can be used to give a more general meaning of ‘all over’, as in (7) below.

- (7) 抹過個銀蛋盅  
*mut3 gwo3 go3 ngan4 daan6 zung1*  
 wipe *gwo3* CL silver egg cup  
 ‘wipe that silver egg-cup’ (Bridgman 1841)

In (7), *gwo3* does not denote a simple movement from one location over to another location. By seeing the surface of the egg-cup as a kind of ‘path’, (7) suggests that the person needs to wipe ‘all over’ the surface of the egg-cup, which consists of more than one movement of ‘moving across’ (i.e. not wiping once, but iterative movements over the surface). This meaning of *gwo3* indicating ‘all over’ is still rather concrete and physical, not markedly different from the basic ones observed above.

### 5.2.2 Metaphorical uses

On the basis of *gwo3*’s source meaning of ‘move across’, it has evolved into a particle meaning ‘transfer’, and two grammatical markers indicating ‘experience’ and ‘repetition’. The developments involved can still be understood by considering the image schema of *gwo3* suggested in Diagram 5.1, indicating that these uses are developed via the process of metaphorical extension from the spatial domain to other domains. Consider examples (10)–(12) below as an overview.

- (8) 我留過你 (*gwo3* as a marker of ‘transfer’)  
*ngo5 lau4 gwo3 nei5*  
 I reserve *gwo3* you  
 ‘I will reserve it for you’ (Bonney 1853)

- (9) 嘗過 (*gwo3* as a marker of ‘experience’)  
*soeng4 gwo3*  
 taste *gwo3*  
 ‘have tasted it’ (Bonney 1853)
- (10) 我杯茶淡得嘍,  
*Ngo5 bui1 caa4 daam6 dak1zai6,*  
 I CL tea weak excessive  
 擰過一杯嚟。 (*gwo3* as a marker of ‘repetition’)<sup>69</sup>  
*ling1 gwo3 jat1 bui1 lai4.*  
 bring *gwo3* one CL come  
 ‘My tea is too weak, change it for another cup.’ (Bridgman 1841)

The meaning of *gwo3* in (8) is fairly transparent. It can be accounted for easily by considering its most basic directional sense – to move over from one place to another. It is understood as a grammatical marker of ‘transfer’, resembling the prepositions *to* and *for* in English. This use of *gwo3* is now very uncommon in contemporary Cantonese, if not obsolete. We shall discuss in Section 5.2.2.1 its possible path of evolution and suggest reasons for its decline in contemporary Cantonese.

The development of *gwo3*’s experiential sense, as in (9), and repetition sense, as in (10), are presented in Section 5.2.2.2. We shall see that the repetition sense is in fact evolved from the experiential sense. Both senses share the same image schema of moving from one location to another, only differing in the reference point of the movement.

### 5.2.2.1 *Gwo3* ‘move across’ as a transfer particle<sup>70</sup>

In some early Cantonese texts, *gwo3* is found to be used as a particle marking the transfer of things (either concrete or abstract) from one person to another. This use of *gwo3* resembles the function of *to* and *for* in English, as illustrated in (11)–(13) taken from early Cantonese texts.

69. Although in some studies *gwo3* is referred to as a repetitive marker, the term ‘repetition’ is preferred over ‘repetitive’. This is mainly because the particle *gwo3* here is in the sense of doing the same thing ‘again’ (i.e. a second time, a re-doing) rather than performing several repetitions.

70. The label ‘transfer particle’ here is used in the same sense as in Chapter 4, in which it is used to describe a similar function of *lai4* ‘come’. A transfer particle makes explicit the semantic component of ‘transfer’, resembling the function of the prepositions *to* and *for* in English. It is not described as a preposition because syntactically it is still bound to the verb and semantically it retains most of *gwo3*’s lexical meaning of ‘moving across’, with the path component being highlighted.

- (11) 我留過你  
 =(8) *Ngo5 lau4 gwo3 nei5*  
 I reserve *gwo3* you  
 ‘I will reserve it for you’ (Bonney 1853)
- (12) 佢話乜嘢, 講過我聽喇。  
*Keoi5 waa6 mat1 je5, gong2 gwo3 ngo5 teng1 laa1.*  
 s/he say what stuff tell *gwo3* I listen PRT  
 ‘What does he say? Tell me.’ (Ball 1883)
- (13) 俾過你老母  
*bei2 gwo3 nei5 lou5mou2*  
 give *gwo3* you mother  
 ‘bring it to mother’ (Ball 1894)

The use of *gwo3* in examples (11)–(13) is not very different from its directional use. The ‘transfer’ meaning as denoted here can easily be understood by highlighting the path component of *gwo3*’s image schema. As the database shows, this kind of ‘transfer’ *gwo3* is only used with a limited number of verbs. As far as the early Cantonese data is concerned, the ‘transfer’ *gwo3* is only used with seven verbs, namely *gong2* ‘tell’, *waa6* ‘tell’, *maai6* ‘sell’, *bei2* ‘give’, *lau4* ‘reserve’, *dai6* ‘pass’, and *caau1* ‘copy (in writing)’, which already have in themselves the semantic feature of ‘transfer’. In other words, the movement denoted by these verbs often involves a source/sender and a recipient. Among them, the verb *bei2* ‘give’ is found to be most commonly used with the ‘transfer’ *gwo3*.

At first sight, this ‘transfer’ use of *gwo3* is very similar to that of *lai4* when used as a transfer particle – both seem to serve the same function of introducing the recipient of the theme. Consider (14)–(15) below, repeating (27) and (28) from Chapter 4.

- (14) 拈條頸巾嚟我。  
*Nim1 tiu4 geng2 gan1 lai4 ngo5.*  
 bring CL neck cloth *lai4* me  
 ‘Bring me a neckcloth.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (15) 請你遞塊火腿嚟我。  
*Ceng2 nei5 dai6 faai3 fo2teoi2 lai4 ngo5.*  
 please you pass CL ham *lai4* me  
 ‘May I ask you to help me to pass a slice of that ham?’ (Bridgman 1841)

It seems that the function of *lai4* in these examples is the same as the function of *gwo3* in (11)–(13) above, considering that *lai4* can be replaced by *gwo3* to express exactly the same meaning in (14)–(15). However, if we look more closely at the data, it is found that there is in fact a ‘division of labour’ between *gwo3* and *lai4* in giving the meaning of ‘transfer’. *Lai4* can only take the first person singular pronoun (i.e. *ngo5* ‘me’) as its object, while *gwo3* can go with different pronouns, whether the first

person, the second person, or, the third person. The data shows that the ‘transfer’ *gwo5* can go with object pronouns like *ngo5* ‘me’, *nei5* ‘you’, or even a phrase such as *nei5 lou5 mou2* ‘your mother’, which refers to a third person. Example (16) below shows a very nice contrast with (15).

- (16) 等我遞塊牛肉過你。  
*Dang2 ngo5 dai6 faai3 ngau4juk6 gwo3 nei5.*  
 wait I pass CL beef *gwo3* you  
 ‘Allow me to send you a slice of beef.’ (Bridgman 1841)

Examples (15) and (16) share a very similar syntactic and semantic structure; their major difference lies in the use of *lai4/gwo3* and the object pronoun that follows. *Lai4* always goes with *ngo5* ‘me’, while there is no such restriction imposed on *gwo3*. This difference in objects between *lai4* and *gwo3* can be accounted for by considering their nature as directional verbs. Unlike *gwo3*, *lai4* as a directional verb takes into account the speaker orientation. It denotes a movement directed towards *the speaker*. Because of this, when it grammaticalized into a particle and expresses the meaning ‘transfer’, it can only take the first person singular pronoun. In other words, the transfer *must* be oriented towards the speaker him/herself. As a directional particle, *gwo3* only means to pass over from one place to another, without specifying the orientation of either the starting point or the end point. Thus, this ‘transfer’ as denoted by *gwo3* allows many possibilities – it could be from me to you, from me to him/her, or from you to me.

Besides taking a broader range of objects, *gwo3* also differs from *lai4* in another respect. As reflected in the database, *lai4* as a transfer particle has definitely become obsolete; not a single instance of it was found after the late nineteenth century. However, the use of the ‘transfer’ *gwo3* has undergone a more gradual decline. This use of *gwo3* is still understood nowadays, but has become more restricted.

As reflected in the 1950s data, the ‘transfer’ *gwo3* is only used with the verb *bei2* ‘give’. Consider (17) and (18) below.

- (17) 若果你係肯出一兩金俾過我,我幾艱難都同你搵個靚嘅新抱。  
*Joek6gwo2 nei5 hai6 hang2 ceot1 jat1 loeng2 gam1 bei2 gwo3 ngo5,*  
 if you BE willing offer one CL gold give *gwo3* I  
*ngo5 gei2 gaan1naan4 dou1 tung4 nei5 wan2 go3 leng3*  
 I how difficult still with you find CL beautiful  
*ge3 sam1pou5.*  
 LP daughter-in-law  
 ‘If you are willing to give me one *liang* of gold, I’ll find you a beautiful daughter  
 -in-law, no matter how difficult it is.’<sup>71</sup> (Blessings 1950)

71. ‘Liang’ is a unit of weight in Chinese, roughly equal to 37.8g.

- (18) 等我俾過佢。

*Dang2 ngo5 bei2 gwo3 keoi5.*

wait I give gwo3 s/he

'Let me give (it to) him.'

(Butterfly 1954)

The examples here may suggest that this 'transfer' *gwo3* has become more lexically restricted and is not as versatile as it was in the late nineteenth century. If we look close enough at the 1950s data, there are in fact some hints about the possible causes which have led to this decline in use. One possible reason could be the rise in use of *bei2* 'give' as a replacement for *gwo3*. Originally a 'transfer' verb, *bei2* 'give' has grammaticalized into a particle of 'transfer' occupying the post-verbal position. Examples (19)–(21) below are all taken from the 1950s films, showing that *bei2* 'give' has come to replace *gwo3*: these examples would have probably involved the use of *gwo3* if they were uttered in the nineteenth century.

- (19) 我去到講俾馬公子聽,我有個未婚夫嘅。

*Ngo5 heoi3 dou3 gong2 bei2 ma5 gung1zi2 teng1, ngo5*

I go arrive tell *bei2* Ma (surname) Mr. listen I

*jau5 go3 mei6fan1fu1 ge3.*

have CL fiancé PRT

'When I arrive at Mr. Ma's place, I'll tell him that I actually have a fiancé.'

(Blessings 1950)

- (20) 我重有好消息話俾你聽啊!

*Ngo5 zung6 jau5 hou2 siu1sik1 waa6 bei2 nei5 teng1 aa3!*

I still have good news tell *bei2* you listen PRT

'I still have some good news to tell you!'

(Couple 1952)

- (21) 我今日專登帶咗一樣嘢俾你。

*Ngo5 gam1jat6 zyun1dang1 daai3 zo2 jat1 joeng6 je5 bei2 nei5.*

I today especially bring PERF one CL stuff *bei2* you

'Today I've brought something especially for you.'

(Woman 1955)

In these examples, the main verbs that go with *bei3* 'give' are *gong2* 'tell', *waa6* 'tell', *daai3* 'bring', all involving the semantic feature of 'transfer'. From our earlier discussion of the 'transfer' *gwo3* in early Cantonese, it would be expected that *gwo3*, but not *bei2*, should co-occur with these verbs. However, *bei2* seems to have gradually taken the place of *gwo3*. Although the use of *bei2* as a transfer marker is not a recent innovation and did occur in the early Cantonese texts, only a few instances have been found and they are all restricted to the verb *ling1* 'carry', as in (22) below.<sup>72</sup>

72. Example (33) in Chapter 4 is repeated here as (22).

(22) 擡張椅俾我。

*Ling1 zoeng1 ji2 bei2 ngo5.*

carry CL chair give me

‘Bring me a chair.’

(Ball 1883)

The above examples have revealed important tendencies about the development of *gwo3* and *bei2*, namely the decline in the use of *gwo3* and the increased versatility of *bei2*. Another piece of evidence which suggests the gradual replacement of *gwo3* by *bei2* is that they are found as free variants in the 1950s data. Examples (23) and (24) below are taken from the same film, uttered by the same actor.

(23) 你快啲擡啲信紙過我。

*Nei5 faai3 di1 lo2 di1 seon3 zi2 gwo3 ngo5.*

you quick bit get CL letter paper *gwo3* I

‘Quickly get me some writing papers.’

(Pak 1949)

(24) 你擡件睡袍俾我叫。

*Nei5 lo2 gin3 seoi3 pou4 bei2 ngo5 aa1.*

you get CL sleep gown *bei2* I PRT

‘Get me my sleep gown.’

(Pak 1949)

Example (23) is one of the very few instances in the 1950s data where the ‘transfer’ *gwo3* is used. Both (23) and (24) are uttered by the same actor, suggesting that *bei2* can be used to replace *gwo3* in exactly the same semantic and syntactic environment (i.e. *lo2-NP-gwo3/bei2-ngo5*). In other words, the speaker perceived them as identical and used them interchangeably. O’Melia (1941) is the earliest grammar book that has discussed explicitly the function of *gwo3* and *bei2* together. He says that both of them ‘often introduce and govern the indirect object, and correspond to the English preposition “to”’ (ibid. 12).

Instances of this ‘transfer’ *gwo3* are rarely found after the 1950s; only one instance is found in the database, appearing in a film screened in 1992.

(25) 我做雞都記得買支玩具槍過佢玩。

*Ngo5 zou6 gai1 dou1 gei3dak1 maai5 zil wun6geoi6 coeng1 gwo3*

I do chick also remember buy CL toy gun *gwo3*

*keoi5 waan2.*

s/he play

‘Even when I was a prostitute I still remembered to buy him a toy gun to play with.’

(Fight II 1992)

Example (25) is uttered by a comic actress in Hong Kong, who acted the role of a 50-year-old mother in this film. The context of this example is that the mother is saying how good she was to her son when her son was young. Despite that she

had no money, she bought her son a toy gun when she was a prostitute. The actress might want to sound 'older' by using the transfer *gwo3* in order to match with her character in the film, or it might be her personal preference to use it.<sup>73</sup>

Based on data from contemporary Cantonese, it seems reasonable to come to the interim conclusion that the use of the 'transfer' *gwo3* has declined, while at the same time *bei2* has taken over its role. This is supported by several observations: (1) while the 'transfer' *gwo3* was common in early Cantonese, not a single instance of it is found in the 1970s and 1990s data (except for example [25]); (2) although it is found in the 1950s data, its use is not as common as in the nineteenth century and it only appeared as *bei2-gwo3*; (3) despite the relatively frequent use of *bei2-gwo3* in the 1950s, this *gwo3* is actually redundant as it has little semantic content. On occasions where *bei2-gwo3* is used, the presence of *bei2* alone is sufficient to express the intended meaning. These observations explain why this use of *gwo3* has nearly disappeared from use in present day Cantonese.<sup>74</sup>

#### 5.2.2.2 *Gwo3 'move across' as temporal markers of experience and repetition*

As a particle, *gwo3*'s ability to mark repetition and experience is also well-described. In particular, *gwo3*'s experiential sense is especially well-studied since the same morpheme appears with the same function in many different dialects of Chinese, including the standard variety Putonghua.<sup>75</sup> As pointed out by A. Yue in her study on comparative Chinese dialectal grammar, 'the marker for the experiential aspect seems to be the most uniform among the dialects, all of which use some form of the suffix 過' (1993: 72). The suffix 過 is often glossed as an experiential marker across dialects because a sentence with it can always be rephrased as 'having the experience of X'.

The particle use of *gwo3* is included in most studies on Cantonese grammar. In some studies, it is regarded as both a marker of experience and repetition (Kwok

73. This use of *gwo3* as meaning 'transfer' is still included in many contemporary Cantonese dictionaries (cf. Rao et al. 1996; Bai 1998; Zhang and Ni 1999), showing that it is still considered a 'current' use by many dictionary compilers. However, the fact that not a single instance of the 'transfer' *gwo3* is found in the 1970s and 1990s data (except for [25]) has strongly indicated that this use is very uncommon in present day Cantonese, if not extinct.

74. As a native speaker of Cantonese who grew up in the 1980s, I have observed that people of my generation never use this transfer *gwo3* in daily conversations. Apparently this *gwo3* is only used by members of earlier generations. Still, I can report that I seldom hear people use it in daily conversations, and have never heard of my (grand) parents using it

75. There are studies which detail how *-guò* has developed into a grammatical marker with other meanings. For an investigation of the polysemy of *-guò*, see Wang (2002) and Hsiao (2003). For the grammaticalization path of *-guò*, see H. Wu (2003) for detail.

1971; X. Li 1994; Li et al. 1995; Cheung 2007a; Matthews and Yip 2011a; Tang 2015), while in others, it is only considered as having an experiential function (H. Gao 1980; Yuan 1989; S. Zhang 1996). Similarly, most contemporary Cantonese dictionaries have *gwo3* included as a separate entry. Amongst these dictionaries, Bai (1998) has discussed both the experiential sense and the repetition sense of *gwo3*, while others like Rao et al. (1996) and Zhang and Ni (1999) only mention the repetition use of *gwo3*. The fact that they do not include the experiential sense might not mean that they consider *gwo3* has no experiential sense. Rather, this might indicate that they consider the ‘experiential’ function of *gwo3* in Cantonese as no different from that of Mandarin Chinese and thus it might not be ‘peculiar’ enough to be included into a Cantonese dictionary.

Now the question would be: how could the meanings of repetition and experience arise from the directional meaning of *gwo3*? Consider again the examples illustrating these two uses.

(26) 嘗過 (*gwo3* used as an experiential marker)

=(9) *soeng4 gwo3*

taste *gwo3*

‘have tasted it’

(Bonney 1853)

(27) 嚟過好幾勻咯。<sup>76</sup> (*gwo3* used as an experiential marker)

*Lai4 gwo3 hou2 gei2 wan4 lok3*

come *gwo3* good several time PRT

‘He has been several times’

(Ball 1883)

(28) 我杯茶淡得嘍, 擰過一杯嚟。<sup>76</sup> (*gwo3* used as a repetition marker)

=(10) *Ngo5 bui1 caa4 taam2 dak1zai6, ling1 gwo3 jat1 bui1 lai4.*

I CL tea weak excessive bring *gwo3* one CL come

‘My tea is too weak, change it for another cup.’

(Bridgman 1841)

(29) 種過第二種。<sup>76</sup> (*gwo3* used as a repetition marker)

*Zung3 gwo3 dai6ji6 zung2.*

plant *gwo3* another type

‘Put another in.’

(Ball 1912)

Examples (26)–(27) and (28)–(29) from early Cantonese texts illustrate respectively the experiential use and the repetition use of *gwo3*. These uses of *gwo3* are in fact not very different from the ones we find in contemporary Cantonese. In (26) and (27), *gwo3* shows that the person has encountered the experience (i.e. ‘tasting’ and ‘coming to here’) at least one time, while (28) and (29) indicate the speaker’s will

76. The word 好 *hou2* in this example is more appropriately considered as an intensifier, stressing that it is *more than one* time.

to perform the action one more time, very often for a better result. There is often an implication that the second attempt is used to replace the original one because it is not good enough. As will be illustrated below, both meanings of ‘experience’ and ‘repetition’ can be accounted for by the same image schema, thereby indicating that they are derived from the basic ‘move across’ sense of *gwo3* via the process of metaphorical extension from the spatial domain. It will be further illustrated that the repetition sense is in fact developed from the experiential meaning.

It is not difficult to understand how the meaning of experience could have arisen if we take into account again the basic image schema of *gwo3*.



*Gwo3* as a directional particle denotes a physical movement which passes beyond a reference location in space. If this movement in space is mapped onto a movement in time, a perfective meaning is suggested. In other words, a point/some points in time has/have passed. In contexts where the reference is mapped onto an event that a person has encountered in a temporal path, an experiential sense is always implied. This is because when one moves from one point to another on the time axis, the event(s) he or she encounters has become a part of his or her experience.

Despite the fact that this experiential sense is widely noted and mentioned in past studies, few have gone into specific details. As D. Li (1997) argued in his work on the Mandarin *-guò*, the dominant practice of labeling it as an ‘experiential’ marker or some kind of ‘perfective’ marker is inadequate. He suggested that ‘discontinuity’ is a distinguishing feature of *-guò* in the sense that the action is discontinuous with the present or other reference time.<sup>77</sup> We will illustrate below what he means by ‘discontinuity’, and show that his analysis of Mandarin *-guò* is applicable to Cantonese *gwo3*.

D. Li (1997) suggests that this feature of ‘discontinuity’ is important because it sets *-guò* apart from the general perfective marker *le*. In fact, this feature of ‘discontinuity’ is well recognized in the literature (Li and Thompson 1981; Tiee 1986; C. Smith 1991, 1997; among others). Xiao and McEnery summarize the findings on ‘discontinuity’ in the literature and suggest that ‘the distinguishing feature of *-guò* is that it conveys a mentally experienced situation. In relation to a reference time, the final state of the same situation no longer obtains’ (2004: 144). Consider the following pair of Mandarin sentences (C. Smith 1991: 348; quoted in D. Li 1997: 2):

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77. As D. Li pointed out, this feature of ‘discontinuity’ was also observed in Chao (1968a) and C. Smith (1991).

- (30) a. 他們上個月去了香港。  
*Tāmen shàng gè yuè qù le Xiānggǎng.*  
 they last CL month go PERF Hong Kong  
 ‘Last month they went to Hong Kong (they may still be there).’
- b. 他們上個月去過香港。<sup>78</sup>  
*Tāmen shàng gè yuè qù guò Xiānggǎng.*  
 they last CL month go guò Hong Kong  
 ‘Last month they went to Hong Kong (and they are no longer there).’

The same argument also applies to Cantonese in the sense that the particle *gwo3* is also set apart from the general perfective marker *zo2* because of ‘discontinuity’. Similar to (30b), the use of *gwo3* in (31b) suggests that the situation ‘being in Hong Kong’ is ‘discontinuous’ with the present time, while there is no such implication in (31a), in which the general perfective marker *zo2* is used.

- (31) a. 佢哋上個月去咗香港。  
*Keoi5 dei6 soeng6 go3 jyut6 heoi3 zo2 Hoeng1gong2.*  
 s/he PL last CL month go PERF Hong Kong  
 ‘Last month they went to Hong Kong (they may still be there).’
- b. 佢哋上個月去過香港。  
*Keoi5 dei6 soeng6 go3 jyut6 heoi3 gwo3 Hoeng1gong2.*  
 s/he PL last CL month go gwo3 Hong Kong  
 ‘Last month they went to Hong Kong (and they are no longer there).’

D. Li added that the feature of ‘discontinuity’ can be further specified as two partial functions, in his terminology, the ‘deresultative’ and the ‘no longer in a state of X’ functions, depending on the linguistic context and the verb meaning or situation type (1997: 19). When *-guò* is attached to a resultative verb, it gives a ‘deresultative’ meaning. That is to say, the resultant state arising from the action has been reversed or neutralized in some ways. Consider (32) below.

- (32) 張三打破過這個瓶子。  
*Zhāngsān dǎpò guò zhè gè píngzi.*  
*Zhangsan break guò this CL vase*  
 ‘Zhangshan has broken this vase before (but it is now in good shape again).’  
 (D. Li 1997: 4)

When *-guò* is attached to verbs with stative meanings, the discontinuity function should be more appropriately glossed ‘no longer in a state of X’. With the use of *-guò*, (33) below implies that the man is no longer in the state of loving the three women.

78. As C. Smith commented on her own example, the use of past tense does not accurately translate the meaning conveyed by *-guò*, the perfect is in fact a more appropriate choice, except that the English perfect does not require discontinuity (1991: 349).

(33) 我愛過三個女人。

*Wǒ ài guò sān gè nǚrén*

I love *guò* three CL woman

'I had loved three women'

(D. Li 1997: 7)

These findings on discontinuity have enhanced our understanding of the properties of *-guò* as the analysis can actually be transferred to the investigation of *gwo3* here. In fact, all the above observations about *-guò* are still valid if it is replaced by *gwo3* in the examples above.

We now turn to look at how the repetition sense of *gwo3* is developed. It is suggested that the repetition sense is actually based on the experiential sense and both of them share the same image schema. While the experiential sense of *gwo3* can be understood as seeing the reference as mapped onto any event that the person has encountered in that temporal path, the repetition sense can also be seen as sharing the same image schema, but with the reference mapped onto an earlier experienced event. In other words, the experiential *gwo3* means 'experienced event E', while the repetition *gwo3* means 'I experienced event E which I had already experienced earlier'. In this respect, the experiential sense is considered more basic, leading to the repetition sense.

The analysis of the English word *over* also throws light on the justification that *gwo3*'s development path should be 'experience > repetition', not vice versa. Brugman's story of *over* (1981, 1988) and Lakoff's re-presentation of it in Lakoff (1987) provide important insights for our analysis here. The English word *over* can be used to mark both completion and repetition. Brugman suggests that sentences with the repetition sense of *over* often presuppose the accomplishment of a named activity, and that it has been or will be repeated (1988: 79). She thus proposes that the Trajectory and the Landmark are in a near-identity relation. By using the metaphor ACTIVITY IS A JOURNEY, Lakoff also suggests that the repetition sense of *over* involves seeing the landmark metaphorically as an earlier completed performance of the activity (1987: 435). From this perspective, the repetition sense of *over* can be seen as an extension from its completive sense. As 'completion' always implies 'experience', *over*'s development path 'completion > repetition' is also suggestive for *gwo3*'s development 'experience > repetition'.

Another piece of evidence comes from the OED online (2000). As found in the entry for *over* (as an adverb), the earliest cited use of completion is from 1230 (*Hwen hit is al ouer, spit & shake*) while that of repetition is from 1550 (*Pray doe it over again!*). This again supports the path 'completion > repetition' of *over*.

A further piece of evidence supporting *gwo3*'s development 'experience > repetition' comes from Mandarin. As has been discussed, the Mandarin *-guò* (cognate of *gwo3*) has also grammaticalized as a marker of experience. Both *-guò* and *gwo3* are able to denote 'have V-ed', but *-guò* cannot mark repetition while *gwo3* can. This

could be explained if we rely on the claim that the repetition sense arises from the experiential sense. While the Cantonese *gwo3* has gone a step further and grammaticalized into a marker of repetition, the Mandarin *-guò* has not undergone this further grammaticalization.

Although both the experiential sense and the repetition sense of *gwo3* are found in our early Cantonese texts and it is hard to tell which sense came first merely based on these historical data. However, the proposal ‘experience > repetition’ seems well-justified on the basis of evidence from other sources.

We now turn to examine the development of a relatively recent use of *gwo3* – the expression of ‘worthiness’.

### 5.2.3 Pragmatic enrichment of the notion ‘worthiness’

Besides the experience and repetition uses, which are common, *gwo3* is also observed to encode the meaning ‘worthy of’ in the potential construction (i.e. the construction *V-dak1/m4-gwo3* ‘V-able/not- *gwo3*’). Consider (34) below.

- (34) 係啊,呢個方法諗得過啊。  
*Hai6 aa3, nei1 go3 fong1faat3 nam2 dak1 gwo3 aa3.*  
 yes PRT this CL method think able *gwo3* PRT  
 ‘Yes, it’s worth thinking about using this method.’ (HKCanCor)

This use of *gwo3* has been little discussed in contemporary Cantonese dictionaries, only Bai (1998) has it included as a separate sense under the lemma ‘*gwo3*’. She suggests that when *gwo3* is used after *V-dak1*, it expresses the meaning of ‘worth V-ing’, as in examples (35) and (36) below.

- (35) 呢隻布買得過嚟,又平又靚。  
*Nei1 zek3 bou3 maai5 dak1 gwo3 bo3, jau6 peng4 jau6 leng3.*  
 this CL cloth buy able *gwo3* PRT also cheap also beautiful  
 ‘This cloth is worth buying; it is not only cheap but also beautiful.’ (Bai 1998)

- (36) 睇得過  
*tai2 dak1 gwo3*  
 see able *gwo3*  
 ‘worth seeing’ (Bai 1998)

The phrase *maai5-dak1-gwo3* buy-able-*gwo3* means ‘worth buying’ and *tai2-dak1-gwo3* see-able-*gwo3* means ‘worth seeing’. If *gwo3* was not used in these examples, we would need to rely on other lexical means to make this idea of ‘worthiness’ explicit. For instance, we could make use of the adjective *zik6dak1* ‘worth’, as in *zik6dak1-maai5* worth-buy ‘worth buying’ and *zik6dak1-tai2* worth-see ‘worth seeing’.

Matthews and Yip (2011a) have also noted this use of *gwo3*, and considered it as an ‘idiomatic’ use. They suggest that the experiential and repetition uses of *gwo3* do not occur in potential constructions because the combination (verb) *dak1/m4 gwo3* has an idiomatic meaning implying that something is safe or can be trusted (2011a: 278), as in (37) and (38) below.

- (37) 我信得過你。  
*Ngo5 seon3 dak1 gwo3 lei5.*  
 I trust able *gwo3* you  
 ‘I can trust you.’ (Matthews and Yip 2011a)
- (38) 呢啲屋都係買唔過，無保養嘅。  
*Ni1 di1 uk1 dou1 hai6 maai5 m4 gwo3, mou5 bou2joeng5 ge2.*  
 this PL house also BE buy not *gwo3* no maintenance PRT  
 ‘It is not safe to buy these houses, there’s no maintenance.’  
 (Matthews and Yip 2011a)

With the help of our diachronic data, it is possible to reconstruct how this ‘idiomatic’ use of *gwo3* could have developed from the ‘move across’ sense of *gwo3*. The implication of ‘worthy of’ carried by *gwo3* is first attested in Ball (1912), as illustrated below.

- (39) 估信得過佢咯  
*gu2 seon3 dak1 gwo3 keoi5 lok3*  
 guess trust able *gwo3* s/he PRT  
 ‘thought you could trust him’ (Ball 1912)

Literally, the phrase *seon3-dak1-gwo3* means ‘the level of trust can pass beyond a certain reference point’. This could be interpreted as ‘the amount of trust has gone beyond a certain level deemed sufficient by the speaker so that the speaker can now trust the person’. In short, the phrase simply means ‘can trust’, as reflected in the original translation of (39). This meaning of ‘can trust’ has a strong implication of ‘worth trusting’ or ‘trustworthy’. That is, he is ‘worth being trusted’ underlines ‘he is worth trusting’. The more literal meaning of ‘able to trust’ and the more abstract meaning of ‘worthy of trust’ are both present in (39). In other words, it might be in this context of ‘trust’ where the implication of ‘worthy of’ is initiated.<sup>79</sup>

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79. I understand that the database might not be big enough to prove that this single occurrence of *seon3* with *dak1-gwo3* in Ball (1912) was actually the trigger of this implication of ‘worth trusting’. It could be the case that the ‘worthy of’ meaning of *gwo3* is too infrequent to show up in historical texts. However, this path of development seems plausible, in the absence of evidence suggesting otherwise.

This meaning of ‘worthy of’ has been extended to other contexts. The construction *V-dak1-gwo3* can then be employed to mean ‘worth V-ing’ generally, as in examples (34)–(36) above. In fact, this sense of ‘worthiness’ is quite established in Cantonese, and is reinterpreted as a separate sense of *gwo3*, coexisting with its directional sense of ‘to move across’. In other words, the fact that *gwo3* can give the meaning ‘(not) worthy of’ in the potential construction does not prevent it from being interpreted as ‘(not) able to cross’ if this interpretation is also available in the context.

(40) 呢條隧道行唔過㗎。

*Nei1 tiu4 sei06dou6 haang4 m4 gwo3 wo3.*

this CL tunnel walk not *gwo3* PRT

‘We’re not able to get through this tunnel.’/‘This tunnel is not worth using.’

Sentence (40) gives rise to different readings when used in different contexts, including ‘not able to get through’ and ‘not worth of going through’. If it is followed by a comment like ‘there is a big truck lying on the road’, the former reading would be salient. However, if (40) is followed by a comment like ‘the toll is too expensive’, then the first reading is not acceptable and the second reading becomes salient.

Apparently, this ‘worthiness’ function of *gwo3* is not observed in Mandarin. Thus, the kind of ambiguity that we have seen in (40) does not exist in Mandarin Chinese. Instead of saying (41a) below (a direct translation of [40] into Mandarin), speakers of Mandarin have to make use of the lexical item *zhíde* ‘worthy’ to mark the meaning of ‘worthiness’ explicitly, as in (41b).

(41) a. 這條隧道走不過的。

*Zhè tiáo suìdào zǒu bú guò de.*

this CL tunnel walk not *guò* PRT

‘We’re not able to get through this tunnel.’

b. 這條隧道不值得走。

*Zhè tiáo suìdào bù zhíde zǒu.*

this CL tunnel not worthy walk

‘This tunnel is not worth using.’

Now we have seen how *gwo3*, with its source meaning ‘move across’, has developed into a temporal particle marking experience and repetition via the process of metaphorical extension. We have also discussed how it can be used as a ‘transfer’ marker, by highlighting its path component, which denotes a movement from one place to another. We have also attempted a possible explanation for how *gwo3*’s more recent sense of ‘worthiness’ has come about. Below, the evolution of another directional particle, namely *hei2* ‘to raise (something) up’, is examined.

### 5.3 *Hei2* ‘raise (something) up’

As a directional verb, *hei2* is mainly used transitively to mean ‘to raise (something) up’. Distinct from other directional verbs, *hei2* does not take a locative goal, but instead a theme object which undergoes a change in location. In other words, *hei2* as a directional verb is always used causatively. *Hei2* can be used either with a concrete object, denoting a change of physical location from a lower position to a higher position, or, with an abstract object. Consider (42) and (43) below from early Cantonese texts.

- (42) 起錨  
*hei2 maau4*  
*hei2* anchor  
 ‘heave up the anchor’ (Bonney 1853)

- (43) 起價  
*hei2 gaa3*  
*hei2* price  
 ‘raise the price’ (Bonney 1853)

In addition to not taking a locative goal, *hei2* as a verb is set apart from other directional verbs as it only appears with a restricted set of objects. It is often used with a set of fixed objects and is more appropriately understood as a compound verb consisting of V+N. One probably cannot say *hei2-syu1* (literally ‘raise book’) to mean ‘to raise the book’. More often, *hei2* is used in compounds like *hei2-zou1 hei2* rent ‘increase the rent’, *hei2-san1 hei2* body ‘wake up’, *hei2-fai3 hei2* chopstick ‘start the meal’, and some others, listed in dictionaries of Cantonese as ‘VO collocations’. In spite of such restrictions on its collocation with objects, as a directional particle, *hei2* has diverse uses and has developed into a grammatical marker with various abstract meanings

Upon grammaticalization from verb to particle, *hei2* also gives the directional meaning ‘to raise (something) up’. From this directional meaning, *hei2* has undergone further grammaticalization to become a particle with more abstract meanings, such as ‘affordability’ and ‘completion’. In the rest of this section, the various stages of *hei2*’s grammaticalization are explored, first by looking at its source directional meanings in Section 5.3.1, then by examining the more abstract meanings that have arisen along the path of *hei2*’s grammaticalization. We distinguish those meanings that result from metaphorical extension in Section 5.3.2, from those involving pragmatic enrichment in Section 5.3.3.

## 5.3.1 Directional uses

As a directional particle, *hei2* can be used to mean something is raised up from one location to a higher location, illustrated below.

- (44) 使隻籩挂起佢。  
*Sai2 zek3 lei1 gwaa3 hei2 keoi5.*  
 use CL tray hang *hei2* it  
 ‘Use a tray to hang it up.’ (Bridgeman 1841)
- (45) 執起膏藥  
*zap1 hei2 gou1joek6*  
 pick *hei2* plaster  
 ‘pick up the plaster’ (Bonney 1853)
- (46) 遞起腳  
*dai6 hei2 goek3*  
 lift *hei2* foot  
 ‘lift up the foot’ (Bonney 1853)

In (44)–(46), the verbs which *hei2* is attached to all involve some kind of upward movement; the use of *hei2* mainly reinforces the upward movement the theme object has undergone. The kind of directional meaning that *hei2* denotes is best understood in terms of the image schema in Diagram 5.2 below.



Diagram 5.2 The image schema of *hei2*

The directional use of *hei2* in contemporary Cantonese is not very different from that in early Cantonese texts. *Hei2* always denotes a movement in which the theme undergoes a change of position from a lower level to a higher level as caused by the main verb. What interest us would probably be those uses of *hei2* which do not involve a physical upward movement.

## 5.3.2 Metaphorical uses

Through the process of metaphorical extension, *hei2* can be used to denote some more abstract upward movements, as exemplified in (47)–(49) below.

- (47) 我添起工錢你。  
*Ngo5 tim1 hei2 gung1cin4 nei5.*  
 I add *hei2* wage you  
 ‘I will increase your wages.’ (Bonney 1853)
- (48) 心處不歇想起  
*sam1 syu3 bat1 hit3 soeng2 hei2*  
 heart place not stop think *hei2*  
 ‘thought about them all the time’ (Ball 1894)
- (49) 或者記起唔定呀  
*waak6ze2 gei3 hei2 m4 ding6 aa3*  
 perhaps remember *hei2* not certain PRT  
 ‘you might perhaps remember them again’ (Ball 1912)

*Hei2* in (47) is used to mean an ‘increase’ through the simple orientation metaphor MORE IS UP, while in (48) and (49), it is more appropriately considered as denoting an abstract upward movement in one’s mind, that is, something is brought up (i.e. ‘recalled’) in the speaker’s mind. These different meanings that *hei2* expresses are all related closely to its source meaning as a directional particle. All of them result from the process of metaphorical extension and can be easily understood by considering them in terms of Diagram 5.2 above.

As with what have been found in the early Cantonese texts, *hei2* in the contemporary data is also used to denote metaphorical upward movements – an upward movement in more abstract domains. Consider below a few examples from contemporary data.

- (50) 你兩個嘅事幹(結婚)呀,我擔起!  
*Nei5 loeng5 go3 ge3 si6gon3 (wedding) aa3, ngo5 daam1 hei2!*  
 you two CL LP issue PRT I carry *hei2*  
 ‘Talking about your wedding – just leave it to me!’ (Ghost 1959)
- (51) 啲郵票根本抄唔起。<sup>80</sup>  
*Di1 jau4piu3 gan1bun2 caau2 m4 hei2.*  
 CL stamp basically stir-fry not *hei2*  
 ‘Return from speculating in (special edition) stamps is low.’ (HKCanCor)
- (52) 佢睇唔起呢啲問題。  
*Keoi5 tai2 m4 hei2 nei1 di1 man6tai4.*  
 s/he see not *hei2* this CL question  
 ‘He didn’t regard these questions highly.’ (HKCanCor)

80. In Cantonese, *caau2* X (literally ‘stir-fry X’) is an idiomatic colloquial expression meaning ‘speculate in X’. The most common collocation is *caau2 gu2piu3* (literally ‘stir-fry shares’).

In (50)–(52), *hei2* does not denote any physical upward movement. In (50), *daam1-hei2* ‘carry-*hei2*’ does not mean that the speaker is physically lifting something onto her shoulder, but metaphorically refers to ‘be responsible for’, ‘to shoulder’. Similarly in (51)–(52), *hei2* means ‘upward’ in an abstract sense. The phrase *caau2-hei2* ‘stir-fry-*hei2*’ in (51) refers to the boosting up of the market price of the stamps while *tai2-hei2* ‘see-*hei2*’ in (52) is used figuratively to mean ‘to regard with respect/to look up to’.

Besides these more figurative ‘upward’ movements, many instances of *hei2* encoding the raising of a subject in mind or a topic in conversation were also found, exemplified in (53)–(55) below.

(53) 點解提起結婚,你就好失意?

*Dim2gai2 tai4 hei2 git3fan1, nei5 zau6 hou2 sat1ji3?*  
 why mention *hei2* marriage you then very frustrated  
 ‘Why when (I) mentioned marriage, did you seem to be so frustrated?’

(Love 1953)

(54) 我諗起我個仔嘅前途,我都好擔心...

*Ngo5 nam2 hei2 ngo5 go3 zai2 ge3 cin4tou4, ngo5 dou1 hou2*  
 I think *hei2* I CL son LP future I also very  
*daam1sam1...*

worry

‘When I think about my son’s future, I’m very worried too...’

(Butterfly 1954)

(55) 講起啲旅遊巴士呢,有一次...

*Gong2 hei2 di1 lei5jau4 baa1si2 ne1, jau5 jat1 ci3...*  
 talk *hei2* CL tour bus PRT have one time

‘You mention tour buses, well, there was one time...’

(HKCanCor)

The sense of *hei2* illustrated here in examples (53)–(55) has received relatively more attention in the past and scholars who have noted it sometimes consider this use of *hei2* frequent enough to be treated as a separate sense. Cheung (2007a: 170) describes this use of *hei2* as having senses such as ‘to mention’ and ‘to recall’. Matthews and Yip also point out that in these uses, *hei2* denotes ‘turning one’s conversation or thoughts to something which has been out of the picture for a while (cf. English *bring up a topic*)’ (2011a: 248). This *hei3* is depicted as rather restrictive and is only used with a small number of verbs, very often ‘cognitive’ verbs.<sup>81</sup>

81. As far as the data is concerned, only three verbs (i.e. *tai4* ‘mention’, *nam2* ‘think’, and *gong2* ‘talk’) co-occur with this use of *hei2*. In Cheung (2007a) and Matthews and Yip (2011a), similar verbs are used in their examples. The verb *king1* ‘talk’ and *nam2* ‘think’ are used in Cheung (2007a), while *tai4* ‘mention’ and *nam2* ‘think’ are used in Matthews and Yip (2011a).

Apart from these meanings resulting from metaphorical extension, *hei2* is used in potential constructions to refer to ‘affordability’. This use of *hei2* is not observed in the early Cantonese data.<sup>82</sup> It is first attested in the 1950s film data, and appears consistently thereafter.<sup>83</sup>

- (56) 你點買得起咁貴嘢呀?  
*Nei5 dim2 maai5 dak1 hei2 gam3 gwai3 je5 aa1?*  
 you how buy able *hei2* so expensive stuff PRT  
 ‘How could you afford to buy such expensive stuff?’ (Couple 1952)
- (57) 賠呢, 啲窮鬼就賠唔起嘞。  
*Pui4 ne1, di1 kung4gwai2 zau6 pui4 m4 hei2 laak3.*  
 compensate PRT CL poor then compensate not *hei2* PRT  
 ‘As for compensation – the poor do not have the resources to pay compensation.’  
 (Tenant 1973)
- (58) 你點養得起你父母啊?  
*Nei5 dim2 joeng5 dak1 hei2 nei5 fu6 mou5 aa3?*  
 you how support able *hei2* you father mother PRT  
 ‘How could you support your parents (financially)?’ (Fight II 1992)

In (56)–(58), the verbs themselves already have some sense of ‘affordability’; their use with *hei2* in the potential construction has nevertheless made this meaning more explicit.

This use of *hei2* has been little discussed, despite its frequent occurrence in everyday conversations. Matthews and Yip (2011a: 249) briefly mention it in their discussion on *hei2*, saying that ‘in modal constructions *dak1 hei2* may have the meaning “can afford to...”’. Among the Cantonese dictionaries in the database, Cheng (1997) included this sense in the entry of *hei2*. The reason for it being excluded in most studies is probably because of its metaphorical nature. This ‘figurative’ use of *hei2* can be understood fairly easily if we consider its source directional meaning – to understand the ability to ‘afford something’ in terms of the ability to ‘carry/raise something up on one’s shoulder’. Note that the verbs used in (56)–(58) are all used to denote money-related activities. The particle *hei2* in these examples can be understood metaphorically as ‘able to shoulder the burden (of the expense)’. This meaning of ‘affordability’ (in terms of a financial position) is extended to a broader range of contexts, as in example (59).<sup>84</sup>

82. The particle *hei2* in the early Cantonese data can also enter the potential construction. However, it can only mean literally whether something is able/unable to be raised up, not whether it is affordable.

83. The same construction is also used in Mandarin Chinese to mean ‘affordability’.

84. The context of (59): The big brother (A) wants to ask his follower (B) a few questions, but the follower refused to answer.

(59) A: 噉我而家係咪問你唔起啊?

*Gam2 ngo5 ji4gaa1 hai6 mai6 man6 nei5 m4 hei2 aa3?*  
so I now BE not ask you not *hei2* PRT

‘So, does that mean I can’t afford/am not in a position to ask you a question?’

B: 問得起! 問得起!

*Man6 dak1 hei2! Man6 dak1 hei2!*

ask able *hei2* ask able *hei2*

‘Of course you can (=are in a position to) ask! Of course you can!’

(Fight I 1991)

In (59), the sense of ‘affordability’ as expressed by *hei2* is even more obvious. Unlike examples (56)–(58), in which the verbs *maai5* ‘buy’, *pui4* ‘compensate’, and *joeng5* ‘support’ on their own bear some sense of ‘affordability’, the verb *man6* ‘ask’ in (59) is not related with ‘affordability’ at all. This shows that the sense of ‘affordability’ comes from the particle alone. The phrase *V-dak1-hei2* here is used in a more abstract sense to mean whether someone has the right or power to perform the action as denoted by the main verb.

These various uses of *hei2* described are all brought about through the process of metaphorical extension. They can all be understood by considering them in terms of the basic image schema of ‘something is raised up’. In the next section, the development of the completive use of *hei2*, a sense which does not seem to link directly to its directional meaning, is examined.

### 5.3.3 Pragmatic enrichment of the notion ‘completion’

The completive use of *hei2* is already observed in early Cantonese, as exemplified in (60)–(63).

(60) 做起你唔要都要銀。

*Zou6 hei2 nei5 m4 jiu3 dou1 jiu3 ngan4.*

do *hei2* you not want still want money

‘If you do not want it when it is finished, still the money will be wanted.’

(Bonney 1853)

(61) 明日洗得起呢的手巾嗎?

*Ming4jat6 sai2 dak1 hei2 nei1 di1 sau2gan1 maa3?*

tomorrow wash able *hei2* this CL handkerchief PRT

‘Can you have these handkerchiefs washed by tomorrow?’

(Stedman and Lee 1888)

(62) 上帝已經造起旱地...

*Soeng6dai3 ji5ging1 zou6 hei2 hon5 dei6...*

God already make *hei2* dry land

‘When God made the dry land...’

(Ball 1894)

(63) 睇呢張大餐檯,新整起。

*Tai2 nei1 zoeng1 daai6 caan1 toi2, san1 zing2 hei2.*

see this CL big dining table new make *hei2*

‘Look at this dining table. It is just newly made.’

(Ball 1912)

These examples from early Cantonese texts are still acceptable in contemporary Cantonese. This completive use of *hei2* has been mentioned in most major works on Cantonese grammar (Qiao 1966; Kwok 1971; Li et al. 1995; Cheung 2007a; Matthews and Yip 2011a) as well as Cantonese dictionaries (Rao et al. 1996; Cheng 1997; Bai 1998; Zhang and Ni 1999). In most studies, it is considered comparable to the complement *jun4*, with the lexical meaning ‘finish, complete’. Matthews and Yip (2011a) have described *hei2* as comparable to the preposition *up* within the construction of an English phrasal verb, as in *eat up* and *use up*. However, they did not go further into the details of how *hei2* is similar to or different from *up*, or how *hei2* has come to encode this meaning of ‘completion’. As far as I am aware, no studies have been conducted to explore the semantic and grammatical properties of this completive *hei2*, nor how it could have developed from the directional meaning in the first place.

Altogether seven instances of *hei2* as a completive marker are found in the early Cantonese texts; some of which have been illustrated in (60)–(63). Four verbs are found as hosts for this completive *hei2*, namely *zou6* ‘do’ (four instances), *zou6* ‘create’ (one instance), *zing2* ‘fix up’ (one instance), and *sai2* ‘wash’ (one instance). Apparently, the use of *hei2* is rather restrictive. The contexts in which this completive *hei2* appeared are all job/work-related, and commitments and effort are often required. A similar observation is made regarding the contemporary data. In all the examples cited in works which have mentioned the completive use of *hei2*, only three host verbs are attested – *zou6* ‘do’ (Li et al. 1995; Cheung 2007a; Matthews and Yip 2011a), *se2* ‘write’ (Qiao 1966; Kwok 1971; Zhang and Ni 1999) and *gai3* ‘calculate’ (Bai 1998). Examples from the contemporary data (i.e. film data and HKCanCor) also do not include verbs other than *zou6* ‘do’ and *se2* ‘write’. Below are some examples taken from these sources.

(64) 我覺得好奇怪,寫起喎!

*Ngo5 gok3dak1 hou2 kei4gwaai3, se2 hei2 wo4!*

I feel very surprised write *hei2* PRT

‘I was so surprised – (he managed) to finish the writing!’

(HKCanCor)

(65) 寫起論文未呀?

*Se2 hei2 leon6man2 mei6 aa3?*

write *hei2* thesis not PRT

‘Have you finished writing the thesis?’

(Kwok 1971)

- (66) 呢件事做唔起嘢  
*Nei1 gin6 si6 zou6 m4 hei2 bo3!*  
 this CL task do not *hei2* PRT  
 ‘This task cannot be completed!’ (Cheung 2007a)
- (67) 計起嘞!  
*Gai3 hei2 laak3!*  
 calculate *hei2* PRT  
 ‘There --- all added up!’ (Bai 1998)

It is generally agreed in major works on Cantonese that *hei2* as a completive marker is comparable to *jyun4* ‘complete’ (Kwok 1971; Li et al. 1995; Cheung 2007a). Despite the fact that *hei2* is similar to *jyun4* in expressing ‘completion’, *jyun4* is definitely freer and more versatile. It can be attached to virtually any verb in Cantonese to signal ‘completion’. For instance, each *hei2* in (64)–(67) can be replaced by *jyun4* without affecting the meaning of the sentence. However, *hei2* as a ‘completive’ marker is definitely more restrictive in use. It seems odd to use *hei2* with a number of verbs to mean completion, even with common verbs such as *tai2* ‘see’, *teng1* ‘listen’ and *waan2* ‘play’. Consider below examples (68)–(70).

- (68) ?我睇起齣戲。  
 ?*Ngo5 tai2 hei2 ceot1 hei3.*  
 I see *hei2* CL film  
 ‘I finished watching the film.’
- (69) ?我聽起隻CD。  
 ?*Ngo5 teng1 hei2 zek3 CD.*  
 I listen *hei2* CL CD  
 ‘I finished listening to the CD.’
- (70) ?我玩起隻電腦遊戲。  
 ?*Ngo5 waan2 hei2 zek3 din6nou5 jau4hei3.*  
 I play *hei2* CL computer game  
 ‘I finished playing the computer game.’

Looking more closely at these examples, it does not seem to be the verb alone that causes the oddness, but the whole activity as denoted by the predicate. If we keep the main verb *tai2* ‘see’ in (68), but have the object changed from *hei3* ‘film’ to *syu1* ‘book’, the sentence becomes acceptable at once, illustrated in (71).

- (71) 我睇起本書。  
*Ngo5 tai2 hei2 bun2 syu1.*  
 I see *hei2* CL book  
 ‘I finished reading the book.’

The observation here seems to suggest that the acceptability of *hei2* depends not just on the verb, but on the object as well, or the V+O combination as a whole. The particle *hei2* in (71) basically has the same meaning as *gyun4* ‘finish, complete’. Thus, examples (71) and (71’) would normally be considered as having exactly the same meaning.

- (71’) 我睇完本書。  
*Ngo5 tai2 jyun4 bun2 syu1.*  
 I see finish CL book  
 ‘I finished reading the book.’

However, native speakers of Cantonese can always spot the subtle difference between (71) and (71’). (71’) only means ‘finished reading a book’, but (71) has the implication of ‘finally finished reading that *rather difficult* book’ (e.g. Shakespeare’s). In other words, in addition to just meaning ‘completion’, *hei2* in (71) has an implication that some effort is required for this ‘completion’, and that this ‘completion’ is somehow obligated. The observation here leads us to rethink the seemingly unacceptability of (68)–(70). It appears that these not-so-acceptable sentences would become acceptable once they are properly contextualized. Examples (68) and (69) will become more acceptable if they are uttered in a particular context, as in (68’) and (69’) below.

- (68’) 我睇起齣戲, 可以開始寫份報告。(uttered by a student of Film Studies)  
*Ngo5 tai2 hei2 ceot1 hei3, ho2ji3 hoi1ci2 se2 fan6 bou3gou3.*  
 I see *hei2* CL film can start write CL report  
 ‘I have finished watching the film and can start writing the report.’
- (69’) 我聽起隻CD 先可以做份音樂功課。(uttered by a student of Music)  
*Ngo5 teng1 hei2 zek3 CD sin1 ho2ji3 zou6 fan6*  
 I listen *hei2* CL CD first can do CL  
*jam1ngok6 gung1fo3.*  
 music assignment  
 ‘I have to finish listening to the CD before I can do my music assignment.’

If the speaker in (68’) and (69’) is a student of music/film studies and needs to listen to a particular CD/watch a particular film in order to finish an assignment, the two sentences then become acceptable immediately. In these contexts, the act of watching a film/listening to a CD is no longer for leisure, but an activity which requires some effort as the task is now part of the student’s assignment requirement.

The question now is: how did the restriction on complete *hei2* come about? Why does *hei2* seem to work better with a subgroup of verbs, or in a certain context, when giving the ‘completive’ meaning? To answer these questions, it is necessary

to find a possible source from which the completive meaning of *hei2* might have developed. The historical source always has an effect on the path, as well as the result of a particular grammaticalization process. In particular, the context which might have led to the rise of this meaning of ‘completion’ (i.e. the bridging context), needs to be identified.

### 5.3.3.1 *The historical source of completive hei2*

A possible historical source from which the completive meaning of *hei2* could have evolved is the phrase *hei2-fo3* (literally ‘to raise goods/freight’), normally used in manufacture. The verb *hei2* in *hei2-fo3* is used in its lexical, pre-grammaticalized sense of ‘raise/move (something) up’. However, *hei2-fo3* often has an implied completive meaning, as observed in (72)–(73) from early Cantonese.

(72) 後船定了保商通事, 方能起貨。<sup>85</sup>

*Hau6 syun4 ding6 liu5 bou2soeng1 tung1si6, fong1 nang4*

after ship settle PERF guarantor translator then able

*hei2 fo3.*

*hei2* cargo

‘After the ship has obtained a security merchant and linguist, she may discharge her cargo.’ (Bridgman 1841)

(73) 去起貨

*heoi3 hei2 fo3*

go *hei2* cargo

‘go and discharge the cargo’

(Bonney 1853)

In commercial contexts, *hei2-fo3* is very often used as a fixed expression to mean ‘the goods are ready to be discharged’, as reflected in the original translation in (72) and (73). The readiness for the goods to be raised and unloaded/discharged at the pier often underlies the completion of the manufacturing process. Hence, *hei2-fo3* actually has the association of ‘complete and ready’. Repeated use of *hei2-fo3* within this specific context may lead to the conventionalization of the pragmatic implicature ‘completion’, which in the end results in *hei2*’s ability to mark completion.

85. In this example, the perfective marker from standard Chinese *liu5* 了 is used instead of *zo2* 咗, the perfective marker in Cantonese. As pointed out by Kwok and Kataoka (2006), most Cantonese materials compiled in the nineteenth century used *hiu1* 嘍, the predecessor of *zo2*, as the perfective marker. However, some of the early Cantonese materials did use *liu5* 了. Bridgman (1841) was one of them. For the details of the development of Cantonese perfective markers, see Kwok and Kataoka (2006). In the nineteenth century, *bou2soeng1* was a professional whose duty was to insure foreign merchant ships and to help them out with the tariff-related matters.

A piece of evidence suggesting the conventionalization of the completive meaning of *hei2-fo3* comes from the lexicographers' treatment of this phrase. In a number of Cantonese dictionaries, the explanation given for *hei2-fo3* is not 'unloading goods/freight', but explanations such as 'to have handled a retail order' (Cheng 1997) or 'a commercial procedure has been completed' (Zhang and Ni 1999). This suggests that the implicit meaning of 'completion' has been conventionalized in *hei2-fo3*, thus preparing a way for the grammaticalization of the verb *hei2*, from expressing a purely directional meaning to implying a completive meaning.

Another piece of evidence suggesting *hei2*'s ability to mark completion comes from Xu and Gongtian (1999). This dialect dictionary cites an example from a Guangzhou newspaper showing that *hei2* in its own right can mean completion in the context of manufacturing.<sup>86</sup>

- (74) 年輕女工,要眼明手快,才能起快,賺得多。  
*Nin4hing1 nei5 gung1, jiu3 ngaan5 ming4 sau2 faai3, coi4*  
 young female worker need eye sharp hand quick just  
*nang4 hei2 faai3, zaan6 dak1 do1.*  
 can *hei2* quick earn able more  
 'Young female workers need to have sharp eyes and quick-moving hands, so that they are capable of finishing the work quickly, and able to earn more money.'  
 (Yangcheng Evening News, Year 1983)

Once this meaning of completion is more established, *hei2* becomes more independent syntactically and can be used with objects other than cargo and factory goods. The meaning of *hei2* has been broadened so that it can be used to imply the completion of a task other than a manufacturing process resulting in factory goods. Later, *hei2* as a verb comes to collocate with a wider variety of products of work, including concrete and abstract products, as in (75)–(77).

- (75) 份報告可以起未?  
*Fan6 bou3gou3 ho2ji3 hei2 mei6?*  
 CL report can *hei2* not  
 'Is the report done?'

86. In (74), the verb *hei2* has taken an implicit object of work. Also, since this example is taken from a newspaper, it is expected that (74) is in the more formal, written, rather than the colloquial register. Nevertheless, the fact that *hei2* can be used alone here is a good indication that the completive meaning has been reinterpreted by this writer, who is likely to be a Cantonese speaker, as part of its semantics.

(76) 你起唔起倒份功課?

*Nei5 hei2 m4 hei2 dou2 fan6 gung1fo3?*  
 you *hei2* not *hei2* ACC CL assignment  
 'Are you able to finish the assignment?'

(77) 你聽日之前起個演唱會主題俾我。

*Nei5 ting1jat6 zi1cin4 hei2 go3 jin2coeng3wui2 zyu2tai4 bei2 ngo5.*  
 you tomorrow before *hei2* CL concert theme give me  
 'You have to come up with the theme of the concert and give it to me by tomorrow.'

In (75)–(77), the products that are ready for submission are not cargos or freight or transported goods; the product which is *hei2* (i.e. complete and ready) in (75) is a report and in (76) an assignment. *Hei2* can also be used with an abstract product, such as an idea or a plan, as in (77).

Despite the fact that the verb uses of *hei2* have been generalized and its use is not restricted to factory goods, it seems that only products resulting from assigned duties at work/school may become the object of *hei2*. This is probably because, in the first place, the completive meaning comes from the pragmatic implicature of *hei2-fo3*, which entails the completion of a manufacturing process. Hence, semantic features such as 'prior commitment', 'working schedule', and 'meeting deadlines' are still retained even though the objects that can co-occur with the completive *hei2* have become more general.

These semantic constraints on the verb *hei2* remain when it grammaticalized into a particle. This 'retention' on earlier meanings accounts for why the completive particle *hei2* has been depicted as rather restrictive, often associated with verbs like *zou6* 'do', *zou6* 'create', and *zing2* 'fix up', as suggested by examples found in data as early as in the 1850s (cf. examples [60]–[63]). These verbs are typical in job/work-related contexts and thus are compatible with the completive *hei2*. This semantic 'residue' also explains why activities like watching a film and listening to a CD are rather unacceptable at first sight when they are used with *hei2*, since these activities are not normally related to work duties. However, as seen earlier, the collocation of *hei2* with these activates would become acceptable once they are appropriately contextualized as work-related, in which the agent is obligated or committed to finishing these activities. This also explains why *tai2-hei2-bun2-syu1 see-hei2-a-book* 'finished reading a book' (i.e. example [71]) is more acceptable than *tai2-hei2-ceot1-hei3 see-hei2-a-film* 'finished watching a film' (i.e. example [68]), if no contextual information is given. Although reading a book might not be always related to study or work commitments, it requires focus and attention which is similar to that of completing a job/work duty.

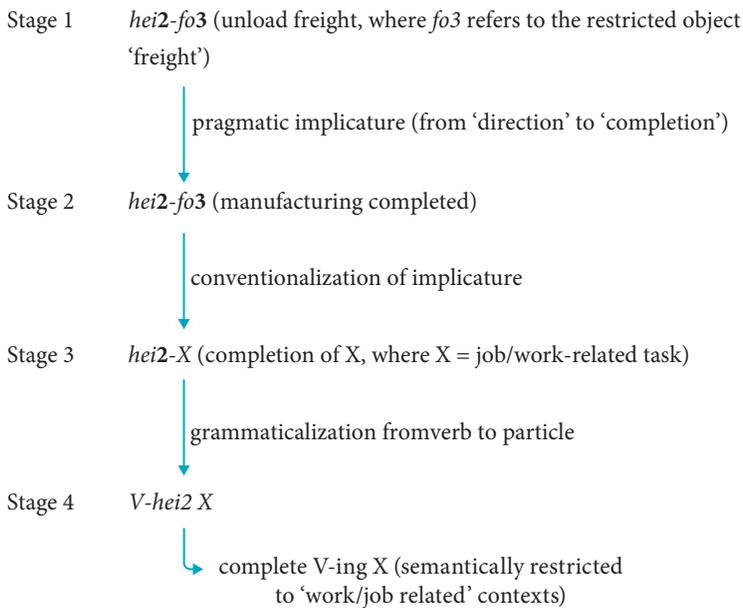
From the discussion above, it seems that *hei2* as a completive marker is actually not as restricted as it was perceived to be in the past. The completive use of *hei2* has been extended so that it can be used with wider types of predicates, as long as the actions they denote require some degree of focus and effort similar to work duties and that the agent is committed to completing. In fact, the completive *hei2* can be used with many more different activities, such as writing a letter, cooking a meal, or fitting together a 5000-piece puzzle, if the speaker wants to stress that the activity is particularly demanding and requires considerable time and effort to be done. This point is made obvious if we consider (78) as uttered by a physically disabled person.

- (78) 我終於摺起件衫。  
*Ngo5 zung1jyul zip3 hei2 gin6 saam1.*  
 I finally fold *hei2* CL clothes  
 'I finally managed to fold up the clothes.'

Folding up clothes is not normally considered as job/work-related, nor an activity which requires a high degree of focus and attention as if it is a work task. However, this might be a challenging task for a person who is physically disabled. The use of *hei2* here emphasizes that this is in fact a great achievement for the speaker – a huge amount of effort is needed to complete the task. This leads us to rethink the distinction between *hei2* and *jyun4* 'complete' as a marker of completion. Although previous studies consider that *hei2* is comparable to *jyun4* 'complete' (as mentioned earlier), they actually serve different functions. It is true that *hei2* as a completive marker can be replaced by *jyun4* in all instances and the meanings might seem very similar, yet native speakers of Cantonese can definitely tell the subtle difference between the two – the speaker needs to put in relatively more effort and is more committed to completing the tasks in cases where *hei2* is used.

Diagram 5.3 summarizes the development of the completive meaning of *hei2* from a verb to a particle. *Hei2* is used as a verb in stages 1 to 3, and as a particle in stage 4.

When *hei2* is used in commercial contexts, the collocation of *hei2* and *fo3* (literally 'to raise goods/freight') often has the implication that 'the goods are ready to be discharged'. This 'state of readiness' implies the completion of the manufacturing process and hence *hei2-fo3* actually has the association of 'complete and ready'. Repeated use of *hei2-fo3* within this specific context leads to the conventionalization of the pragmatic implicature 'completion', which in the end results in *hei2*'s ability to mark completion. However, as explained, the objects of *hei2* very often need to be works produced under the conditions of job/work. This context-induced semantic constraint of the verb *hei2* carries through to its particle use. Thus, *hei2* as a particle can only be used with predicates which are school/work-related, or at least



**Diagram 5.3** Development of the completive meaning of *hei2*

activities which require a lot of focus and attention and involve effort and energy similar to that of completing a work assignment or duty. Here, *hei2* clearly involves the retention of its source meanings in the grammaticalized forms.

The development of this completive *hei2* is quite special when compared with the grammaticalization of other directional particles. For all other cases that have been investigated so far, it is the directional meaning of the *particle* (in the post-verbal position) which got generalized and the directional meaning developed into more abstract meanings serving different grammatical functions. However, in the case of *hei2*, the implied completive meaning evolved before it actually grammaticalized into a particle. That is to say, it is the commercial context in which *hei2-fo3* is used that licenses the development of *hei2*'s completive meaning. This then was carried through to its particle use when it grammaticalized from a verb to a particle. Thus, the important point here about the development of the completive *hei2* is that the *hei2-O* construction (i.e. the verb use) actually has an effect on the *V-hei2* construction (i.e. the particle use).

### 5.3.3.2 Additional constraints on completive *hei2*

In addition to the semantic constraint that the object of the completive *hei2* must be job/work-related, two additional constraints are also observed – the current relevance requirement and the telicity requirement. They reflect the semantic residue inherited as a result of the restricted use of *hei2* in its grammaticalization.

#### 5.3.3.2.1 Current relevance requirement

We observe that the completive particle *hei2* appears to be more sensitive to the immediacy of an event and hence it is more compatible with current actions. Consider (79) and (80) below.

- (79) 我十年前寫起本書。  
 ?*Ngo5 sap6 nin4 cin4 se2 hei2 bun2 syu1.*  
 I ten year before write *hei2* CL book  
 ‘I wrote a book ten years ago.’

- (80) 我啱啱寫起本書。  
*Ngo5 aam1aam1 se2 hei2 bun2 syu1.*  
 I just write *hei2* CL book  
 ‘I just managed to finish writing a book.’

It appears that the V-*hei2* construction is more compatible with current actions. Example (79) is not acceptable because the reference time (i.e. *sap6 nin4 cin4* ‘ten years ago’) is not close to the speech time.<sup>87</sup> No such constraint is imposed on *jyun4*; both (79) and (80) are perfectly acceptable if the general completive marker *jyun4* is used instead. However, it is in fact not impossible for *hei2* to co-occur with a distant-past event. Consider (81).

- (81) 當我十年前寫起本書嘅時候,我個仔就出世嘞。  
*Dong1 ngo5 sap6 nin4 cin4 se2 hei2 bun2 syu1 ge3 si4hau6,*  
 when I ten year before write *hei2* CL book LP time  
*ngo5 go3 zai2 zau6 ceot1sai3 laak3.*  
 I CL son then born PRT  
 ‘When I had finished writing my book ten years ago, my son was born.’

Example (81) is absolutely acceptable even though the event ‘writing the book’ was finished ten years before speech-time. It seems that the factor of ‘relevance’ plays a more important role in determining *hei2*’s compatibility with the given action.

87. This applies to pronouns of other types as well. The observation stays the same when the first person pronoun in (79) and (80) is replaced by the second, or the third person pronoun.

Although the writing was completed a long time ago, it is still considered relevant with reference to a particular point of time: when the son was born. This observation about V-*hei2* is very similar to that of ‘HAVE+participle’ in English, which is used to describe an action in the past which has some relevance to a particular reference time (which is often close to the action time). Thus, *hei2* is often used to describe the completion of an action which has some effect or relevance to a reference time. For instance in (80), the completion of the book is relevant to the present time, as made explicit by the adverb *aam1aam1* ‘just’. In (81), the event is relevant to the time when the son was born, thus licensing the use of *hei2*. However in (79), the completion of the event happened a long time ago and it has no relevance to the present time nor any point of reference, hence the oddness of using *hei2*.

Our observation of ‘current relevance’ also applies to future events. Matthews and Yip have made a similar point; they suggest that the particle *hei2* denotes completion ‘within a certain time limit’ (2011a: 248), as in (82).

- (82) 我哋聽日實做得起。  
*Ngo5 dei6 ting1jat6 sat6 zou6 dak1 hei2.*  
 I PL tomorrow sure do able *hei2*  
 ‘We can certainly finish up by tomorrow.’ (Matthews and Yip 2011a)

A ‘time limit’ is very often set for a short period of time. When *hei2* is used to mark an anticipated completion of a future event, very often it is something expected to happen in the near future, but not a long time from now (e.g. a few number of years). Thus, despite the fact that (82) is grammatical, (83) is rather unacceptable under normal circumstances.

- (83) ?我哋十年後實做得起。  
 ?*Ngo5 dei6 sap6 nin4 hau6 sat6 zou6 dak1 hei2.*  
 I PL ten year later sure do able *hei2*  
 ‘We can certainly finish up after ten years.’

On a very specific occasion, for instance, if a supervisor/leader wishes to encourage his/her workers/followers (and the public) that a long-term project is worth undertaking and seeing to completion, and especially if the supervisor/leader wishes to establish or restore confidence, *hei2* might be acceptable in (83). However, generally speaking, *jyun4* ‘complete’ would be more accepted and readily used in situations like this, as illustrated in (84).

- (84) 我哋十年後實做得完。  
*Ngo5 dei6 sap6 nin4 hau6 sat6 zou6 dak1 jyun4.*  
 I PL ten year later sure do able complete  
 ‘We can certainly finish up after ten years.’

A plausible explanation for this ‘relevance’ constraint might again be one based on the semantic residue of *hei2*. At the very first instance, the completive meaning of *hei2* comes from *hei2-fo3*, which often has the implication of ‘readiness’ and the obligation of ‘meeting deadline’ within a certain time limit. This semantic feature of ‘urgency and immediacy’ that *hei2-fo3* possesses is carried through to the completive *hei2*, making it incompatible with events which do not have an immediate relevance to the present time.

### 5.3.3.2.2 *Telicity requirement*

In addition to the current relevance requirement, the completive *hei2* is also subject to the telicity requirement. Situations are classified into four types: states, activities, accomplishments and achievements (Vendler 1967: 97–121). They can be further divided into either telic or atelic events, depending on whether or not the events are directed towards a goal or an endpoint. We find that the *V-hei2* predicate can only denote a telic event.

- (85) 整兩個蛋糕 (accomplishment)  
*zing2 loeng5 go3 daan6gou1*  
 make two CL cake  
 ‘make two cakes.’
- (86) 整起兩個蛋糕 (achievement)  
*zing2 hei2 loeng5 go3 daan6gou1*  
 make *hei2* two CL cake  
 ‘have made two cakes’

It is ungrammatical to use *hei2* with atelic predicates. Consider examples (87) and (88) below.

- (87) \*佢喺露台睇起雀仔。 (activity)  
 \**Keoi5 hai2 lou6toi4 tai2 hei2 zoek3zai2.*  
 s/he at balcony see *hei2* bird  
 ‘He finished watching the birds on the balcony.’
- (88) \*佢愛起呢個人。 (state)  
 \**Keoi5 ngoi3 hei2 nei1 go3 jan4.*  
 s/he love *hei2* this CL person  
 ‘He has loved this person.’

The reason for this telicity constraint is again semantic in nature. The function of *hei2* is to mark the completion of an event. Thus, inherently, *hei2* is employed to direct the predicate to an endpoint. It is contradictory for *hei2* to be used with predicates which do not have a natural endpoint.

Before reaching the concluding chapter (i.e. Chapter 7), the grammaticalization of the remaining five particles, *soeng2* ‘ascend’, *lok6* ‘descend’, *hoi1* ‘move away’, *maai4* ‘move towards’, and *faan1* ‘move back’ will be discussed in the next chapter, with a specific focus on the role subjectification plays in the grammaticalization of these particles.

## Subjectification

### A mechanism leading to stancemarking

#### 6.1 Introduction

So far, starting with the simpler cases, this book has explored how directional particles have taken on other grammatical meanings in the course of their grammaticalization. In Chapter 4, those directional particles whose development/evolution involves only the process of metaphorical extension have been examined. They are *lai4* ‘come’, *heoi3* ‘go’, *ceot1* ‘move out’, *jap6* ‘move into’, and *dou3* ‘arrive’. In Chapter 5, the evolution of *gwo3* ‘move pass’ and *hei2* ‘raise (something) up’ have been investigated, by highlighting the role of context in their development and how important pragmatic implicature is in determining their paths of grammaticalization. In this chapter, the focus would be on how subjectification plays a role in the grammaticalization of Cantonese particles – the way that speakers of Cantonese recruit directional particles to externalize their subjective point of view towards a proposition.

Subjectification is understood as a historical process whereby meanings become increasingly based in the speaker’s subjective belief state, or attitude toward what is said (Traugott 1989, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2003b, 2010b, among her other works). In other words, it is a process in which linguistic items and constructions come to encode subjectivity explicitly. Subjectification of directional particles then refers to the way in which directional particles are employed to encode speaker’s perspectives and attitudes explicitly. It is a strategy that speakers use to fulfill their fundamental need to assess situations and convey their assessments and feelings explicitly.

In this chapter, the grammaticalization of the remaining five particles are examined – *soeng5* ‘ascend’, *lok6* ‘descend’, *hoi1* ‘move away’, *maai4* ‘move towards’, and *faan1* ‘return’. The particles *soeng5* and *lok6*, and, *hoi1* and *maai4*, form another two pairs of semantic opposition. Although *soeng5* ‘ascend’ and *hoi1* ‘move away’ do not actually involve subjectification in their grammaticalization, they are also discussed in this chapter as each forms a pair with another directional particle, which does involve subjectification. *Pairs* are treated as units of discussion whenever possible.

The pair *soeng5* ‘ascend’ and *lok6* ‘descend’ is first examined in Section 6.2. Although *soeng5* has remained rather ‘lexical’ and did not go far in its grammaticalization, *lok6* has gone through the full range of grammaticalization processes, from metaphorical extension, to pragmatic enrichment, and further to subjectification. It has gone all the way to eventually becoming a grammatical marker encoding the speaker’s reaching of a conclusive assessment of a situation. After a discussion of *lok6*, we then turn to discuss the grammaticalization of another pair of particles, *hoi1* ‘move away’ and *maai4* ‘move towards’, in Section 6.3. Through the process of metaphorical extension from the spatial to the temporal domain, *hoi1* develops into a grammatical marker signaling continuation of an action. Upon further grammaticalization via pragmatic enrichment in a suitable context, *hoi1* is then reinterpreted as a habitual marker. The particle *maai4* is another particle which has undergone subjectification in its grammaticalization. In its latest evolutionary stage, it has taken on the function of marking the speaker’s negative evaluation. Finally, the evolution of *faan1* ‘return’ is investigated in Section 6.4. The grammaticalization of *faan1* is not simple either; it has gone all the way to become a subjective evaluative particle marking the speaker’s subjective evaluation of an activity as ‘pleasant’ and ‘enjoyable’. A discussion on the phenomenon of grammaticalization asymmetry follows at the end, in Section 6.5.

## 6.2 *Soeng5* ‘ascend’ and *lok6* ‘descend’

As directional verbs, *soeng5* ‘ascend’ is used to denote an upward movement and *lok6* ‘descend’ a downward movement.<sup>88</sup> Their meanings are illustrated in this example from early Cantonese.

(1) 用板梯易上落。

*Jung6 baan2 tai1 ji6 soeng5 lok6.*

use step ladder easy *soeng5 lok6*

‘It is easy to go up and down upon a step-ladder.’ (Bridgman 1841)

As a directional particle attaching to verbs, *soeng5* and *lok6* express meanings similar to their verb counterparts, as exemplified in (2)–(5) below.

88. The character 上 is shared by two morphemes in Cantonese – (1) the directional verb 上 *soeng5* ‘ascend’ that is being dealt with here; (2) the affix 上 *soeng6* ‘up’ which usually forms part of a word to mean ‘up/above’, as in 上 司 *soeng6si1* (literally ‘up official’) ‘superior (at work); supervisor’ and 上 面 *soeng6min6* (literally ‘up surface’) ‘above’ (notice the difference in tones regarding the two morphemes).

- (2) 掛上  
*gwaa3 soeng5*  
 hang *soeng5*  
 ‘to hang up’ (Bonney 1853)
- (3) 抬上你處  
*toi4 soeng5 nei5 syu3*  
 carry *soeng5* you place  
 ‘to carry it up to your place’ (Ball 1912)
- (4) 跌落水  
*dit3 lok6 sei2*  
 fall *lok6* water  
 ‘to fall into water’ (Morrison 1828)
- (5) 老鼠跌落天平。  
*Lou5syu2 dit3 lok6 tin1ping4.*  
 rat fall *lok6* scales  
 ‘The rat fell into the scales.’ (Bridgman 1841)

The directional meanings that *soeng5* and *lok6* express can be understood by taking into account a simple image schema, illustrated in Diagram 6.1 below.



**Diagram 6.1** The image schema of *soeng5* and *lok6*

Through the process of metaphorical extension from the spatial domain to other domains, a number of more abstract meanings have arisen. While the development of *soeng5* is observed to have stopped at this initial stage, showing only a few metaphorical meanings, *lok6* has moved a few more steps further along its path of grammaticalization. Via pragmatic enrichment in a suitable context, *lok6* has taken up the function of marking the settlement of an action. Upon further grammaticalization via subjectification, the function of *lok6* has shifted towards the speaker’s perspective, marking the settlement of the *speaker’s* conclusion. The actual steps that lead to these various uses associated with *soeng5* and *lok6* are examined in detail in Sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 below.

### 6.2.1 *Soeng5* ‘ascend’

Based on observations from our diachronic data, the particle use of *soeng5* is found to be fairly restricted, with only one or two extended uses.

6.2.1.1 *Metaphorical uses*

As a directional particle, the basic function of *soeng5* is to denote a physical upward movement. Through the process of metaphorical extension, *soeng5* in Modern Cantonese can be used to denote an upward movement of a more abstract kind, as in (6) below.

- (6) 我睇上呢架靚車。  
*Ngo5 tai2 soeng5 nei1 gaa3 leng3 ce1.*  
 I see *soeng5* this CL nice car  
 ‘I fancy this luxurious car.’

The phrase ‘*tai2 soeng5 X*’ means ‘look up to *X*’. Taken literally, one can look up to virtually anything. Metaphorically, one does not normally ‘look up to’ things that are cheap or common. Thus, it is not very acceptable for *tai2 soeng5* to be used with objects which are common or ‘everyday’, as in (7).

- (7) ?我睇上呢袋富士蘋果。  
 ?*Ngo5 tai2 soeng5 nei1 doi6 fu3si6 ping4gwo2.*  
 I see *soeng5* this CL fuji apple  
 ‘I fancy this bag of Fuji apples.’

While an adjective encoding a positive evaluation, such as *leng3* ‘nice’ in (6), may be absent, the object of *tai2 soeng5* must be something unusual and positively evaluated. Thus, the object described in (8) must be something which possesses a considerable amount of value, though it is not explicitly stated.

- (8) 我睇上呢件嘢。  
*Ngo5 tai2 soeng5 nei1 gin6 je5.*  
 I see *soeng5* this CL thing  
 ‘I fancy this thing.’

Apart from *tai2 soeng5*, example (9) below shows another instance of *soeng5* being used metaphorically.

- (9) 我愛上一個女仔。  
*Ngo5 ngoi3 soeng5 jat1 go3 nei5zai2.*  
 I love *soeng5* one CL girl  
 ‘I fell in love with a girl.’

(Dragon 1947)

Again in (9), *ngoi3 soeng5* ‘love up’ does not involve a physical upward motion. Rather, *soeng5* in this expression means ‘attachment’ in a non-upward way – the girl and the speaker’s heart are attached to each other. In this respect, (9) is not very different from (10) below, in which *soeng5* is used in its physical, directional sense.

- (10) 將幅畫掛上捧牆。

Zeong1 fuk1 waa2 gwaa3 soeng5 bung6 coeng4.  
 get CL painting hang soeng5 CL wall  
 'Put up the painting on the wall.'

In (10), the painting is hung up on the wall so that the painting and the wall are now attached to each other. This meaning of physical attachment might be reinterpreted as a kind of psychological attachment when *soeng5* is attached to psychological verbs such as *ngoi3* 'love'. The object of *ngoi3 soeng5* is not limited to human beings, but also non-human objects, as in (11).

- (11) 我愛上呢啲紅色嘅車。

Ngo5 ngoi3 soeng5 nei1 di1 hung4 sik1 ge3 ce1.  
 I love soeng5 this CL red colour LP car  
 'I fell in love with these red cars.'

(HKCanCor)

The metaphorical uses of *soeng5* that we have seen so far are in fact fairly restricted in the sense that this *soeng5* can only co-occur with a limited number of verbs.<sup>89</sup> This restrictedness of *soeng5* is reflected in its treatment in contemporary Cantonese dictionaries. In dictionaries where the post-verbal use of *soeng5* is mentioned, only a simple explanation 'from a lower position to a higher position' is given (Cheng 1997; Bai 1998). There are also quite a few which do not even have the entry *soeng5* at all (Rao et al. 1996; K. Wu 1997; Zhang and Ni 1999), despite the fact that their lexicons include an entry for *lok6*, the opposite of *soeng5*. This shows that from the perspective of those Cantonese dictionary compilers, *soeng5* does not have any features which are peculiar to Cantonese; for most of the time it remains a directional particle with its basic directional meaning.

### 6.2.2 Lok6 'descend'

*Lok6* as a directional particle is used to denote a downward motion, always from a higher level to a lower level. This directional meaning of *lok6* is mentioned in most Cantonese dictionaries (Rao et al. 1996; Cheng 1997; K. Wu 1997; Bai 1998; Zhang and Ni 1999). As a directional verb, *lok6* can take a goal (e.g. 落街 *lok6 gaai1* 'lok6

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89. The phrases 看上 *kàn shàng* 'see-ascend' and 愛上 *ài shàng* 'love-ascend' are also commonly used in Mandarin Chinese. In other words, these expressions may be calques from Mandarin as this use of *soeng5* is very restricted in Cantonese. Even if this is the case, the fact that these expressions have been adopted into Cantonese (with lexical substitution of Cantonese *tai2* for Mandarin *kàn*) suggests that they should be fitted into the grammaticalization pattern of *soeng5*.

street'), a source (e.g. 落車 *lok6 ce1* 'lok6 car'), a path (e.g. 落樓梯 *lok6 lau4tai1* 'lok6 stairs'), even a theme (e.g. 落雪 *lok6 syut3* 'lok6 snow'), as its object. Apparently, only the 'goal' object invites grammaticalization – it is only in contexts where *lok6* is combined with a locative goal that it gets exploited in grammaticalization. By focusing on this locative goal of the downward movement, *lok6* can be used to imply 'come to rest at' a certain location. This emphasis on the locative goal has enabled *lok6* to take on the function of marking 'physical settlement' in suitable contexts, which is then further reinterpreted as marking the 'settlement' of an action, which then undergoes subjectification to indicate the 'settlement' of the *speaker's* subjective thought process. In the remainder of the discussion, all these different functions of *lok6* will be analyzed in detail.

### 6.2.2.1 *Metaphorical uses*

By highlighting the locative goal of the movement, *lok6* can be used to encode the location that the theme object occupies after the movement, that is, where the object comes to rest. Consider (12)–(13) taken from early Cantonese texts.

- (12) 擗帽落帽盒。

*Zai1 mou2 lok6 mou2 hap2.*

put bonnet *lok6* bonnet box

'Put the bonnet in the bandbox.'

(Bridgman 1841)

- (13) 放落個處

*fong3 lok6 go2 syu3*

put *lok6* that place

'put it down there'

(Bonney 1853)

In (12)–(13), it is the locative goal rather than the directional movement which is being projected by *lok6*. Thus, (14) below does not mean that one is not allowed or one does not have the ability to put down the entity concerned, but rather that there is not enough space for it so the movement becomes impossible. Example (14) can even be used to respond to a person's request to put a book *up high* on the bookshelf.<sup>90</sup> This further proves that *lok6* in this situation orients towards the 'space', not the downward movement.

- (14) 冇地方放得落

*mou5 dei6fong1 fong3 dak1 lok6*

no place put able *lok6*

'there is no place to put it'

(Bonney 1853)

90. In English, theoretically we can also say 'Put the book *down up* on that high shelf'.

In fact, *lok6*'s marking of 'space' is considered quite salient since it is treated as a separate sense 'having the capacity to hold' in Bai (1998). This emphasis on the occupation of space as illustrated in (14) might give rise to the implication of 'physical settlement' in suitable contexts, exemplified in (15) below.

- (15) 係呢處住落好耐  
*hai2 nei1 syu3 zyu6 lok6 hou2 noi6*  
 at this place reside *lok6* very long  
 'have resided here a long time' (Bonney 1853)

In (15), the fact that the theme subject has occupied the place for a long time can be interpreted as him 'settling' in that place. As will be discussed in the next section, *lok6*'s meaning of 'settlement' has been extended to mean the settlement of an action denoted by the verb, without any sense of occupation of space. This more abstract 'settlement' has further undergone subjectification to suggest the speaker's subjective evaluation of a situation has come to rest. However, before moving on to discuss how *lok6* becomes more grammaticalized, there is a common misconception about *lok6*'s use in examples like (15), which must first be clarified.

Quite a few Cantonese dictionaries and past studies have attempted to attribute to *lok6* in (15) a sense of temporal continuation. Consider some examples given in these works.<sup>91</sup>

- (16) 呢度住落幾好。  
*Nei1 dou6 zyu6 lok6 gei2 hou2.*  
 this place live *lok6* quite good  
 '(I) feel good when (I) continue to live in this place.' (Cheng 1997)
- (17) 佢住落就唔搬走。  
*Keoi5 zyu6 lok6 zau6 m4 bun1 zau2.*  
 s/he live *lok6* then not move out  
 'As s/he continues to live in a certain place, s/he would not move out.'  
 (Yiu 2005: 141)
- (18) 睇落都幾好㗎。  
*Tai2 lok6 dou1 gei2 hou2 aa1.*  
 see *lok6* also quite good PRT  
 'It is quite good when (I) continue to look at it.' (Bai 1998)

Cheng (1997), Bai (1998) and Yiu (2005) all suggest that *lok6* in the examples above is used to denote the continuation of an action, namely the action of living in a particular place, as in (16) and (17), and the action of looking at a particular object,

91. Since both Cheng (1997) and Bai (1998) did not write in English, free translations of (16) and (18) are mine, according to the meaning of *lok6* described in these works.

as in (18). However, we suspect that it is more appropriate to interpret *lok6* in these examples as a marker of ‘settlement’ rather than ‘continuation’, mainly because *lok6* in these sentences focuses on the ‘goal’ rather than the ‘path’ of the action. Consider example (19) below.

- (19) 我喺呢度住落幾十年囉!  
*Ngo5 hai2 nei1 dou6 zyu6 lok6 gei2 sap6 nin4 lo3!*  
 I at this place live *lok6* several ten year PRT  
 ‘I have lived here for several decades already!’

At the time the speaker utters (19), he should have *already* resided/settled there for several tens of years. In other words, the time of speaking should be seen as the endpoint of that extended period, ‘a few decades’. The particle *lok6* actually marks the endpoint of the movement (in this case a temporal movement), not the path, nor the ‘continuation’ of the movement, as has often been claimed in previous studies. Consider another example below.

- (20) 佢住落冇耐,就有幾個人搬入嚟。  
*Keoi5 zyu6 lok6 mou5 noi2, zau6 jau5 gei2 go3 jan4 bun1*  
 s/he live *lok6* not long then have several CL person move  
*jap6 lai4.*  
 in here  
 ‘After s/he had settled in for a while, several people moved in.’

Example (20) cannot be interpreted as ‘While s/he continues to live in that place, several people moved in’ or ‘Several people moved in during his/her short stay in that place’. Again, *lok6* ‘descend’ here marks the ‘settlement’ of that person in that particular place.

Now, let us go back to (16)–(18). The comment *gei2 hou2* ‘quite good’ in (16) is made after the speaker has resided there for some time. Thus, it is an assessment of the situation after having lived there for a period of time. Similarly in (17), the conclusion *m3 bun1 zau2* ‘(will) not move out’ is based on the settled condition of the person described. The sentence is better translated as ‘Once he has settled in, he will not move out’. The ‘continuation’ interpretation of *lok6* is even more unlikely in (18) (i.e. ‘It is quite good when (I) continue to look at it’). One cannot utter (21) to mean he or she has continued to look at the dress for a long time; the sentence is ungrammatical in Cantonese.

- (21) \*睇落呢條裙好耐。  
 \**Tai2 lok6 nei1 tiu4 kwan4 hou2 noi6.*  
 see *lok6* this CL dress very long  
 ‘I have continued to look at this dress for a long time.’

We observe that when *lok6* is used with verbs other than *zyu6* ‘live’, the ‘continuative aspectual’ analysis looks even weaker. Thus, *lok6* in (18) should also be considered as a marker of ‘settled condition’ or ‘achieved state’, rather than a marker of ‘continuation’. Again, *lok6* on these occasions is more appropriately interpreted as indicating a ‘settled condition’ in the speaker’s thought process. While the settlement in (16) and (17) is a physical one; the settlement in (18) is a more abstract, psychological one. We shall leave the detailed discussion of this use of *lok6* in Section 6.2.2.3, when the subjectification of *lok6* is examined.

The reason for *lok6* being mis-described as marking continuation is probably because of the confusion between *lok6* (literally ‘descend’) and *lok6-heoi3* (literally ‘descend go’). In Cantonese, the complex directional particle *lok6-heoi3* projects the path of a downward movement, as illustrated in the following example from early Cantonese.<sup>92</sup>

- (22) 若係冇欄杆我就跌落去。  
*Joek6 hai6 mou5 laan4gon1 ngo5 zau6 dit3 lok6 heoi3.*  
 if BE no balustrade I then fall *lok6 heoi3*  
 ‘If there had been no balustrade, I should have fallen down.’

(Bridgman 1841)

Through the process of metaphorical extension from the spatial domain to the temporal domain, *lok6-heoi3* is used as a temporal marker to indicate the meaning of continuation, as in the following two examples taken from the film data.<sup>93</sup>

- (23) 我唔會俾你胡混落去。  
*Ngo5 m4 wui3 bei2 nei5 wu4 wan6 lok6 heoi3.*  
 I not will let you reckless drift-along *lok6 heoi3*  
 ‘I will not let you continue to drift along recklessly.’ (Night 1949)

- (24) 你講落去啦。  
*Nei5 gong2 lok6 heoi3 laa1.*  
 you say *lok6 heoi3* PRT  
 ‘Continue with what you are saying.’ (Couple 1952)

The difference between *lok6* and *lok6-heoi3* is more clearly illustrated when we consider the following pair of examples.

92. As a directional particle projecting the path of a downward movement, *lok6* requires a goal of the downward movement, while *lok6-heoi3* does not. In other words, *lok6* needs an endpoint, while *lok6-heoi3* does not.

93. For a more detailed discussion of the directional meaning of *lok6-heoi3*, see Yiu (2005: 152–153).

- (25) a. 聽落,確實係難嘅!  
*Teng1 lok6, kok3sat6 hai6 naan4 ge2!*  
 listen *lok6* truly BE difficult PRT  
 ‘Judging from what I’ve heard, it is truly difficult!’
- b. 聽落去,確實係難嘅!  
*Teng1 lok6 heoi3, kok3sat6 hai6 naan4 ge2!*  
 listen *lok6 heoi3* truly BE difficult PRT  
 ‘To continue listening (to it) is truly difficult!’

This pair of examples only differs in the use of *lok6* and *lok6-heoi3*. Even without the context, the semantic difference between them is very clear. In (25a), *lok6* marks the completion, or the settlement, of the act of listening. After the speaker has gathered some information from the addressee, he or she has come to the conclusion that the situation is truly impossible.<sup>94</sup> However in (25b), *lok6-heoi3* marks the continuation of the action – to keep on listening to it is a task which is going to be very difficult (perhaps that is a boring lecture or an awful song). In other words, *lok6* focuses on the ‘goal’ meaning while *lok6-heoi3* puts more emphasis on the ‘path’ meaning. Schematically, the two meanings are represented in Diagram 6.2 below.

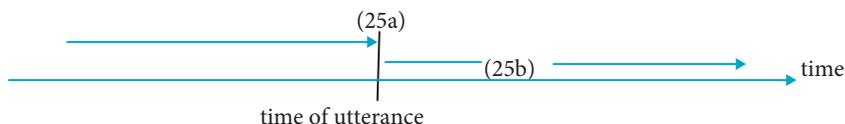


Diagram 6.2 The meaning of *lok6* vs. *lok6-heoi3*

We should now have a clearer picture of how *lok6* is understood as a marker putting emphasis on the goal, and why it is often mis-described as having the sense of temporal continuation. In Section 6.2.2.2 below, we shall investigate how *lok6* is used to imply the meaning ‘settlement of an activity’.

#### 6.2.2.2 *The pragmatic implicature of ‘settlement of an activity’*

In the previous section, how *lok6* is used to imply the ‘occupation of space’, by highlighting the locative goal of the physical downward movement, has been described. This meaning of ‘occupation of space’ in the context of ‘residency’ can be reinterpreted as a ‘physical settlement’, or ‘settling down’, as in (26).

- (26) 係呢處住落好耐  
 =(15) *hai2 nei1 syu3 zyu6 lok6 hou2 noi6*  
 at this place reside *lok6* very long  
 ‘have resided here a long time’

(Bonney 1853)

94. The particle *lok6* in (25a) is considered as having a subjective sense. This will be discussed in more detail in Section 6.2.2.3, when the subjectification of *lok6* is examined.

When this meaning of ‘settlement’ has become more established, it is extended to other contexts to mean, in general, the ‘settlement’ of an activity. This use of *lok6* is first attested in Stedman and Lee (1888) from the database.

- (27) 如果士笏唔在屋, 交落箇封信就得咯。  
*Jyu4gwo2 Si6mat6 m4 zoi6 uk1, gaau1 lok6 go3 fung1 seon3*  
 If Smith not at house hand-in *lok6* that CL letter  
*zau6 dak1 lok3.*  
 then fine PRF  
 ‘If Smith is not in, you can simply leave the letter in the house.’  
 (Stedman and Lee 1888)
- (28) 寫落呢張稿處囉。  
*Se2 lok6 ni1 zoeng1 gou2 syu3 lo1.*  
 write *lok6* this CL form place PRT  
 ‘Before he left, he has given this book to me.’ (Stedman and Lee 1888)

In (27) and (28), *lok6* is used to indicate the completion of an action, which usually has some relevance to the speech time, or to another action. Here, *lok6* can be seen as giving the perfective meaning ‘HAVE V-ed’. Below are two examples from more contemporary Cantonese, taken from films screened in the 1950s.

- (29) 佢寫落張紙, 走咗喇。  
*Keoi5 se2 lok6 zoeng1 zi2, zau2 zo2 laak3.*  
 s/he write *lok6* CL paper go PERF PRT  
 ‘After s/he had written something on the paper, s/he went away.’  
 (Couple 1952)
- (30) 我同我家父返嚟呢, 就買落啲田, 起好間屋。<sup>95</sup>  
*Ngo5 tung4 ngo5 gaa1fu6 faan1 lai4 ne1, zau6 maai5 lok6 di1*  
 I with I father back come PRF then buy *lok6* CL  
*tin4, hei2 hou2 gaan1 uk1.*  
 field build complete CL house  
 ‘When I came back with my father, we have bought some fields, and built the house.’  
 (Lover 1952)

The particle *lok6* in the above examples is more appropriately understood as an indicator of the ‘settlement’ of the activity just prior to a second activity (in a sequence). *Lok6* in (29) is used to indicate the ‘fixing’ of the activity ‘writing on a piece of paper’, and to mean the ‘settlement’ of ‘the business deal’ in (30). Interestingly, the actions described in both examples involve an entity filling up some space.

95. The term *gaa1fu6*, literally *home-father*, refers to ‘father’ in a more respectful way. It can only be used to refer to the speaker’s father in front of another person. That is to say, one cannot use *gaa1fu6* to address his or her father directly, if the father is in fact the addressee in the conversation.

For instance, the paper is filled by the words, as in (29), and the land is filled by the fields, as in (30). Apparently, this *lok6* cannot be used with actions that do not involve any occupation of space. One probably cannot say:

- (31) ʔ我沖落涼就出街嘞。  
 ʔNɔŋ5 cʊŋ1 lok6 loŋŋ4 zau6 ceot1 gaai1 laak3.  
 I take lok6 shower then go street PRT  
 ‘After I had my shower, I went out.’

It is suspected that the ‘physical settlement’ sense of *lok6* should be attributed in explaining why examples that involve an occupation of space are more acceptable. Originally, the ‘physical settlement’ sense signals that something has resided, and become fixed, in a place for a long time. When this use of *lok6* becomes more general, it is extended and can be used with action verbs other than *reside*. However, these actions still need to involve some kind of spatial occupation for *lok6* to be acceptable. Again, this is a case of retention in grammaticalization.

Tang (2015: 77) has included this use of *lok6* in his discussion, and suggested another constraint on its occurrence that the verb involved must be able to lead to some results that have a certain degree of continuity. Thus, it is unacceptable to utter (32) below. However, the utterance would have become acceptable at once if the action concerned is replaced by ‘taking care of the laundry’, as in (32’). For one thing, the clothes would have occupied some physical space. For another thing, even though you have settled the clothes in the washing machine, the washing machine would still be at work after you have gone out, thus satisfying the constraint suggested by Tang (2015).

- (32) \*聽落歌我就出街嘞。  
 \*Tɛŋ1 lok6 go1 ngo5 zau6 ceot1 gaai1 laak3.  
 listen lok6 song I then go street PRT  
 ‘After (I) listened to the song, I went out.’
- (32’) 洗落衫我就出街嘞。  
 Sai2 lok6 saam1 ngo5 zau6 ceot1 gaai1 laak3.  
 wash lok6 clothes I then go street PRT  
 ‘After (I) settled the laundry, I went out.’

It seems that this use of *lok6* might be a relatively recent innovation since this is not found in any of the early Cantonese texts published in the nineteenth century. Upon further grammaticalization, *lok6* has undergone subjectification to mark the ‘settlement of the speaker’s thought’, which is our focus in the next section.

### 6.2.2.3 Subjectification of *lok6* – settlement of the speaker’s thought

Based on its function of marking the settlement of an action, *lok6* has further undergone subjectification to indicate the settlement of the speaker’s thought process

in an evaluation or assessment – the kind of settlement which implies the speaker’s perspective and point of view. It is suspected that *lok6* with this function was at first mostly used with perception verbs, attested in data from the 1950s and onwards. Consider (33)–(36) below.

- (33) 呢個女仔睇落都係唔得嘅。  
*Ne1 go3 nei5zai2 tai2 lok6 dou1 hai6 m4 dak1 ge3.*  
 this CL girl see *lok6* also BE not fine PRT  
 ‘It looks like (to me) this girl is still not fine.’ (Foster Daddy 1952)
- (34) 依家見落暫時係散戶比較多。  
*Ji1gaa1 gin3 lok6 zaam6si4 hai6 saan2 wu6*  
 now see *lok6* for-the-moment BE private investor  
*bei2gaa3 do1.*  
 compare more  
 ‘(As I can see) at the moment, there appear to be more private investors.’  
 (HKCanCor)
- (35) 粒糖睇落係半透明狀嘅。  
*Lap1 tong2 tai2 lok6 hai6 bun3 tau3ming4 zong6 ge3.*  
 CL candy see *lok6* BE semi transparent form PRT  
 ‘The candy (seems to me) to have a semi-transparent form.’ (HKCanCor)
- (36) 個價錢諗落都抵。  
*Go3 gaa3cin4 nam2 lok6 dou1 dai2.*  
 CL price think *lok6* also worth  
 ‘After some thought, (I think) it is actually a good price.’ (HKCanCor)

In (33)–(36), the ‘settlement’ that *lok6* expresses has been shifted towards the speaker’s perspective. In these cases, *lok6* is not used to mark the settlement of an activity right before another activity is to take place, but is used to indicate the settlement of an action before the speaker can make his or her evaluation. This use of *lok6* is often used with mental verbs, or verbs of perception, such as *tai2* ‘see’ and *nam2* ‘think’. For instance, (35) actually means ‘After I have looked at this candy (for some time), I suggest that it has a semi-transparent form, based on my observation earlier’. Similarly, (36) basically means ‘After I have thought about this price (for some time), I conclude that it is actually a good price, based on my assessment of it earlier’. Since the major role of *lok6* here is to mark the speaker’s subjective comment, the sentence would have become ungrammatical if the assessment part after *lok6* is left out.<sup>96</sup>

96. Tang (2015: 87) has also noticed the ‘obligatoriness’ of the speaker’s comment in similar constructions with *lok6*. He accounted for this constraint from a syntactic perspective, by drawing upon the similarities between this construction and the middle construction in English, such as *The book reads easily*. While ‘the book’ is the subject of the sentence, it is actually the PATIENT that

The fact that *V-lok6* is always used to introduce the conclusion or evaluation of the speaker has made it a suitable candidate to introduce a reassessment of the first impression in contexts where the speaker wants to revise his or her previous evaluation. Consider more examples taken from HKCanCor.

- (37) 起初以為佢好cool, 識落就知唔係嘞。  
*Hei2co1 ji5wai4 keoi5 hou2 cool, sik1 lok6 zau6 zi1 m4*  
 beginning suppose s/he very cool know *lok6* then know not  
*hai6 laak3.*  
 BE PRT  
 ‘At the beginning (I thought that) s/he was very cool, but after (I have known him/her for) a while I realize that’s not true.’ (HKCanCor)
- (38) 個計劃好似好周詳, 但係諗落都有危險性。  
*Go3 gai3waak6 hou2ci3 hou2 zau1coeng4 daan6hai6 nam2 lok6*  
 CL plan seem very careful but think *lok6*  
*dou1 jau5 ngai4him2sing3.*  
 also have danger  
 ‘(To me) it seems to be a careful plan, but when thinking about it (more carefully) it has (its own) dangers.’ (HKCanCor)
- (39) 雖然係假酒, 飲落都係差唔多啫。  
*Seoi1jin4 hai6 gaa2 zau2, jam2 lok6 dou1 hai6 caa1 m4 do1 ze1.*  
 though BE fake wine drink *lok6* also BE differ not much PRT  
 ‘Although the wine was fake, it actually didn’t taste very different from real wine.’ (HKCanCor)

In (37)–(39), *lok6* is used to announce a revised conclusion or re-assessment. Words such as *bat1gwo3* ‘but’, *daan6hai6* ‘but’, *seoi1jin4* ‘although’, and *ji5wai4* ‘suppose’ have provided the context for *lok6* to take on the meaning of ‘re-’. In these examples, *lok6* is used to suggest the final conclusion. These examples can be understood as ‘on first appearance it seems to me to be X, but afterwards on the basis of further V-ing, I conclude that it is actually Y’. This conclusive function of the construction *V-lok6* is actually quite salient in everyday speech. If someone has made a decision and then suddenly utters ‘*V-lok6*...’, then this is an important clue that this person is going to revise his previous judgment and express another conclusion.

Apparently, little has been written on this use of *lok6* with verbs of perception and cognition. However, despite the not-so-accurate description of *lok6* as a

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is affected by the action as denoted by the verb. In here, ‘the book’ is actually comparable with the subjects in examples (33)–(36), syntactically speaking. Since ‘easily’ cannot be left out in *The book reads easily*, the speaker’s comments in (33)–(36) also cannot be omitted, in a similar manner.

marker of continuation, Cheng (1997)'s suggestion that 'the continuation of the action always draws forth the *speaker's subjective judgment*' seems to be well-taken. Examples (33)–(39) all involve the *speaker's subjective assessment* of a situation, namely to arrive at a conclusion after some deliberate consideration (i.e. the goal of a mental path). The sense of *lok6* here is essentially subjective as it can only be used to introduce the *speaker's* subjective assessment, not anyone else's.

For instance, example (36) inevitably involves the speaker's subjective assessment of a situation – arriving at the conclusion that 'the price is good' after some deliberate consideration. If the subject has to be expressed explicitly, it must be the first person, but not the second, or third person. This is related to what has been called the 'pronoun test' for subjectification, introduced in Chapter 3.<sup>97</sup>

- (40) a. 個價錢我諗落都抵。  
 Go3 gaa3cin4 ngo5 nam2 lok6 dou1 dai2.  
 CL price I think lok6 also worth  
 'After some thought, I think it is actually a good price.'
- b. ?個價錢佢諗落都抵。  
 ?Go3 gaa3cin4 keoi5 nam2 lok6 dou1 dai2.  
 CL price s/he think lok6 also worth  
 'After some thought, he thinks it is actually a good price.'
- c. ?個價錢人人諗落都抵。  
 ?Go3 gaa3cin4 jan4 jan4 nam2 lok6 dou1 dai2.  
 CL price person person think lok6 also worth  
 'After some thought, everyone thinks it is actually a good price.'

In addition to the 'pronoun test', *lok6* as a subjective marker cannot pass the 'narrative test' either, as already suggested in Chapter 3, repeated below as (41a) and (41b). It is rather unacceptable to use *lok6* in a narrative context, as in (41a). If we want to describe that person's thought/judgment about the price after some consideration, we need to spell it out explicitly by using the verb *kok3ding6* 'certain', as in (41b).

- (41) a. ?個價錢佢諗落都抵。  
 ?Go3 gaa3cin4 keoi5 nam2 lok6 dou1 dai2.  
 CL price s/he think lok6 also worth  
 'After some thought, he concluded it is actually a good price.'
- b. 諗咗一陣, 佢確定個價錢都抵。  
 Nam2 zo2 jat1 zan6, keoi5 kok3ding6 go3 gaa3cin4 dou1 dai2.  
 think PERF one while s/he certain CL price also worth  
 'After some thought, he was certain that it was actually a good price.'

97. Examples (19a–c) in Chapter 3 are repeated here as (40a–c).

At this point, it would be interesting to compare *lok*'s subjective use with *lai4*'s subjective use, since both can be used to introduce the speaker's subjective evaluation. In Chapter 4, it has been suggested that when *lai4* is used with the perception verb *tai2* 'see', it serves the function of introducing an evaluation made by the *speaker* on the basis of the circumstantial evidence, as illustrated in (42).<sup>98</sup>

- (42) 我哋照咁樣睇嚟, 可知舊社會以金錢 結合嘅婚姻, 並不健全。  
*Ngo5 dei6 ziu3 gam2joeng2 tai2 lai4, ho2 zi1 gau6 se5wui2*  
 I PL according such see *lai4* can know old society  
*ji5 gam1cin4 git3hap6 ge3 fan1jan1, bing6 bat1 gim6cyun4.*  
 use money combine LP marriage entirely not healthy  
 'From our point of view, it looks like that the way of using money to bring  
 together a marriage is not healthy.' (Blessings 1950)

Given this example, the function of *tai2-lai4* 'see-come' seems to be very similar to *tai2-lok6* 'see-descend', since both are used to introduce the speaker's evaluation. However, if we look closely enough at the different contexts in which *tai2-lai4* and *tai2-lok6* are used, we can tell that they are in fact different. Consider the pair of examples below.

- (43) a. 睇落, 佢都唔似一個壞人吖!  
*Tai2 lok6, keoi5 dou1 m4 ci5 jat1 go3 waai6 jan4 aa1!*  
 see *lok6* s/he also not resemble one CL bad person PRT  
 'As far as I can see, s/he does not seem (like) a bad guy.'  
 b. 睇嚟, 佢都唔似一個壞人吖!  
*Tai2 lai4, keoi5 dou1 m4 ci5 jat1 go3 waai6 jan4 aa1!*  
 see *lai4* s/he also not resemble one CL bad person PRT  
 'Judging from what I know - s/he doesn't seem to be a bad guy.'

Both *lok6* and *lai4* are used to mark only the *speaker's* subjective evaluation, not *someone else's* conclusion. However, when compared to (43b), the meaning of (43a) is even more speaker-oriented. The conclusion in (43a) is solely based on the speaker's perspective. The speaker is not relying on any objective evidence in order to make the judgment, indeed, he or she might not even know that person. Yet, the conclusion introduced by *lai4* in (43b) is more impersonal, or at least the conclusion is based on some circumstantial facts. The speaker in (43b) has gathered some information in order to make a fair judgment. The phrase *tai2-lok6* in (43a) means 'looking at him...' while *tai2-lai4* in (43b) is better considered as expressing the meaning 'looking at the facts...'. In other words, with *tai2-lok6*, it is the speaker who does the looking; while with *tai2-lai4*, it is the evidence which comes towards

98. Example (42) is first cited in Chapter 4 as example (8).

the speaker (cf. the directional sense of *lai4*, which denotes a movement directed towards the speaker).

Another difference between *tai2-lok6* and *tai2-lai4* is that *lai4* is definitely more restricted than *lok6*. As already seen in the discussion of *lai4* in Chapter 4, *lai4* is bound to the verb *tai2* ‘see’ to introduce the speaker’s conclusion – the particle *lai4* in *tai2-lai4* is not at all versatile, whereas *lok6* can attach to a variety of verbs to encode the speaker’s conclusion after a particular cognitive process.

### 6.3 *Hoi1* ‘move away’ and *maai4* ‘move towards’

The directional particles *hoi1* ‘move away’ and *maai4* ‘move towards’ form another pair of directional antonyms in Cantonese, with *hoi1* used to denote a movement directed away from a reference point and *maai4* used for a movement directed towards a reference point. Consider (44) and (45) taken from early Cantonese texts.

- (44) 掣開一邊。  
*Zai1 hoi1 jat1 bin1.*  
 put *hoi1* one side  
 ‘Put them by one side.’ (Bridgman 1841)

- (45) 抽埋個邊。  
*Cau1 maai4 go2 bin1.*  
 carry *maai4* that side  
 ‘Carry it over that side.’ (Bonney 1853)

The kind of directional meanings illustrated can be understood through the image schema illustrated in Diagram 6.3.

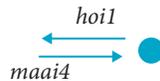


Diagram 6.3 The image schema of *hoi1* and *maai4*

Similar to other directional particles, *hoi1* and *maai4* as particles are also grammaticalized from their verb counterparts. However, the case of *hoi1* as a verb is rather different from other cases; it cannot take a locative goal directly.

- (46) 埋岸  
*maai4 ngon6*  
*maai4* shore  
 ‘approach shore’ (Bonney 1853)

- (47) \*開岸  
 \**hoi1 ngon6*  
*hoi1* shore  
 ‘away from shore’

While most directional verbs can take a locative object, *hoi1* does not seem to follow this general trend.<sup>99</sup> While example (46) expresses a movement directed towards the shore, this would become ungrammatical if *maai4* is replaced by *hoi1*. Yiu (2005) ascribes this special property of *hoi1* to its origin as a causative transitive verb; it always takes a theme object instead of a locative object. Yiu suggests that the character 開 *hoi1* at first was only associated with the meaning ‘to open’ (e.g. to set apart the two panels of a traditional Chinese door or gate), which appeared as early as in pre-Qin (before 221 BC). She adds that it was the meaning ‘to open’ which led to the meaning ‘to separate’ (Han, 206 BC–AD 220), which then further developed into the directional meaning ‘away’ (ibid: 50). Following Yiu’s line of argument, the verb *hoi1* did not originate as a verb of direction as it does not occur as a main verb meaning ‘move away’; it only became a directional particle meaning ‘move away’ at a later stage of its evolution through its use in the post-verbal position. This seems a possible reason as to why *hoi1*’s behavior is a little different from other directional verbs.

Although Yiu does not support her proposal with historical data, her proposed pathway seems reasonable and a similar observation can be made in data from early Cantonese texts. In Morrison (1828), the first dictionary compiled for Cantonese, only two senses for *hoi1* are found, ‘open’ and ‘separation’, illustrated in (48) and (49) below.

- (48) 開門  
*hoi1 mun4*  
*hoi1* door  
 ‘to open the door’ (Morrison 1828)
- (49) 分開好醜  
*fan1 hoi1 hou2 cau2*  
 divide *hoi1* good bad  
 ‘to separate the good from the bad’ (Morrison 1828)

Consider below a few more examples taken from other early Cantonese texts:

- (50) 難開口  
*naan4 hoi1 hau2*  
 difficult *hoi1* mouth  
 ‘difficult to open the mouth (embarrassed)’ (Bridgman 1841)

99. Another directional verb which does not take a locative goal is *hei2* ‘move (something) up’, which has been discussed in Chapter 5.

- (51) 開布帳遮日晒。  
*Hoi1 bou3 zoeng3 ze1 jat6 saai3.*  
*hoi1* cloth awning shade sun glare  
 ‘Open the cloth awning to shade from the sun’s glare.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (52) 開把遮  
*hoi1 baa2 ze1*  
*hoi1* CL umbrella  
 ‘open the umbrella’ (Bonney 1853)

The senses ‘to open’ or ‘to separate’ have indeed prepared the way for *hoi3* to take on the sense ‘away’ when it grammaticalized into a particle. As a particle attaching to verbs, *hoi1* not only can express the meanings ‘to open’ and ‘to separate’, but also the meaning ‘to move away from’ – to denote a movement directed away from a point of reference. Consider examples (53)–(55) below.

- (53) 擘開口  
*maak3 hoi1 hau2*  
 split *hoi1* mouth  
 ‘open the mouth’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (54) 推開隻大銀碟。  
*Teoi1 hoi1 zek3 daai6 ngan4 dip2.*  
 push *hoi1* CL large silver plate  
 ‘Push away that large silver plate.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (55) 同我揀開四札香芹  
*Tung4 ngo5 gaan2 hoi1 sei3 zaat3 hoeng1 kan4.*  
 with me pick *hoi1* four CL celery  
 ‘Pick out for me four bunches of celery.’ (Stedman and Lee 1888)

By looking more closely at (53)–(55), the movement denoted by *hoi1* in all these examples can be represented by the same image schema as described in Diagram 6.3, repeated below, denoting a movement directed away from a source or reference point. They only differ in the actual realizations of the same image.



Now, it has been shown how the directional meaning of *hoi1* and *maai4* has come about. Similar to most directional particles, the case of *maai4* is rather simple; its directional meaning ‘move towards’ comes directly from its verb counterpart bearing the same meaning (i.e. ‘approach’). However, the development of *hoi1*’s directional meaning is less straight forward. It is suggested that its directional meaning has not come directly from its verb counterpart meaning ‘move away’, which actually did not exist, but has rather come from the meaning ‘open’.

In the remainder of Section 6.3, the various more abstract meanings which get associated with *hoi1* and *maai4* in their course of grammaticalization are examined. The grammaticalization of *hoi1* is presented in Section 6.3.1, followed by the investigation of *maai4* in Section 6.3.2.

### 6.3.1 *Hoi1* ‘move away’

*Hoi1* as a directional particle denoting a movement away from a reference point has developed into a particle expressing different functions. Through the process of metaphorical extension, *hoi1* expresses the more abstract notion ‘away’. By metaphorical transfer from the spatial to the temporal domain, *hoi1* has developed into grammatical markers of different kinds, expressing a number of temporal meanings, to be investigated in Section 6.3.1.1. Section 6.3.1.2 will turn to examine how *hoi1* has developed into a particle expressing habitual meaning, a meaning resulting from the conventionalization of pragmatic implicature.

#### 6.3.1.1 *Metaphorical uses*

Besides the concrete directional meaning of ‘move away’, *hoi1* also denotes a more abstract kind of ‘away’, illustrated in (56).

- (56) 將呢個道理推開講。  
*Zoengl nei1 go3 dou6lei5 teoi1 hoi1 gong2*  
 take this CL principle push *hoi1* talk  
 ‘Take this principle and extends its application to other things.’ (Ball 1894)

The object which undergoes the movement denoted by *hoi1* is very often a real object, travelling in a real space. However, the object in (56) is a more abstract one in a metaphorical space (i.e. a principle), being extended to a wider range of applications. In addition to the more abstract ‘away’, *hoi1* is also found to express several temporal meanings, including the meanings of ‘progression’, ‘continuation’, and ‘while’. These temporal implications of *hoi1* are only attested in the twentieth century data. See examples (57)–(60) below for the ‘progressive’ use of *hoi1*.<sup>100</sup>

- (57) 佢做開嘢唔嚟得。  
*Keoi5 zou6 hoi1 je5 m4 lai4 dak1.*  
 s/he do *hoi1* thing not come able  
 ‘He is doing something thus not able to come.’ (Wisner 1927)

100. It appears that the ‘progressive’ sense of *hoi1* has become obsolete in contemporary Cantonese; examples (57)–(60) are no long acceptable to mean ‘progression’. Example (57) still sounds grammatical nowadays, but meaning ‘continuation’ – a sense of *hoi1* which will be discussed below. In order to turn these sentences into grammatical ones which signal ‘progression’, the particle *hoi1* needs to be replaced by *gan2*, the progressive aspect marker in contemporary Cantonese.

- (58) 寫開字唔好講話。  
*Se2 hoi1 zi6 m4 hou2 gong2 syut3waa6.*  
 write *hoi1* words not good say talk  
 ‘Do not talk while writing.’ (Wisner 1927)
- (59) 佢啱啱食開飯。  
*Keoi5 aam1aam1 sik6 hoi1 faan6.*  
 s/he just eat *hoi1* rice  
 ‘He is just eating.’ (O’Melia 1941)
- (60) 食開飯就唔好講話。  
*Sik6 hoi1 faan6 zau6 m4 hou2 gong2 waa6.*  
 eat *hoi1* rice then not good say words  
 ‘Do not talk while eating.’ (O’Melia 1941)

In (57)–(60), *hoi1* is considered by the authors of the texts as a progressive marker, comparable to the progressive suffix *-ing* in English. That is to say, the action involved is in progress at the time of utterance. This temporal meaning of *hoi1* can be accounted for by seeing the path in the spatial domain (i.e. ‘move away’) being mapped onto the path in the temporal domain (i.e. ‘in progress’) through metaphorical extension. This use of *hoi1* is only attested in the twentieth century Cantonese texts and not a single instance of it is found in data from contemporary Cantonese, including film data and data from HKCanCor.<sup>101</sup>

*Hoi1* as a temporal marker is more commonly described as a marker of ‘continuation’, putting emphasis on the starting point and the path extending from this point in the temporal domain to express the inception and continuation of a particular event. This continuative use of *hoi1* stresses that the event has started and been continued for some time, and may or may not be in progress at the time of utterance. This *hoi1* started to appear in data from the 1950s, illustrated in (61) and (62), repeating (14a) and (14b) from Chapter 3.

- (61) 你無信俾我,我連寫開俾你個封信都抔埋。  
*Nei5 mou5 seon3 bei2 ngo5, ngo5 lin4 se2 hoi1 bei2 nei5 go2*  
 you no letter give me I even write *hoi1* give you that  
*fung1 seon3 dou1 dam2 maai4.*  
 CL letter also throw as-well  
 ‘Since you have sent me no letters, I have thrown away the letter which I actually started writing a while ago.’ (Butterfly 1954)

101. A possible reason for its decline might be its competition with the progressive marker *gan2* in contemporary Cantonese.

- (62) 我郊外仲打理開個病人。

*Ngo5 gaau1ngoí6 zung6 daa2lei5 hoí1 go3 beng6jan4.*

I countryside still look-after *hoí1* CL patient

'I have a patient waiting in the countryside whom I have been looking after for some while (so that I can't stay any longer).' (Woman 1955)

This use of *hoí1* can again be understood fairly easily by taking into account the basic image schema illustrated in Diagram 6.3 above. In both (61) and (62), the path marked by *hoí1* is more appropriately considered as a temporal path, that is, the event (i.e. the writing of the letter and the caring of the patient) started at a certain point of time (i.e. the reference time) and has continued for some time along the temporal path. The meaning of 'to start and move away' in the spatial domain has been transferred to the temporal domain as 'to commence and continue'. Although it is also possible for other directional particles to project the path of the movement to mean 'continuation', only *hoí1* has grammaticalized into a marker of 'continuation'. This is probably because of the special feature related to *hoí1*'s origin that it does not take a locative goal. In other words, it does not have an implicit endpoint, thus leading to this implication of 'continuation'.

The continuative sense of *hoí1* has been widely discussed in the literature (X. Li 1994; Li et al. 1995; S. Zhang 1996; Yiu 2005; Cheung 2007a), and is also mentioned in most contemporary Cantonese dictionaries (Rao et al. 1996; K. Wu 1997; Bai 1998; Zhang and Ni 1999). While the continuative use has been widely discussed, discussion on the 'while' sense of *hoí1* has not received a lot of attention in prior studies, apart from Bai (1998) and Tang (2015). Bai describes this usage of *hoí1* as 'at the time of V-ing...', which often has an implication of 'convenience', illustrated in (63).<sup>102</sup> Bai's observation seems to be supported by Tang (2015), with the adverb *seon6bin2* 'convenience' also appears in Tang's example. Tang believes that this use of *hoí1* is not very different from its use as an inchoative marker. For example, (64) means that when this thought of 'coming back to the campus' *begins*, then you can come and visit me.

- (63) 你去開郵局就幫我擲嚟喇。

*Nei5 heoi3 hoí1 jau4guk2 zau6 bong1 ngo5 lo2 lai4 laa1.*

you go *hoí1* post-office then help me take come PRT

'If you happen to be going to the post office, please bring (it) to me.' (Bai 1998)

- (64) 你返開嚟校園就順便搵我。

*Nei5 faan1 hoí1 lai4 haau6jyun4 zau6 seon6bin2 wan2 Ngo5.*

you back *hoí1* come campus then convenience find me

'If you happen to be back to the campus, come and find me.' (Tang 2015: 89)

102. The original quote from Bai (1998): 做...的時候(有順便之義) 'at the time of V-ing...(with an implication of *seon6bin2* 'convenience')'. This is similar to the sense of 'as long as' in English.

It seems that in both (63) and (64), the major function of *hoi1* is to introduce a condition for another action to occur. It means something like ‘while one is at a time doing something, then...’, which, in fact, is also a kind of temporal meaning projecting the path of the temporal movement. This ‘during V-ing’ meaning of *hoi1* is also considered relevant to its continual meaning that once an action has started and continued, another action can then occur in the course (temporal path) of that action. It is observed that this temporal path that *hoi1* suggests is rather vague. The phrase containing *hoi1* often provides the background setting (i.e. the continuing action) for the main event to happen. Thus, this *hoi1* is always used in the initial framing clause, in preparation for the event in the main clause.

This ‘while’ sense of *hoi1* is not a recent innovation; it is attested in the 1940s data, exemplified in (65). Two more recent examples from HKCanCor are given in (66)–(67).

- (65) 如果你係買開野，請你同我買本書。  
*Jyu4gwo2 nei5 hai6 maai5 hoi1 je5, cing2 nei5 tung4 ngo5 maai5*  
 if you BE buy *hoi1* thing please you with me buy  
*bun2 syu1.*  
 CL book  
 ‘If it be that you are buying things, please buy a book for me.’ (O’Melia 1941)
- (66) 如果我哋去開深圳呢，噉我哋可以買多啲字典。  
*Jyu4gwo2 ngo5 dei6 heoi3 hoi1 Sam1zan3 ne1, gam2 ngo5 dei6*  
 if me PL go *hoi1* Shenzhen PRT then I PL  
*ho2ji3 maai5 do1 di1 zi6din2.*  
 can buy more some dictionary  
 ‘If we are going to Shenzhen, then we can buy more dictionaries.’  
 (HKCanCor)
- (67) 有次我去開廣州呢，買咗本語法書，四十幾文咋！  
*Jau5 ci3 ngo5 heoi3 hoi1 Gwong2zau1 ne1, maai5 zo2 bun2*  
 have one-time I go *hoi1* Guangzhou PRT buy PERF CL  
*jyu5faat3 syu1, sei3sap6 gei2 man1 za3!*  
 grammar book forty few dollar only  
 ‘There was one time I went to Guangzhou, I bought a grammar book which  
 only cost me forty something!’  
 (HKCanCor)

In these examples, *hoi1* signals ‘while X happens, it marks the condition for Y to happen’, no matter whether the event has already happened, as in (67), or is still to come, as in (65) and (66). That is to say, the reference time is not restricted to the present or the past, but can also be set in the future. In fact, most examples from the database have their reference set in the future.

To arrive at an interim conclusion, we have observed how *hoi1*, originally a verb meaning ‘open’, has undergone grammaticalization to become a directional particle

meaning ‘move away’. By projecting its path component in the temporal domain, *hoi1* has developed into a marker of progression and continuation. The progressive sense of *hoi1* is no longer grammatical in modern Cantonese, while the continuative sense, which puts emphasis on the inceptive and continuative aspect of an event, is still in use nowadays. Besides, when *hoi1* is used in a subordinate clause, it can be reinterpreted as a temporal marker meaning ‘while’, marking the temporal path (i.e. the precondition) for another action to happen.

### 6.3.1.2 *The pragmatic implicature of ‘habit’*

As has been observed in the precious section, *hoi1* has a continuative use and it always stresses that the event has started and continued for some time in the past. On occasions where *hoi1* is employed as a continuative marker, it can also imply that the activity concerned has become a ‘habit’. Consider (68) below taken from a film screened in the 1950s.

- (68) 佢嚟開就時時上嚟嚟嚟。  
*Keoi5 lai4 hoi1 zau6 si4si4 soeng5 lai4 gaa3 laa3*  
 s/he come *hoi1* then often up come PRT PRT  
 ‘If he has started and continued to come, then he is going to come here often.’  
 (Lover 1952)

In (68), the continuative use of *hoi1* has taken on a ‘habitual’ implication in this context. When one started to come and has this ‘coming’ repeated, it would have become one’s habit. In some contexts, ‘continuation’ is more likely understood as ‘habitual’. Further consider (69) and (70) below, taken from two Cantonese grammar books.

- (69) 我哋食開飯，忽然間叫我哋食麵，點得嚟？  
*Ngo5 dei6 sik6 hoi1 faan6, fat1jin4gaan1 giu3 ngo5 dei6 sik6*  
 I PL eat *hoi1* rice suddenly ask I PL eat  
*min6, dim2 dak1 gaa3?*  
 noodles how can PRT  
 ‘We’ve been eating rice, how can we suddenly change to eating noodles?’  
 (Cheung 2007a: 158)
- (70) 我坐開呢張凳嘅。  
*Ngo5 co5 hoi1 nei1 zoeng1 dang3 ge3.*  
 I sit *hoi1* this CL chair PRT  
 ‘This is the chair that I’ve been sitting on.’  
 (X. Li 1994: 256)

In (69), *Ngo5 dei6 sik6 hoi1 faan6* can be understood as ‘we’ve been eating rice for this meal’. However, the utterance can also mean ‘we have been eating rice as our habit’. For instance, it might be the case that the speaker always orders rice dishes

in this restaurant (maybe the restaurant is famous for its rice dishes). However, when he came to the restaurant he was told that the rice dishes were all sold and he could only order noodles. On this occasion, example (69) is more appropriately interpreted as ‘We are used to eating rice, how can we suddenly change to eating noodles?’ Here, the event of ‘having rice’ is no longer treated as a single event, but a regularly iterated event over a span of time. The ability of *hoi1* to mark the continuous occurrences of an event over a span of time has made it possible to be reinterpreted as a habitual marker in suitable contexts.

The same rationale applies to (70). The chair may be one which the speaker has continued to sit on for some time before the time of utterance. The chair can also be one which the speaker sits on *regularly*. In fact, the speaker may or may not be sitting on that chair when uttering (70). In either case, however, *hoi1* stresses that the action of sitting on that chair, or the situation that the speaker regularly sits on that chair, has started and continued for a considerable period of time. In other words, the notion of ‘habit’ is added to the first interpretation to yield the second reading.

Examples (68)–(70) can be considered as ‘bridging’ examples, leading from the continuative interpretation, to the habitual interpretation. Not all examples with a continuative interpretation can also be interpreted as having an implied habitual meaning. For instance, in (71), *hoi1* can only suggest a continuative reading.

(71) 你無信俾我,我連寫開俾你個封信都挲埋。

(=61) *Nei5 mou5 seon3 bei2 ngo5, ngo5 lin4 se2 hoi1 bei2 nei5 go2*  
 you no letter give me I even write *hoi1* give you that  
*fung1 seon3 dou1 dam2 maai4.*  
 CL letter also throw as-well

‘Since you have sent me no letters, I have thrown away the letter which I actually started writing a while ago.’ (Butterfly 1954)

From the examples above, it seems that only contexts which naturally allow the event to be performed consistently over a period of time can give rise to a habitual reading – it is assumed that an action performed consistently and repeatedly in the past would have become a habit. Thus, examples (69) and (70) allow the room for *hoi1* to be reinterpreted as a habitual marker because both ‘having rice’ and ‘sitting on that chair’ can occur many times, which eventually might become one’s habit.

On occasions where *hoi1* is used with an event which is related to the notion of ‘type’ or ‘category’, the habitual reading becomes even more salient.

(72) 我啲貓食開個隻牌子。

*Ngo5 di1 maau1 sik6 hoi1 go2 zek3 paai4zi2.*  
 I CL cat eat *hoi1* that CL brand

‘My cats are used to eating that brand (of cat food).’ (HKCanCor)

- (73) 我用開嗰個方法返工。  
*Ngo5 jung6 hoi1 go2 go3 fong1faat3 faan1 gung1.*  
 I use *hoi1* that CL method back work  
 ‘I am used to going to work that way.’ (HKCanCor)
- (74) 佢睇開中醫嘅。  
*Keoi5 tai2 hoi1 zung1 ji1 ge3.*  
 s/he see *hoi1* Chinese doctor PRT  
 ‘S/he usually goes to a Chinese doctor.’ (Matthews and Yip 2011a: 241)
- (75) 佢飲開呢隻咖啡。  
*Keoi5 jam2 hoi1 nei1 zek3 gaa3fe1.*  
 s/he drink *hoi1* this brand coffee  
 ‘She drinks this brand of coffee.’ (Yiu 2005: 141)

In (72)–(75), a habitual interpretation is brought out by the use of *hoi1*, which is described as denoting a ‘habitual, customary activity’ (Matthews and Yip 2011a: 241). In particular, the meaning of ‘type’ expressed in these examples has further reinforced the habitual reading evoked by *hoi1*; it is *this* type of thing that the person does habitually, not *other* types. For instance, (72) stresses that ‘my cats are used to eating *that brand* of cat food, as opposed to *other brands*’. Similarly, (74) suggests something like ‘She’s more used to going to a *Chinese* doctor, instead of a *Western* doctor’. Without this context of ‘type’, the continuative meaning is still there, but the implication of ‘habit’ would have gone. Consider (75’) below, with the classifier *zek3* ‘brand’ replaced by *bui1* ‘cup’.

- (75’) 佢飲開呢杯咖啡。  
*Keoi5 jam2 hoi1 nei1 bui1 gaa3fe1.*  
 s/he drink *hoi1* this cup coffee  
 ‘She has been drinking this cup of coffee.’

Example (75’) can only mean ‘the person has started and continued to drink the particular cup of coffee for some time before speech time’, but never ‘the person regularly drinks the cup of coffee’. The essence of *hoi1* is that it has got a starting point built into it, and a natural continuation from this starting point. Without the context of ‘type’, described in (75’), the habitual implicature is gone, leaving only the continuative reading. Without *hoi1*, however, the meaning of ‘over a span of time’ is no longer there. Although examples (72)–(75) are still perfect without the particle *hoi1*, the meaning has become totally different; the meaning that ‘the action has become a habit’ is gone. The sentences can only be treated as answers to different WH-questions. Without *hoi1*, (72) can only be used as the response to the question ‘Which brand of cat food does your cat eat?’ and (75) to the question ‘Which brand of coffee does s/he drink?’

In 6.3.2 below, we turn to investigate the development of the directional particle *maai4* – the opposite of *hoi1*.

### 6.3.2 *Maai4* ‘move towards’

We have seen that *maai4* as a full-fledged verb denotes a movement directed towards a locative goal, described in (76) and (77).

- (76) 埋岸  
 =(46) *maai4 ngon6*  
*maai4* shore  
 ‘approach shore’ (Bonney 1853)
- (77) 帶水埋虎門砲台。  
*Daai3seoi2 maai4 Fu2mun4 paau3toi4.*  
 pilot *maai4* Fumun(place) fort  
 ‘The pilot goes on shore to the fort.’ (Bridgman 1841)

When the verb grammaticalizes into a directional particle, it bears the meaning ‘move towards’ a reference point, illustrated in (78) and (79).

- (78) 抽埋個邊。  
 =(45) *Cau1 maai4 go2 bin1.*  
 carry *maai4* that side  
 ‘Carry it over that side.’ (Bonney 1853)
- (79) 個的浪打埋船。  
*Go2 di1 long6 daa2 maai4 syun4.*  
 that CL wave beat *maai4* ship  
 ‘The waves beat against the ship.’ (Bonney 1853)

Via the process of metaphorical extension, pragmatic enrichment, and subjectification, *maai4*, originally a particle indicating direction, has developed into a grammatical marker serving different functions – ‘addition’, ‘completion’, and in the 1950s, ‘negative evaluation’. These senses are illustrated in (80)–(82) respectively.

- (80) 咁抬琴個四個抬埋佢上去。<sup>103</sup>(*maai4* as an ‘additive’ marker)  
*Giu3 toi4 kam4 go2 sei3 go3 toi4 maai4 keoi5 soeng5 heoi3.*  
 tell carry piano those four CL carry *maai4* it up go  
 ‘Tell the four who carry the piano to carry it up as well.’ (Ball 1912)

103. The characters 咁 is no longer in use. It equals the character 叫 in modern Cantonese.

- (81) 先生講埋啦。(maai4 as a ‘completive’ marker)  
 Sin1saang1 gong2 maai4 laa1.  
 sir speak maai4 PRT  
 ‘Finish what you have to say, sir.’ (Ball 1912)
- (82) 你講埋晒啲噉嘅嘢, 正核突佬!(maai4 as a ‘negative evaluative’ marker)  
 Nei5 gong2 maai4 saai3 di1 gam2 ge3 je5, zing3 wat6dat6 lou2!  
 you say maai4 all CL such LP thing exact disgusting guy  
 ‘You say all these (disgusting) things – you are such a disgusting guy!’  
 (Fight I 1991)

In the remainder of this section, we discuss in detail how all these senses can possibly be brought about, with examples taken from the diachronic database.

### 6.3.2.1 Metaphorical uses

To recall, *maai4* as a directional particle means to move towards a reference point, illustrated by the image schema below.



In contexts where more than one entity is moving *maai4* (i.e. ‘towards’) the same goal and comes into contact with one another, the implication of ‘altogether’ emerges.

- (83) 四部釘埋一部  
 sei3 bou6 deng1 maai4 jat1 bou6  
 four volume stitch maai4 one volume  
 ‘stitch together four books into one book’ (Bonney 1853)
- (84) 幫我扭埋呢條繩  
 bong1 ngo5 nau2 maai4 nei1 tiu4 sing2  
 help me twist maai4 this CL cord  
 ‘help me twist this cord’ (Bonney 1853)
- (85) 住埋一執  
 zyu6 maai4 jat1 zap1  
 live maai4 one lump  
 ‘live together in a cluster’ (Bonney 1853)

The motion of ‘moving towards one another’ has given rise to a more abstract meaning of ‘closeness’ or ‘tightness’, which can also be understood by the basic image schema of *maai4*, but with more than one movement at a time, illustrated in Diagram 6.4.

In (83) and (84), *maai4* is more appropriately considered as having an abstract meaning ‘close together’. Through stitching and twisting, the books in (83) and



Diagram 6.4 The image schema of *maai4* meaning ‘altogether’

the cords in (84) are now coming *maai4* (i.e. ‘close together’). The meaning of ‘closeness’ is even more obvious in (84). Example (85) might not even involve any physical movement at all; it does not necessarily mean that the entities are coming from all over the place and are now moving towards the same goal and they eventually come to live together. Here, *maai4* is simply used to show the result that these entities are now ‘close together’ (i.e. the resulting state). In (83)–(85), although words like *deng1* ‘stitch’, *nau2* ‘twist’, and *jat1 zap1* ‘one lump/cluster’ already imply ‘together’, *maai4* nevertheless reinforces the meaning of ‘closeness’ and emphasizes that the entities are not only together, but ‘close’ together. Consider another example from early Cantonese:

- (86) 鎖埋個度房門。  
 So2 *maai4* go2 dou6 fong2 mun4.  
 lock *maai4* that CL room door  
 ‘Lock that door.’ (Bridgman 1841)

In (86), the verb *so2* ‘lock’ on its own already suggests that the leaves of the door must be ‘close together’, and even ‘locked’.<sup>104</sup> However, with the use of *maai4*, the meaning ‘shut’ is reinforced – the lock is so tight that it is hardly separable. That is to say, you do not only *lock* the door, but lock it *shut*.

It has been seen how the meaning of ‘draw close’ is brought out when *maai4* is used in the context where there is more than one movement of *maai4* (i.e. ‘moving towards’). Besides giving the meanings ‘move towards’ and ‘altogether’, *maai4* then develops into an additive quantifier meaning ‘also/as well’. It is in the twentieth century Cantonese texts that attestations of this use of *maai4* are found. Consider (87)–(89) below.

- (87) 叫抬琴個四個抬埋佢上去。  
 =(80) *Giu3 toi4 kam4 go2 sei3 go3 toi4 maai4 keoi5 soeng5 heoi3*.  
 tell carry piano those four CL carry *maai4* it up go  
 ‘Tell the four who carry the piano to carry it up as well.’ (Ball 1912)

104. The doors in the old days usually consist of two leaves, which can be represented schematically as →|←.

- (88) 天時熱都除埋個件衫添。

*Tin1si4 jit6 dou1 ceoi4 maai4 go2 gin6 saam1 tim1.*

weather hot also take-off *maai4* that CL jacket also

‘In hot weather they take off the jacket as well.’

(Ball 1912)

- (89) 我要埋你呢枝筆至得。

*Ngo5 jiu3 maai4 nei5 nei1 zil bat1 zi3 dak1.*

I need *maai4* you this CL pen until sufficient

‘I need your pen as well (because I don’t have enough).’

(Wisner 1927)

This ‘also/as well’ meaning as illustrated in (87)–(89) is believed to have come from the more general ‘altogether’ meaning, but in these cases the speaker is using *maai4* to assert the inclusion of an additional entity coming into the group. For instance, (87) can be understood as ‘in addition to carrying the piano up there, carry this thing up there *as well*’, and (89) means something like ‘in addition to what I have, I need your pen *as well*’. Metaphorically, this can be represented by the image schema illustrated in Diagram 6.5, in which the focus is put on the entity which is new to the group.

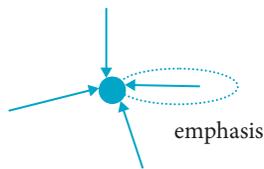


Diagram 6.5 The image schema of *maai4* meaning ‘also/as well’

Here, *maai4* has been reinterpreted as an additive quantifier, signaling the inclusion of an additional entity. As Lee pointed out, one crucial meaning of *maai4* is to ‘mark an extension of an action to either the object (in case of transitive verbs) or the subject (in case of intransitive verbs)’ (2002: 1). This additive/inclusive meaning of *maai4* is comparable to that of additive particles in English such as *also*, *too*, *as well*. Notice, this ‘additional item’ as quantified by *maai4* is not necessarily a concrete entity, but can also be an event. For instance, (88) might mean either ‘in addition to their scarfs, they need to take off their jackets as well’, or ‘in addition to turning on the air-conditioner, they need to take off their jackets as well’. The first interpretation is about *maai4* quantifying an object, while the second one is about the addition of an event.

The directional ‘altogether’ and ‘additive’ meaning that *maai4* expresses can both be understood in terms of the basic image schema of *maai4*, namely a movement towards a reference point. Below, we turn to examine how, in a suitable context, the ‘additive’ *maai4* is further reinterpreted as a marker of ‘completion’.

### 6.3.2.2 *The pragmatic implicature of ‘completion’*

It has already been established how *maai4* can be used to suggest the inclusion of an additional entity. In a suitable context, this additive *maai4* is reinterpreted as a marker of completion, as exemplified in this example:

- (90) 重有呀,我講埋你聽。  
*Zung6 jau5 aa3, ngo5 gong2 maai4 nei5 teng1.*  
 still have PRT I speak *maai4* you listen  
 ‘There are more. Wait and I will tell you the rest.’ (Ball 1912)

In (90), *maai4* is glossed as ‘finish-up-the-rest’ in the original text. In fact, this completive meaning is more appropriately considered as derived from the context. If we look closely at (90), *maai4* does not bear the meaning ‘finish’ on its own, it only means ‘in addition to what I have told you, there is more to come’. Its function is fairly similar to that in (87)–(89), in which *maai4* is an additive quantifier. The completive meaning in (90) is only an implicature which has developed from the quantificational meaning of *maai4*. This implicature is possible in contexts where the additional item is also the last item.

When *maai4* has occurred frequently enough in this kind of context and the implicature has become more established, it creates the ground for the completive meaning to be reinterpreted as part of *maai4*’s sense. In (91), the completive meaning outweighs the additive meaning and *maai4* is more appropriately interpreted as expressing the meaning ‘completion’, not ‘addition’. Sentence (91) means something like ‘Finish what you have left to say’. The completive use of *maai4* has become very established in contemporary Cantonese and it is even treated as a completive particle in some studies (Kwok 1971; Luo 1990).

- (91) 先生講埋啦。  
 =(81) *Sin1saang1 gong2 maai4 laa1.*  
 sir speak *maai4* PRT  
 ‘Finish what you have to say, sir.’ (Ball 1912)

From our discussion so far, it has become clear how *maai4* has undergone grammaticalization to express meanings from ‘direction’, to ‘addition’, and further to ‘completion’. These three senses of *maai4* are still widely used in contemporary Cantonese, as reflected in examples taken from the contemporary data. In fact, these different uses are all well-documented in contemporary Cantonese dictionaries.

In the next section, we turn to look at the emergence of a relatively new use of *maai4* – the marking of the speaker’s negative evaluation. This is a recent innovation as attestations of this subjective use of *maai4* are only found in data from the 1950s and onwards.

### 6.3.2.3 Subjectification of *maai4* – expression of the speaker’s negative evaluation

Before proceeding to look at how *maai4* has acquired a subjective evaluative meaning, some examples from the database in which *maai4* is used to express the speaker’s negative evaluation are relevant. Consider (92) and (93) taken from two films screened in the 1990s.

(92) 你講埋晒啲嘅嘅嘢, 正核突佬!

=(82) *Nei5 gong2 maai4 saai3 di1 gam2 ge3 je5, zing3 wat6dat6 lou2!*  
 you tell *maai4* all CL such LP thing exact disgusting guy  
 ‘You say all these things – you are such a disgusting guy!’ (Fight I 1991)

(93) 你識埋啲嘅嘅朋友, 映衰我啊!

*Nei5 sik2 maai4 di1 gam2 ge3 pang4jau5, jing2 sei1 ngo5 aa3!*  
 you know *maai4* CL such LP friend reflect bad me PRT  
 ‘You’ve fallen in with such people – it reflects badly on me!’ (Fight II 1992)

In these examples, the use of *maai4* indicates that the nature of the ‘things’ in (92) and the quality of the ‘friends’ in (93) are inferior and second-rate. In both examples, *maai4* cannot be interpreted as a simple additive quantifier, merely conveying the meaning of inclusion. Rather, it is better considered as a marker of evaluation, expressing the speaker’s comment. This evaluative *maai4* is special in a way that it can *only* be used with things which are *negatively evaluated* by the speaker and it *always* generates an implicature of *negative evaluation*. On occasions where *maai4* is seemingly used with a positive comment, the pejorative overtone still exists. Consider a revised version of (93) below.

(93’) 你識埋啲嘅嘅朋友, 好犀利啊!

*Nei5 sik2 maai4 di1 gam2 ge3 pang4jau5, hou2 sai1lei6 aa3!*  
 you know *maai4* CL such LP friend very great PRT  
 ‘You’ve got to know these people – it’s so ‘great!’

Instead of giving a negative comment *jing2 sei1 ngo5* ‘reflects badly on me’, a more positive comment *hou2 sai1lei6* ‘so great’ is used in (93’). However, the use of *maai4* has influenced the interpretation of (93’), turning this positive comment into an ironic one. In other words, the speaker in (93’) is not really showing his appreciation of the hearer’s friends, but is probably teasing the hearer that although it is ‘difficult’, he even got to know ‘such’ (poor quality) friends. If the speaker wants to emphasize that it is really great for the hearer to know those friends (i.e. in its normal sense), *maai4* has to be omitted.

This evaluative use of *maai4* is only attested in contemporary data (i.e. corpus data and film data). The earliest attestation is found in the 1950s film data and not a single example is found in any of the early Cantonese texts. Consider (94) and (95) taken from two films screened in the 1950s.

[The speaker is scolding her son for learning magic]

- (94) 好學唔學, 學埋啲嘅嘅幻術。  
*Hou2 hok6 m4 hok6, hok6 maai4 di1 gam2 ge3 waan6seot6.*  
 good learn not learn learn *maai4* CL such LP magic  
 ‘You don’t learn things worth learning, but instead (useless) things like magic.’  
 (Blessings 1950)

[After the speaker’s fiancé (Tin) has blamed himself for being too poor]

- (95) 田哥, 點解你 講埋啲嘅嘅嘢啲?  
*Tin4 go1, dim2gaai2 nei5 gong2 maai4 di1 gam2 ge3 je5 zek1?*  
 Tin brother why you say *maai4* CL such LP thing PRT  
 ‘Tin, why do you say such words? (It hurts me.)’  
 (Ghost 1959)

Although neither the nature of the magic, nor the content of the conversation, is made explicit, the use of *maai4* nevertheless suggests that the ‘magic’ in (94) and the ‘words’ in (95) must be something which the speaker considers inferior or inappropriate in some way. In these situations, *maai4* pushes the interpretation of the direct object towards the negative pole. If *maai4* is left out, the interpretation would be neutral, without any expression of the speaker’s subjective dispreference.

It is clear that *maai4* has acquired the function of ‘negative evaluation’ in the course of its evolution. This evaluative use of *maai4* leads to the following questions: How has this ‘pejorative’ meaning been encoded? Are there any contextual or constructional constraints imposed on this particular use of *maai4*? What are the semantic-pragmatic motivations for its subjectification? The rest of this section attempts to answer these questions.

Discussion of this ‘pejorative’ sense of *maai4* appeared in Luo (1990), Matthews and Yip (2011a: 259), and Li et al. (1995). Luo observes that when *maai4* is used together with the universal quantifier *saai3* ‘all’, the object which is being quantified must be something insignificant, or evaluated negatively by the speaker. Consider this example taken from Luo (1990):

- (96) 做埋晒啲啲唔等駛嘅嘢事。<sup>105</sup>  
*Zou6 maai4 saai3 go2 di1 m4 dang2 sai2 ge3 si6.*  
 do *maai4* all that CL not wait use LP thing  
 ‘You always do those unimportant things!’  
 (Luo 1990: 174)

105. Here in (96), *maai4* co-occurs with negative expressions like *m4 dang2 sai2* ‘unimportant’, which creates the ground for a pragmatic inference that allows the negative meaning to be re-interpreted as part of *maai4*’s semantics.

Li et al. (1995) share a similar view that in some situations *maai4* is used to show the speaker's disapproval of the type of items being talked about, and this use of *maai4* is often accompanied by *saai3*, forming the phrase *maai4-saai3*. As in:

- (97) 你條友乜做埋(晒)啲噉嘅嘢事啊?  
*Nei5 tiu4 jau2 mat1 zou6 maai4 (saai3) di1 gam2 ge3 si6 aa3?*  
 you CL guy why(!) do *maai4* (all) CL such LP thing PRT  
 'You bugger, why have you done such (crazy) things?' (Li et al. 1995: 560)

Matthews and Yip (2011a) suggest that the evaluative use of *maai4* is in fact idiomatic and they tend to consider this 'pejorative' meaning as resulting from the sequence V-*maai4-saai3*. They suggest that this sequence is often used as an idiom, which implies that 'someone does everything (*saai3*) even including (*maai4*) the outrageous or excessive' (2011a: 259).

- (98) 啲細路做埋晒啲犯法嘅嘢。  
*Di1 sai3lou6 zou6 maai4 saai3 di1 faan6faat3 ge3 je5.*  
 CL children do *maai4* all CL illegal LP thing  
 'The children get up to all sorts of illegal things.'  
 (Matthews and Yip 2011a: 259)

In addition, Luke (2005) adds the suggestion that the 'pejorative' meaning indeed might not have come from the semantics of *maai4*. He suggests that *maai4* can only have this negative meaning when it is used with the adverb *sing4jat6* 'always'. His view is also shared by Bai (1998) whose dictionary is the only Cantonese dictionary which has included this particular use under the entry *maai4*. Although it is not mentioned in Bai (1998) that *maai4* must be used with *sing6jat6* 'always' in order to give a 'pejorative' reading, she does suggest that *maai4* when used in these circumstances always gives the meaning 'always'.

Each of these studies has provided slightly different, but important, perspectives from which to examine this evaluative use of *maai4*. Getting together these bits and pieces are important in order to provide a unified account of *maai4*'s subjective use. Consider below a few more examples from contemporary data.

- (99) 乜你咁中意食埋晒呢啲噉嘅生蘿蔔嘍!  
*Mat1 nei5 gam3 zung1ji3 sik6 maai4 saai3 nei1 di1 gam2 ge3*  
 why(!) you so fond Eat *maai4* all this PL such LP  
*saang1 lo4baak6 gaa3?*  
 raw carrot PRT  
 'How come you are so fond of eating raw carrots like that!?' (Eyes 1976)

- (100) 你請埋晒啲傻仔唔掂㗎!  
*Nei5 ceng2 maai4 saai3 di1 so4 zai2 m4 dim6 gaa3.*  
 you employ *maai4* all CL foolish boy not work PRT  
 ‘Your employing such idiots is not going to work!’ (Cookery 1996)
- (101) 乜你要做埋啲咁沉悶嘅嘢!  
*Mat1 nei5 jiu3 zou6 maai4 di1 gam3 cam4mun6 ge3 je5!*  
 why(!) you need do *maai4* CL so boring LP thing  
 ‘You really mean you have to do such boring stuff!?’ (HKCanCor)
- (102) 去麥當勞開生日會, 玩埋啲啲嘅嘢!  
*Heoi3 Mak6dong1lou4 hoi1 saang1jat6 wui2, waan2 maai4 di1 gam2*  
 go McDonald’s hold birthday party play *maai4* CL such  
*ge3 je5!*  
 LP thing  
 ‘Go to the McDonald’s birthday party and play such (trivial) games!’  
 (HKCanCor)

The particle *maai4* is conveying some kind of ‘pejorative’ meaning in (99)–(102). In some cases, this ‘pejorative’ meaning is reinforced by the negative adjective in the utterance, such as *so4* ‘foolish’ in (100) and *cam4mun6* ‘boring’ in (101). In other cases, however, *maai4* can bear on its own the ‘pejorative’ meaning, without the company of any adjectives. It can be used in any circumstances as long as the speaker wants to express the idea that the referent of the object noun phrase is unpleasant or unimpressive. For instance, although it is not made explicit what ‘such’ games are in (102), with the use of *maai4*, ‘such’ games must be those which the speaker regards as definitely not worth playing.

Most previous studies are right in pointing out that when speakers regard something as trivial, they can use *maai4* to make a negative evaluation of that item. However, it is quite clear that not every pejorative use of *maai4* is accompanied by *saai3* ‘all’ (cf. Luo 1990; Matthews and Yip 2011a; Li et al. 1995). In fact, it is seldom used with the adverb *sing4jat6* ‘always’ (cf. Luke 2005), or used to express the meaning ‘always’ (cf. Bai 1998). Without *saai3* or *sing4jat6*, *maai4* on its own can express the negative evaluation of the speaker, conveying the message that the action concerned is really nonsensical and crazy. However, with *saai3* ‘all’ and *sing4jat6* ‘always’, the disdainful feeling of the speaker is reinforced because the ‘large amount’ in terms of quantity (*saai3*) and time (*sing4jat6*) is stressed. Similarly, *maai4* is sometimes found with the intensifier *gam3* ‘so’ for a negative interpretation, as in (99) and (101). Again, *gam3* is not obligatory but may be used to put emphasis on how bad the speaker thinks the situation is.

There is only one element which apparently must occur with the pejorative interpretation of *maai4* – the plural noun classifier *di1*. As a classifier in Cantonese, *di* is peculiar in the sense that it can denote genericity (Au-Yeung 2007). Au-Yeung suggests that ‘*di1* can express genericity only when a modifying phrase, for example an adjectival phrase, is inserted between the classifier and the noun phrase’ (2007: 6).<sup>106</sup>

- (103) 小明鍾意食啲無核嘅西瓜。  
*Siu2ming4 zung1ji3 sik6 di1 mou2wat6 ge3 sailgwaa1.*  
 Siuming like eat CL seedless LP watermelon  
 ‘Siuming likes eating SEEDless watermelons.’<sup>107</sup> (Au-Yeung 2007: 6)

In (103), the *di1*-noun phrase can be interpreted as generic and refers to the *kind* of watermelon, specifically *seedless* watermelons. Au-Yeung adds that in general, the function of *di1* in a *di1*-noun phrase ‘focuses the kinds/sub-kinds of the referents by contrasting among themselves, presupposing their attributes and attracting the phonetic accent’ (2007: 11). In particular, the generic *di1* ‘also conveys the focusing sense of the nominal’ (ibid.). As we shall see below, these features of *di1* could create the ground for *maai4* to take on a pejorative meaning and be reinterpreted as a marker of subjective evaluation. The following set of examples further illustrates the relationship between *maai4* and *di1*.

- (104) 你食埋呢件朱古力蛋糕。  
*Nei5 sik6 maai4 nei1 gin6 zyu1gu1lik1 daan6gou1.*  
 you eat *maai4* this CL chocolate cake  
 ‘You eat this chocolate cake as well.’
- (105) 你食埋呢幾件朱古力蛋糕。  
*Nei5 sik6 maai4 nei1 gei2 gin6 zyu1gu1lik1 daan6gou1.*  
 you eat *maai4* this several CL chocolate cake  
 ‘You eat these (few) chocolate cakes as well.’
- (106) 你食埋呢啲朱古力蛋糕。  
*Nei5 sik6 maai4 nei1 di1 zyu1gu1lik1 daan6gou1.*  
 you eat *maai4* this CL chocolate cake  
 ‘You eat these chocolate cakes as well.’/‘You even eat such CHOcolate cakes.’

In (104) and (105), *maai4* is simply used as an additive quantifier, meaning ‘in addition to what you have eaten, eat the(se) chocolate cake(s) as well’. This definite

106. Thanks to Ben Au-Yeung for the useful discussion on *di1*.

107. The stress on the syllable SEED is not in the original article from Au-Yeung. Here I am deliberately putting this in so as to differentiate between a sentence with *di1* and without *di1*. If otherwise, the same English translation would be used for the same sentence with or without *di1*.

reading is made explicit by the use of the determiner *nei1* ‘this’ together with the noun classifier *gin*. Turning to (106), the interpretation would rely on whether the *dil*-noun phrase is interpreted as definite or generic. In other words, it very much depends on whether the speaker wants to focus on the *further consumption* of chocolate cakes (i.e. quantificational reading), or, the further consumption of *chocolate cakes* (i.e. type reading). Different readings would be evoked in different contexts. Consider:

(106') 你食埋呢啲朱古力蛋糕, 唔好浪費呀!

*Nei5 sik6 maai4 nei1 dil zyu1gu1lik1 daan6gou1, m4 hou2*  
 you eat *maai4* this CL chocolate cake not good  
*long6fai3 aa3!*  
 waste PRT

‘You eat these chocolate cakes as well – don’t waste them!’

(106'') 你食埋呢啲朱古力蛋糕, 肥死你呀!

*Nei5 sik6 maai4 nei1 dil zyu1gu1lik1 daan6gou1, fei4 sei2*  
 you eat *maai4* this CL chocolate cake fat die(extreme)  
*nei5 aa3!*  
 you PRT

‘You even eat CHOcolate cakes, they are very fatty!’

While *maai4* in (106') is usually analyzed as an additive particle, marking the further consumption of chocolate cakes, *maai4* in (106'') is more appropriately interpreted as a marker of negative evaluation, marking the speaker’s negative assessment of the consumption of chocolate cakes. In (106''), the speaker is not asking the hearer to finish off the cakes, but is showing his shock at the addressee’s consumption of *chocolate cakes*. The emergence of this function of negative evaluation is made possible by the co-occurrence of *maai4* and the generic *dil*, with the modifying phrase *zyu1gu1lik1* ‘chocolate’ inserted in between (i.e. a typical construction for a generic interpretation, as discussed in Au-Yeung 2007). The fact that *dil* puts emphasis on the ‘type’ or ‘kind’ of the following noun phrase provides pragmatic grounds for *maai4* to take on a more subjective function. With the generic *dil*, the speaker can stress that it is *this type* of thing that he evaluates negatively, in contrast with *other types*. Hence, in the real speaking situation, (106'') is often uttered with a phonetic stress placed on the determiner phrase *nei1 dil* ‘these’, marking the focus and reinforcing the ‘type’ reading. It might also be accompanied by a rising intonation, emphasizing the speaker’s surprise at the addressee’s consumption of chocolate cakes. The utterance actually implies something like ‘hey, there are actually other types of cake which I think are more suitable for you than chocolate cakes, why do you choose this type over the other types?’

As far as we can see, an evaluative interpretation is always brought out when *maai4* co-occurs with an emphasis on ‘type’. This negative evaluative reading is

still evoked even though the type of things that the speaker refers to is not named explicitly. Consider:

- (107) 你食埋啲噉嘅蛋糕。  
*Nei5 sik6 maai4 di1 gam2 ge3 daan6gou1.*  
 you eat *maai4* CL such LP cake  
 ‘You even eat such cakes!’

In (107), the speaker is showing his negative attitude towards the cakes – the *type* of cakes, to be specific. This evaluative reading is evoked by the co-occurrence of the classifier *di1* and the phrase *gam2 ge3* ‘such’, which brings out the meaning of ‘type’. The noun phrase *di1 gam2 ge3 daan6gou1* ‘such cakes’ on its own is neutral with regard to the nature of the cakes (i.e. whether they are good cakes or bad cakes). If *maai4* is taken out from (107), its interpretation can be either positive or negative, depending on different contexts:

- (107') 你可以食啲噉嘅蛋糕, 好羡慕呀!  
*Nei5 ho2ji3 sik6 di1 gam2 ge3 daan6gou1, hou2 sin6mou6 aa3!*  
 you can eat CL such LP cake very jealous PRT  
 ‘You can (have such a precious chance to) eat such kind of cakes, so envious!’
- (107'') 你可以食啲噉嘅蛋糕, 真係服咗你!  
*Nei5 ho2ji3 sik6 di1 gam2 ge3 daan6gou1, zan1hai6 fuk6*  
 you can eat CL such LP cake truly admire  
*zo2 nei5!*  
 PERF you  
 ‘You can (even) eat such kind of cakes, that’s truly ‘amazing!’

The phrase *di1 gam2 ge3* ‘such kind of’ on its own is neutral in terms of value judgment and is only used to pick out a certain ‘kind/type’ of things. The type of entities picked up can either be evaluated positively or negatively, depending on the speaker. As the comments suggest, the speaker in (107') values the type of cakes highly while the speaker in (107'') despises the type of cakes and considers the act of consuming these cakes as truly ‘amazing’ (in an ironic sense) – the speaker can *even* put these cakes into his mouth. However, if *maai4* is used together with the phrase *di1 gam2 ge3* ‘such kind of’, the ‘kind/type’ of entities picked up is essentially of an unacceptable type, at least from the speaker’s perspective. In other words, although the ‘type’ of cake is not named explicitly in (107) above, those cakes are essentially of an unacceptable type from the speaker’s perspective since *maai4* is used. Thus, (107) can only be followed by a negative comment, but never a positive one.

This judgment of the unacceptability of the cakes is essentially subjective because *maai4* can only be used to show the *speaker’s* negative reaction to the situation, not *anyone else’s*. In fact, those cakes could be indeed very delicate and tasty.

However, if there is one single reason that the speaker thinks the cakes are unsuitable and should not be eaten (e.g. they are too expensive), then (107) is perfectly good. Notice, the additive quantificational reading is barely probable (cf. [106], in which the additive quantificational reading is still possible). The particle *maai4* has pushed the interpretation of (107) towards a negative evaluative reading. It cannot be treated as an invitation to finish that type of cakes. As a genuine evaluative marker, *maai4* in (107) is used solely to express the speaker's evaluation of the type of cakes as unacceptable and falling below his level of satisfaction.

A schema has been attempted to represent the negative use of *maai4*. All twenty-one examples with evaluative *maai4* in the database are found to conform to this schematic structure, abstracted in (108) below.

(108) (*sing4jat6*) V *maai4* (*saai3*) (Dem) *di1* ModifyingP N<sup>108</sup>

Previous studies have attempted to attribute the pejorative meaning of *maai4* to the construction V-*maai4-saai3* (cf. Luo 1990; Li et al. 1995), considered in some studies as an idiom (cf. Matthews and Yip 2011a). Although the evaluative *maai4* is often supported by elements like *saai3* 'all' and *sing4jat6* 'always', examples from the database have proved that they are not obligatory for *maai4*'s pejorative implication. Their presence only reinforces *maai4*'s evaluative function, pushing the interpretation towards the pejorative reading.

The only essential elements for the pejorative interpretation of *maai4* are found to be the plural classifier *di1* and the modifying phrase between *di1* and the noun. In particular, the chunk V-*maai4-di1-gam2ge3*-N is found to occur very frequently, accounting for sixty-seven percent of the total occurrence of the evaluative *maai4*. As discussed earlier, this construction can induce a generic reading of 'type' on the following noun (i.e. 'such type'). This emphasis on 'type' reinforces the generic reading and induces the speaker's subjective evaluation of it.

This evolution of *maai4* is essentially an instance of subjectification, involving the additional encoding of the speaker's attitude towards, and judgment of, the event. Having the speaker's perspective as the source, *maai4* started to take on an evaluative component as part of its meaning in the context schematized in (108) above. In fact, the evaluative meaning is also in some sense 'directional', moving towards either a positive or negative end of an abstract evaluative scale. The only question remaining unanswered is, why, in the process of *maai4*'s subjectification, the speaker's meaning is pulled towards the negative rather than the positive end (i.e. the evaluation given *must be* a negative one). This can probably be explained

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108. The modifying phrase can be either *gam2ge3* 'such' or a negative adjectival phrase (with an optional *gam2ge3* preceding).

by looking again at the source from which the subjective meaning develops, that is, the quantificational meaning of *maai4*.

As an additive quantifier, *maai4* is neutral in terms of value judgment and is used to include an additional entity, which, in some cases, may exhaust a given set of items. From a pragmatic point of view, some kind of ‘stretching of the boundary’ seems to be involved in the action of including the last remaining item of all, of drawing the peripheral, non-prototypical member into the set. As Matthews and Yip also pointed out, *maai4* is used to express the inclusion of ‘the outrageous or excessive’ (2011a: 259). Tang (2015: 104) echoes by suggesting that when extra members are included for scope expansion, those members very often are the members that are very unlikely to be included in the first place. If this is where the subjective sense is developed from, the sense has a very strong tendency to be negative. In fact, on many occasions where the additive *maai4* is used, there is an implicature of inferiority because the last remaining item may well be the least desired item of all, the sort of entity that originally lay beyond the speaker’s acceptance level. It is suspected that this implication of disfavour may be responsible for the genesis of *maai4*’s negative sense. This special feature of *maai4* allows the speaker to imply the inclusion of a less-than-totally acceptable entity into a set. The conventionalization of this implication would then result in *maai4*’s ability to mark the speaker’s negative evaluation.

This evolutionary pathway of *maai4* proposed here is also attested in other languages. Besides the Cantonese *maai4*, Chor (2010) has demonstrated that the focus particles *lián* (in Mandarin) and *even* (in English), and the counter-expectation particle *-cocha* (in Korean), also share a similar evolutionary pattern of subjectification. The subjective meaning in each case has developed from the same semantic source, namely the meaning of ‘addition’. Each of these particles has gained an evaluative function from the addition of an entity or event – something which is originally outside the speaker’s desired set or is ranked low on the speaker’s scale of expectation.

#### 6.4 *Faan1* ‘move back’

*Faan1* as a directional verb means ‘move back/return’.<sup>109</sup> It indicates a movement towards a goal which is usually the source from which the mover started. Consider (109) below from early Cantonese.

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109. The verb *faan1* in Cantonese is comparable to the verb 回 *huí* in Mandarin, meaning ‘to go back/return to (the original place)’.

(109) 一個番惠州一個番京。<sup>110</sup>

*Jat1 go3 faan1 Wai6zau1 jat1 go3 faan1 Ging1.*

one CL *faan1* Waichow one CL *faan1* Capital

‘One returns to Waichow, the other returns to the Capital.’ (Bonney 1853)

When *faan1* grammaticalized into a particle, it gave a similar meaning of ‘returning to an original place’, illustrated in (110) and (111).

(110) 唔拈得番

*m4 nim1 dak1 faan1*

not bring able *faan1*

‘cannot bring it back (to the original place)’

(Bonney 1853)

(111) 你應該寄番去歸。

*Nei5 jing1goi1 gei3 faan1 heoi3 gwai1.*

you ought send *faan1* go home

‘You ought to send it home.’

(Ball 1883)

The image schema of *faan1* below highlights the most important aspect of its directional meaning. It indicates a movement towards a goal which is *also the source* from which the theme subject started.



Diagram 6.6 The image schema of *faan1*

Interestingly, *faan1* as a directional verb on some occasions might indicate a movement which is not towards the location where the mover started. For instance:

(112) 我聽日第一日返大學。

*Ngo5 ting1jat6 dai6jat1 jat6 faan1 daai6hok6.*

I tomorrow first day *faan1* university

‘Tomorrow is my first day of going to the university.’

Although the verb *faan1* is used in (112), there is no sense of ‘going back’. From the context it is obvious that ‘tomorrow’ is in fact the first day that the speaker goes to the university. We shall discover later that *faan1* has a special extension with its ‘iterated’ uses, as in *faan1 gung1* (*faan1* work ‘go to work’), *faan1 hok6* (*faan1* school ‘go to school’), and *faan1 uk1kei2* (*faan1* home ‘go home’).<sup>111</sup> These expressions are

110. In some early Cantonese texts, 返 *faan1* is found written with the two graphs 番 *faan1* and 翻 *faan1*. However, etymologically speaking, the word should be 返.

111. In Cantonese, *faan1 gung1/faan1 hok1* (*faan1* work/*faan1* school) is the ‘normal’ way of saying ‘go to work/go to school’, but not ‘returning to work/school’.

used so frequently that they are actually lexicalized expressions. The verb *faan1* in these expressions does not necessarily mean ‘return’. The ‘locative source’ of a physical movement that *faan1* indicates has been associated with the location to which one habitually goes, such as one’s school, one’s workplace, and one’s home. These locations can be used with *faan1* even though the theme subject is not ‘returning’ to these places because these locations are often closely associated with one’s place of belonging – some kind of an abstract ‘source’ of a person. The fact that *faan1* can be used with places that one habitually goes to (even though the theme subject has never been to that place before) has played an important role in preparing *faan1* to acquire a subjective meaning when it grammaticalizes into a particle. This will be discussed in Section 6.4.3, when the subjectification of *faan1* is examined.

#### 6.4.1 Metaphorical uses

Based on this meaning of ‘returning to a physical location’, a rich array of extended meanings is associated with *faan1*. Many of these meanings can be expressed by the prefix ‘re-’ in English, as in ‘re-do’, ‘re-sume’, or ‘re-ciprocate’, exemplified in the following examples.

- (113) 點番著個琉璃。(resumption)  
*Dim2 faan1 zeok6 go3 lau4lei4.*  
 light *faan1* on CL water-lamp  
 ‘Relight the water-lamp.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (114) 打番個牛油盅。(re-doing)  
*Daa2 faan1 go3 ngau4jau4 zung1.*  
 make *faan1* CL butter cup  
 ‘(To start all over again and) make a new butter cup.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (115) 等我遞番的麵粉布頓過你呵。(reciprocation)  
*Dang2 ngo5 dai6 faan1 di1 min6fan2 bou3ding1 gwo3 nei5 ho2.*  
 wait I send *faan1* CL flour pudding to you PRT  
 ‘Allow me to send you a little of this flour pudding (in return).’  
 (Bridgman 1841)
- (116) 個間屋起得番唔起得?(resumption)  
*Go2 gaan1 uk1 hei2 dak1 faan1 m4 hei2 dak1?*  
 that CL house build able *faan1* not build able  
 ‘Can the house be rebuilt or not?’ (Bonney 1853)

In each of these examples, *faan1* gives a different kind of ‘re-’ meaning, which can be represented by the sequence ‘A-B-A’, or more visually by the following schematic diagram:



This diagram is a minimally modified version of the basic image schema of *faan1*. In other words, these different ‘re-’ meanings can all be understood in terms of the basic directional meaning of *faan1*. In these examples, the meaning expressed by *faan1* has become more abstract and is less likely to involve a physical motion of ‘return’. Rather, the ‘return’ illustrated here is abstract, or conceptual. For instance, the lamp in (113) has gone through these stages: lit – unlit – re-lit. Example (116) also involves a kind of abstract ‘return’. The ‘re-doing’ in (114) actually implies making another cup, by going back to the original step/starting point and to start all over again. Similarly, (115) can also be understood as having an ‘A-B-A’ sequence: person A has given something to person B, and person B gives something back to person A ‘in return’.

These and similar examples of *faan1* have been commented upon extensively in the past and are still commonly found in contemporary Cantonese. Since many previous studies on Cantonese grammar (Kwok 1971; H. Gao 1980; Yuan 1989; S. Zhang 1996; Cheung 2007a) have found *faan1* very much related to the concept of resumption, it is even termed a ‘resumptive marker’ in some studies. Examples (117)–(119) below illustrate some more ‘re-’ uses of *faan1* found in HKCanCor.

- (117) 佢用返呢個方法嚟解釋。(re-doing)  
*Keoi5 jung6 faan1 nei1 go3 fong1faat3 lai4 gaai2sik1.*  
 s/he use *faan1* this CL method come explain  
 ‘He uses this method again to explain (the reason).’ (HKCanCor)
- (118) 照返原價賣啦!(resumption)  
*Ziu3 faan1 jyun4 gaa3 maai6 laa1!*  
 follow *faan1* original price sell PRT  
 ‘Sell it at the original price!’ (HKCanCor)
- (119) 佢哋結婚,玩返我哋轉頭!<sup>112</sup>(reciprocation)  
*Keoi5 dei6 git3fan1, waan2 faan1 ngo5 dei6 zyun3tau4!*  
 s/he CL marry play *faan1* I CL return  
 ‘It is they who were getting married, but on the contrary they played jokes on us!’ (HKCanCor)

All the above examples seem to suggest that the essence of *faan1*’s meaning lies in its emphasis that the goal of the movement is *also* its source. In different contexts, *faan1* can be interpreted as ‘back to the origin’, ‘back to the beginning’, or ‘back to basics’. In any case, the meaning expressed is in every case related to ‘returning to the point of origin’. As will be shown later, this implication of ‘source’ has played a very important role in *faan1*’s grammaticalization and subjectification.

112. In a traditional Chinese wedding banquet, the guests often play jokes on the newly married couple. However in (119), the jokes are played in the reverse direction – on the guests!

## 6.4.2 The pragmatic implicature of ‘should/ought to’

Some examples of *faan1* found in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century do not seem to have an obvious link with ‘return’. Consider (120) and (121).

- (120) 佢想學番唐人一樣。  
*Keoi5 soeng2 hok6 faan1 tong4jan4 jat1joeng6.*  
 s/he want learn *faan1* Chinese same  
 ‘They want to be like Chinese.’ (Ball 1883)
- (121) 國國都應學翻別國嘅好處。  
*Gwok3 gwok3 dou1 jing1 hok6 faan1 bit6 gwok3 ge3*  
 country country also ought learn *faan1* other country LP  
*hou2 cyu3.*  
 good thing  
 ‘Each country should copy the good things.’ (Ball 1912)

In (120) and (121), *faan1* does not denote a concrete return, nor any resumption or reciprocation. It does not mean to ‘go back’ to the learning for a second time, nor, to ‘resume’ learning. Rather, it means that taking Chinese people (in [120]) and other countries’ strong points (in [121]) as the role model, one should emulate them in order to succeed. Here, the ‘source’ meaning has become salient. In this context of ‘learning’ (i.e. when *faan1* is used with the verb *hok6* ‘learn’), *faan1* is used to mark the ‘return’ to the ‘source’ of learning (i.e. the ideal/role model), which is also the ‘goal’ of this learning path. The verb *hok6* itself is very much related to how you learn something by imitating what should be right to do. Although this is not the *original* source to which one has been to before, this is the *ideal* source (i.e. the role model) which one needs to consult in one’s journey of learning. In other words, *faan1* in these examples expresses the meaning of ‘to go back to the ideal’, or, ‘to go back to the role model’. The meaning is still somehow related to ‘return’, although it is not a concrete physical return.

Observing relevant examples in the database, this use of *faan1* is found to be *always* accompanied by verbs such as *jiu3* ‘need to’, *soeng2* ‘want to’, *jing1* ‘ought to’, and reinforces that the emulation is really what one ‘should’ do for a good result. This use of *faan1* must go with one’s forte, but never one’s shortcoming; a shortcoming is never the ‘goal’ of one’s learning path. Thus, (122) below is perfectly good while (122’) is unacceptable, unless *faan1* is left out.

- (122) 你應該學返人嘅好處。  
*Nei5 jing1goi1 hok6 faan1 jan4dei6 ge3 hou2 cyu3.*  
 you should learn *faan1* other people LP good thing  
 ‘You should emulate others’ good points.’

- (122') ?你唔應該學返人啲嘅壞處。  
 ?*Nei5 m4 jing1goi1 hok6 faan1 jan4dei6 ge3 waai6 cyu3.*  
 you not should learn *faan1* other people LP bad thing  
 'You shouldn't emulate others' bad points.'

At a later stage, this meaning of 'what one should/ought to do' has become salient and more established, and has been associated with *faan1* as an independent sense. Consider (123) and (124) below.

- (123) 而家老爺過咗身,你都應該搵返個老婆㗎。  
*Ji4gaal lou5je4 gwo3 zo2 san1, nei5 dou1 jing1goi1 wan2 faan1*  
 now master pass PERF body you also should find *faan1*  
*go3 lou5po4 aa1.*  
 CL wife PRT  
 'Now that your father has passed away, you should find a wife.'  
 (Dragon 1947)
- (124) 著返件睡褸,願住凍親你嚟。  
*Zoek3 faan1 gin6 sei6 lau1, gu3zyu6 dung3 can1 nei5 bo3.*  
 wear *faan1* CL sleep gown beware cold PRT you PRT  
 '(You should) put on the sleeping gown, and take care not to catch a cold.'  
 (Pak 1949)

In these examples, *faan1* is performing some kind of modal function – a suggestion made to a second person about what he or she *should* do for his or her advantage. It is noticed that this *faan1* is no longer restricted to the verb *hok6* 'learn', but is used with a wider variety of verbs. Example (123) suggests that it is good for the person to find a wife because his father has now passed away (and that person no longer needs to worry about his father). In (124), the 'should/ought to' meaning of *faan1* on its own is even more salient as it is no longer accompanied by an explicit modal (i.e. *jing1goi1* 'should'). The speaker in (124) is suggesting to another person to put on a gown because it is cold outside and it should be good for that person to do so, so that he will not easily catch a cold.

We have now seen how *faan1* has moved from a directional particle meaning 'return', to giving a strong implication of what one should do in the context of 'learning' (i.e. when *faan1* is used with the verb *hok6* 'learn', reinforced by a modal, to imply 'returning to an existing model and learn from it'). It then moves to function as a modal marker in its own right, highlighting the meaning of 'obligation'. The modal force of (123) and (124) is derived from the speaker's interpretation of the objective circumstances. That is, in consideration of a certain objective condition, one should perform the action so that a proper/deserved state can be achieved – a state which one often finds good. This 'good' for oneself later shifts even further towards the speaker's perspective via subjectification. At a later stage

of its grammaticalization, *faan1* can mark the speaker's subjective assessment of a situation. This subjective use of *faan1* is attested in data from the 1970s.

- (125) 沖返個涼。  
*Cung1 faan1 go3 loeng4.*  
 wash *faan1* CL shower  
 '(Let me) enjoy a shower.' (Gamblers 1974)
- (126) 飲返杯冰凍啤酒。  
*Jam2 faan1 bui1 bing1dung3 be1zau2.*  
 drink *faan1* CL chill beer  
 '(Let's) have some nice chilled beer.' (Contract 1978)

In unmarked situations where an explicit subject is not available, the implicit subject is *always* the speaker, as in (125), or it at least includes the speaker, as in (126). A similar observation can be made for English. If one says 'It'd be good/nice, etc. to have a shower', the implication is 'good'/'nice' for the speaker. To defeat this implicature, one has to specify 'It'd be good *for you* to have a shower'. Section 6.4.3 below will explore in detail how *faan1* (originally a directional particle indicating 'return') has become associated with this subjective 'good' sense.

#### 6.4.3 Subjectification of *faan1* – expression of the speaker's *positive* evaluation

The subjective use of *faan1* illustrated in (125) and (126) at the end of the last section has aroused the interest of many scholars in the past. This subjective *faan1* has been identified in many previous studies on Cantonese grammar, as well as some Cantonese dictionaries. However, a full account of how this sense has come about has been lacking in these previous studies. Before presenting the analysis of the developmental path of this subjective use of *faan1*, understanding how it is evaluated in previous studies is relevant.

Zhan (1958) first identified in his article this subjective use of *faan1*, suggesting that it is simply an idiom unrelated to 'return'. Following Zhan, a number of other scholars have also presented analyses of *faan1*. H. Gao (1980) and Yuan (1989) have taken Zhan's position, suggesting that this *faan1* has no semantic content and is used solely as a kind of 'grammatical particle'. Consider (127)–(129) taken from these sources.

- (127) 我今晚要睇返出戲。  
*Ngo5 gam1 maan5 jiu3 tai2 faan1 ceot1 hei3.*  
 I this night need see *faan1* CL movie  
 'I'd love to enjoy watching a movie tonight.' (Zhan 1958: 121)

- (128) 我想講返兩句。  
 Ngo5 soeng2 gong2 faan1 loeng5 geoi3.  
 I wish say faan1 two sentence  
 ‘I wish to say a few words.’ (H. Gao 1980: 56)
- (129) 寫返啲嘢。  
 Se2 faan1 di1 je5.  
 write faan1 CL thing  
 ‘(I wish) to write something.’ (Yuan 1989: 216)

These authors in general agree that the ‘empty’ *faan1* has grammaticalized from the full lexical verb *faan1*, but an explanation for how this use of ‘empty’ *faan1* has come about is not offered. There are a number of other studies which have attempted to find out what the semantic and grammatical status of *faan1* is, as well as any contextual constraints on its use. Cheung (2007a) and Peng (1999) suggest that this seemingly non-directional *faan1* is still related to ‘return’, but a conceptual ‘return’ to a deserved state, illustrated in (130) and (131). Both examples suggest a ‘return’ to a desired state.

- (130) 個女仔咁靚, 係人都要望返幾眼。  
 Go3 nei5za2i gam3 leng3, hai6 jan4 dou1 jiu3 mong6 faan1  
 CL girl so pretty BE person also need look faan1  
 gei2 ngaan5.  
 several eye  
 ‘The girl is so pretty that everyone cannot help looking at her over and over again.’ (Cheung 2007a: 130)
- (131) 嘆返吓空調。  
 Taan3 faan1 haa5 hung1tiu4  
 enjoy faan1 while air-conditioning  
 ‘(I wish) to enjoy the air-conditioning for a while.’ (Peng 1999: 67)

Other studies have noticed that the use of *faan1* is actually related to the implication of ‘for the good of oneself/attainment of a desirable state’ (Matthews and Yip 2011a; K. Wu 1997) and ‘an ideal condition’ (Tang 2001, 2015), exemplified in (132)–(134) below.

- (132) 我幾想生返個仔。  
 Ngo5 gei2 soeng2 saang1 faan1 go3 zai2.  
 I quite wish give.birth faan1 CL son  
 ‘I rather fancy having a son.’ (Matthews and Yip 2011a: 247)

- (133) 有啲凍, 著返件衫先。  
*Jau5 di1 dung3, zoeK3 faan1 gin6 saam1 sin1.*  
 have some cold wear *faan1* CL clothes first  
 ‘It’s a bit cold; let me put on some clothes first.’ (K. Wu 1997: 63)
- (134) 最好就係飲返杯咖啡。  
*Zeoi3 hou2 zau6 hai6 jam2 faan1 bui1 gaa3fe1.*  
 most good then BE drink *faan1* CL coffee  
 ‘The best thing to do is to have a (nice) cup of coffee.’ (Tang 2015: 123)

Tang (2015) has made a further observation about *faan1* that it can be used to reinforce the ‘enjoyment’ of the action denoted by the verb. Tang suggests that *faan1* has something to do with an ideal situation or one’s expectation. He further suggests that *faan1* possesses the semantic components [+enjoyable] and [+positive] so that sentences with *faan1* can only be interpreted as associated with positive connotations. He illustrates his point by the example below.

- (134') \*最慘就係飲返杯咖啡。  
 \**Zeoi3 caam2 zau6 hai6 jam2 faan1 bui1 gaa3fe1.*  
 most poor then BE drink *faan1* CL coffee  
 ‘The worst thing to do is to have a cup of coffee.’ (Tang 2015: 123)

Even though example (134) is perfectly good; (134') is definitely not acceptable. It is semantically anomalous because the positive sense of *faan1* [+enjoyable] clashes with the negative sense of *caam2* ‘dreadful’ [-enjoyable]. This positive/desirable sense of *faan1* is even more apparent if we consider (135) and (136) below, where it is used with activities which are not usually considered as pleasant or enjoyable.

- (135) 掃幅地、抹隻窗, 花咗兩個鐘!  
*Sou3 fuk1 dei6, mut3 zek3 coeng1, faa1 zo2 loeng5 go3 zung1!*  
 sweep CL floor clean CL window spend PERF two CL hour  
 ‘Swept the floor; cleaned the window – it took (me) two hours!’
- (136) 掃返幅地、抹返隻窗, 花咗兩個鐘!  
*Sou3 faan1 fuk1 dei6, mut3 faan1 zek3 coeng1, faa1 zo2 loeng5*  
 sweep *faan1* CL floor clean *faan1* CL window spend PERF two  
*go3 zung1.*  
 CL hour  
 ‘Swept the floor; cleaned the window – it (pleasantly) took (me) two hours!’

Without *faan1*, activities like sweeping the floor or cleaning the window are not necessarily enjoyable and may be onerous. However, the use of *faan1*, as in (136), would imply that the experience of these otherwise onerous activities was somehow pleasurable. One can add remarks like ‘but I enjoyed it!’ or ‘it was very pleasurable!’

to (136), but not (135). One might only expect comments like ‘it was very tiring!’ or ‘how backbreaking!’ for (135).

Besides reinforcing the ‘enjoyment’ of the action denoted by the verb, Tang further points out that *faan1* requires an indefinite NP object if it is to mean ‘ideal’ or ‘enjoyment’. Consider:

- (137) 我想飲返杯咖啡。  
 Ngo5 soeng2 jam2 faan1 bui1 gaa3fe1.  
 I wish drink faan1 CL coffee  
 ‘I’d like to enjoy a cup of coffee.’
- (137’) 我想飲返個杯咖啡。  
 Ngo5 soeng2 jam2 faan1 go2 bui1 gaa3fe1.  
 I wish drink faan1 that CL coffee  
 ‘I’d like to go back to drinking that cup of coffee.’

According to Tang’s observation, (137’) can only encode the resumption of an action because of the definite nature of the complement; the reading involving the enjoyment of the activity is not available. It could hardly mean ‘I’d like to enjoy *that* cup of coffee’. Tang did not go further to justify his observation about this ‘indefinite object constraint’, but a plausible reason might be that an indefinite complement profiles the ‘activity’ while a definite complement profiles the ‘object’. In other words, (137) highlights the ‘process of coffee drinking’ while (137’) focuses more on a specific ‘object’/‘patient’ of the action (i.e. a specific cup of coffee). A definite object normally presupposes a started action so that when it is used with *faan1*, the meaning of resumption would result. On the other hand, an indefinite object allows the activity to be interpreted as generic, thus allowing the speaker to comment on whether he or she thinks the activity is enjoyable. This licenses *faan1* to be interpreted as a marker expressing the enjoyment of a generic activity.

Now we have reviewed how this more ‘empty’ *faan1* is treated in previous studies, which have provided us with clues to the different facets of *faan1*. Most of these studies have identified the ‘ideal’ or ‘good’ implication of *faan1*. Nevertheless, few have examined the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ which leads to this implication. Instances of this subjective *faan1* in the database can provide us with hints to work out the links between ‘return’ and ‘enjoyment’, two meanings which are seemingly unrelated.

We have investigated how the ‘return’ meaning, or the various ‘re-’ meanings, might have led to the modal use of *faan1*; there is always a strong implication of obligation (reinforced by modals like *jiu3* ‘need to’ and *jing1goi1* ‘ought to’) when *faan1* is used in the context of learning (i.e. to return to a role model). This modal force later on gets associated with *faan1* and is reinterpreted as part of *faan1*’s semantics, to suggest what a person ‘should/ought to’ do for his own advantage. From giving a ‘kind suggestion’ to another person, *faan1* has been developed into

a grammatical marker to externalize the speaker's assessment of what is pleasurable. This subjective *faan1* can be considered as having an expressive function, to express the affective and emotional feeling of the speaker. It is used with a much stronger subjective colour that it can only be used to express the *speaker's* subjective assessment, not *someone else's*. The situation is always evaluated on the basis of the speaker's perspective, not necessarily on any circumstantial factors based on the objective environment.

When the various tests for subjectification were discussed in Chapter 3, the subjective *faan1* was found out to be incompatible with the narrative test. That is, it cannot be used to describe a third person's enjoyment of an activity. Likewise, it would be rather unacceptable for *faan1* to go with pronouns other than the first person, demonstrated by the set of examples below.

- (138) a. 我想食返餐buffet。  
*Ngo5 soeng2 sik6 faan1 caan1 buffet.*  
 I wish eat *faan1* CL buffet  
 'I'd love to enjoy a buffet.'
- b. 佢想食返餐buffet。  
 ?*Keoi5 soeng2 sik6 faan1 caan1 buffet.*  
 s/he wish eat *faan1* CL buffet  
 'S/he'd love to enjoy a buffet.'

Sentence (138a) above is perfectly good but (138b), where the first person subject is replaced by third person, is bad. This further confirms that the appraisal of enjoyment is essentially subjective and personal, as it can only be judged from the speaker's perspective, not someone else's. Sentence (138b) is bad because the speaker cannot use *faan1* to express a third person's pleasurable activity, as in *sik6 faan1* 'enjoy eating'. Nevertheless, it would become acceptable again if it is used in reported speech, as it is actually the third person who has used *faan1* to encode his or her pleasurable feelings. Consider (138c) and (138d) below.

- (138) c. 佢話佢想食返餐buffet。  
*Keoi5 waa6 keoi5 soeng2 sik6 faan1 caan1 buffet.*  
 s/he say s/he wish eat *faan1* CL buffet  
 'S/he said s/he wants to enjoy a buffet.'
- d. 佢想食返餐buffet喎。<sup>113</sup>  
*Keoi5 soeng2 sik6 faan1 caan1 buffet wo5.*  
 s/he wish eat *faan1* CL buffet PRT  
 'S/he said s/he wants to enjoy a buffet.'

113. The sentence final particle 喎 *wo5* is used as a device to report what someone else has said.

Besides the narrative test and pronoun test, we have also shown in Chapter 3 that the sense of enjoyment that *faan1* expresses is not cancellable, suggesting that this [+enjoyment] is no longer an implicature and has been reinterpreted as part of *faan1*'s semantics. Example (139) shows that we are dealing with a grammaticalized semantic meaning rather than a pragmatic inference; the positive sense of *faan1* is not cancellable and thus when the particle is present, it cannot be followed by a negative comment.<sup>114</sup>

- (139) 有時我食完晏會飲(?返)杯咖啡,但係我唔算太鍾意。  
*Jau5si4 ngo5 sik6 jyun4 ngaan3 wui5 jam2 (?faan1) bui1*  
 sometimes I eat finish lunch would drink (*faan1*) CL  
*gaa3fe1, daan6hai6 ngo5 m4 syun3 taai3 zung1ji3.*  
 coffee but I not consider very like  
 'Sometimes I'd have a cup of coffee after my lunch – but actually I'm not very fond of it. (without *faan1*)' /  
 '?Sometimes I'd love a cup of coffee after my lunch – but actually I'm not very fond of it. (with *faan1*)'

All the above tests show that this appraisal of 'enjoyment' that *faan1* expresses is essentially subjective (i.e. from the speaker's perspective), and has been reinterpreted as part of its semantics. One possible path by which this subjective *faan1* shifted towards the positive side of an evaluative scale is, as mentioned earlier, by highlighting the 'positive' component of the modal force that *faan1* has developed in the course of its grammaticalization – what is 'good' for the second person has become what is 'good', 'pleasant', etc. from the speaker's perspective. The fact that *faan1* as a verb has the implication of 'good' makes this subjectification path even more probable.

To recall, the core semantics of *faan1* is 'to return to the source'. This 'source' is often interpreted as the original point from which the movement started, as in:

- (140) 我宜家返學校。  
*Ngo5 ji4gaa1 faan1 hok6haau6.*  
 I now *faan1* school  
 'I'm now going (back) to school.'

Sentence (140) implies that some time in the past the speaker has been to the school and now he or she is *going back* to that school. In some situations, *faan1* can even be used with a goal the speaker has never been to.

114. Example (139) was cited as example (25) in Chapter 3.

- (141) 返中國  
*faan1 Zung1gwok3*  
*faan1* China  
 'go (back) to China'

A speaker who has never been to China can still utter (141), under the condition that China is his ancestral homeland. If (141) is uttered by a non-Chinese, *faan1* can only mean a physical return: 'China' is a place which the person left, and is now coming back to. This observation can be accounted for if we consider again the core of *faan1*: back to source. Metaphorically, this 'source' is extended to one's native place and can be interpreted as one's 'source of origin', that is, the place where one comes from or belongs to. In English we can also say 'go back to your roots'. If the speaker of (141) is a Chinese, then China is considered his 'place of origin'. Even if a person has never been to China, he can still use *faan1* as he is conceptualized as going 'back to the source', back to where he belongs and came from originally. Following this direction, we can see why examples (142)–(144) below are possible:

- (142) 我聽日第一日返工。  
*Ngo5 ting1jat6 dai6jat1 jat6 faan1 gung1.*  
 I tomorrow first day *faan1* work  
 'Tomorrow is my first day of work.'
- (143) 我個女聽日開始返幼稚園。  
*Ngo5 go3 nei2 ting1jat6 hoi1ci2 faan1 jau3zi6jyun4.*  
 I POSS daughter tomorrow start *faan1* kindergarten  
 'My daughter will start going to kindergarten tomorrow.'
- (144) 我希望我有一日可以返天堂。  
*Ngo5 hei1mong6 ngo5 jau5 jat1 jat6 ho2ji3 faan1 tin1tong4.*  
 I hope I have one day can *faan1* heaven  
 'I hope I can go to heaven one day.'

The 'sense of belonging' that *faan1* possesses is more salient in (142)–(144). One can probably work out from the contexts that the subjects have never been to the places where they *faan1* (i.e. 'return to'): the workplace, the kindergarten, and most obviously, heaven! However, *faan1* can still be used because places of work or study are often closely associated with one's place of belonging and where habitual structured activities are performed. These are places which define a person's identity and which a person is emotionally attached to: a work place, a study place, and, an 'eternal home' (from a religious perspective). There is a general, cross-cultural conception of 'home' (i.e. where one belongs to) as a place of love and shelter. Returning to this source/where one belongs is often associated with a good and positive feeling, especially in the Chinese community. This association of 'home is good' forms

another conceptual link that bridges the gap between the directional sense ‘return’ and the subjective sense ‘enjoyment’: returning to places where one belongs often creates a pleasurable feeling. These [+pleasurable] and [+positive] features of *faan1* are retained when it grammaticalized and became a verbal particle.

The link between ‘return’ and ‘good’ has now become more apparent and the two senses are not totally unrelated, as remarked in some past studies. The more abstract, non-directional *faan1* is not simply an ‘idiomatic expression’ or ‘empty morphological form’, as described in the literature. More interestingly, *faan1* seems to have gone further in its grammaticalization, moving from the subjective domain into the intersubjective domain, expressing meanings that are hearer-oriented. Consider (145) below.

- (145) 各位同學，喺第一行寫返個名。  
*Gok3 wai2 tung4hok6, hai2 dai7jat1 hong4 se2 faan1 go3 meng2.*  
 every CL student at first row write *faan1* CL name  
 ‘Students, write down your name in the first row.’

Example (145) is perfectly fine without *faan1*; its presence nor absence does not seem to affect the propositional content of (145). Here, *faan1* does not denote any sort of return, nor does it help express the positive feeling of the speaker. Rather, it is used to soften the tone of the speaker, so as to create a good and comfortable feeling towards the hearer. *Faan1* is used as an intersubjective marker, which is essentially hearer-oriented. No one would like to be reminded, or be suggested what they should do. The particle *faan1* in (145) is employed for politeness reason, mitigating the strength of the request/suggestion made by the speaker. It is suspected that the [+positive] feature of *faan1* has been generalized and become more abstract, so that this ‘good for the speaker’ meaning has become the sense of ‘good for the hearer’. This intersubjective *faan1* is discussed in detail in Chor (2013).<sup>115</sup>

## 6.5 A note on ‘asymmetry’ in grammaticalization

At this point, we have looked at the grammaticalization pathways of the twelve directional particles, and the roles played by the three mechanisms in their course of development. Many of them are investigated in pairs. This allows for comparison of similarities and differences in the grammaticalization trajectories of directional

115. Besides the subjective uses of *faan1*, Chor (2013) has also analyzed the intersubjective uses of *faan1*, as well as its preverbal and adverbial uses. The motivation for the subjectification and intersubjectification of *faan1* is also attempted in this study.

particles which at first glance appear to be perfect antonyms that differ only with respect to one opposite feature (e.g. lower vs. higher position along a vertical scale [up-down], orientation relative to a reference point [away-toward]). However, it is found that the presumably antonymic ‘pairs’ of particles are in fact not simple bi-polar oppositions and they have always taken up different connotations in their developments. The findings from this study have provided clear empirical evidence for ‘asymmetrical grammaticalization’ – members within a ‘pair’ do not develop at the same rate and to the same extent along the grammaticalization scale.

In this book, the grammaticalization paths of four pairs of particles have been discussed: (1) *lai4* ‘come’ and *heoi3* ‘go’; (2) *soeng5* ‘ascend’ and *lok6* ‘descend’; (3) *hoi1* ‘move away’ and *maai4* ‘move towards’; and (4) *ceot1* ‘move out’ and *jap6* ‘move into’. Within each pair, one member often displays an evolution quite different from the other, and none of the four pairs shows completely parallel developments within both members. This proves again that *pairs* of directional particles are not simple bi-polar oppositions.

Xu (2008) suggests that the phenomenon of ‘asymmetry’ is common and can be found at different levels (phonetic, lexical and syntactic) in languages. He further proposes that asymmetry is especially common in the expression of space in Chinese. He adds that in Chinese, ‘it is often possible to find pairs of asymmetrical structures expressing opposite concepts: one structure without a counterpart or two symmetrical structures that do not express opposite meanings. These structures are especially attested in expressions related to space. This is true too for the motion verbs *lái* ‘come’ and *qù* ‘go’ in Mandarin Chinese (2008: 176). Xu claims that Chinese speakers do not interpret ‘come’ and ‘go’ in exactly the same manner. In other words, they are not treated cognitively as exact opposites. Although in most cases *lái* ‘come’ and *qù* ‘go’ have taken the same syntactic position in expressing motions, they actually have an asymmetrical relationship when used as main verbs; the scale of *lái*’s use is wider than that of *qù*’s. For instance, *lái* can be used in (146) below but not *qù* (ibid: 178).

- (146) 前面來/\*去了一個人。  
*Qiánmian lái/\*qù le yí gè rén.*  
 ahead lái/ qù PERF one CL person  
 ‘Someone is coming ahead.’

Xu attempts to explain this asymmetry from a cognitive perspective. He attributes the asymmetry to the way that Chinese people perceive space. He suggests that in general ‘Chinese favors spatial terms which are in sight of the speaker’ (ibid: 178). The same thing is observed when *lái* and *qù* are used post verbally, as in (147) below (ibid: 194).

- (147) 樹上飛來/\*去一隻鳥。  
 Shù shàng fēi lái/\*qù yí zhī niǎo.  
 tree up fly lái/ qù one CL bird  
 ‘A bird is flying to a tree.’

Besides the deictic directional verbs *lái* and *qù*, Xu suggests that the same phenomenon also happens to other pairs of antonyms, such as *qián* ‘ahead, before’ and *hòu* ‘back, behind’, and *zhè* ‘this’ and *nà* ‘that’; the first counterpart within each pair is always preferred, and has a wider range of uses (2008: 194).

A similar asymmetry in Cantonese is observed in our analysis. Although the analysis of *lái* and *qù* in Mandarin does not carry over directly to Cantonese, the counterparts *lai4* ‘come’ and *heoi3* ‘go’ also shows an asymmetrical relationship. Compared with *heoi3*, *lai4* is also more grammaticalized and has a wider range of uses. This asymmetry is explainable in terms of their difference in semantic features.

Among all the directional particles, only *lai4* and *heoi3* can serve the function of showing the purpose of the action denoted by the host verb phrase. They can develop this linking function and connect an action with its purpose because they have a built-in speaker orientation which other directional particles lack. The details of their development are not repeated here. However, an important point to be reinforced is their different degrees of grammaticalization – *lai4* has gone a step further in its evolution and become a true purposive particle.

- (148) 我買呢幅畫嚟/\*去裝飾嘅。  
 Ngo5 maai5 nei1 fuk1 waa2 lai4/\*heoi3 zong1sik1 ge3.  
 I buy this CL painting lai4/heoi3 decorate PRF  
 ‘I bought this painting for (the purpose of) decoration.’

In (148), only *lai4* can be used to link the action (i.e. buying the painting) to its purpose (i.e. decoration), but not *heoi3*. As explained earlier, this difference is due to the fact that *lai4* has a feature which *heoi3* lacks – *lai4* not only specifies the orientation (i.e. towards the speaker), but also the goal (i.e. where the speaker is located). That is to say, not only does it have a built-in orientation, but also a built-in goal (whereas *heoi3* only has a built-in orientation, but not a built-in goal). This difference from the cognitive perspective allows *lai4* to grammaticalize into a genuine purposive particle.

Despite the fact that some instances of asymmetry can be accounted for, reasons for other cases might not be clear. Very often, we can only speculate about their asymmetrical behavior. For instance, the particles *maai4* ‘move towards’ and *hoi1* ‘move away’ have both gone fairly far on their paths of grammaticalization and become grammatical markers serving a range of functions. Via metaphorical extension, *maai4* has developed into an additive particle ‘also/as well’, while *hoi1* has gone in another direction, and become a temporal marker expressing a number of temporal meanings. *Maai4* moved a step further, and has undergone the process of

subjectification and become a true marker of negative evaluation. However, *hoi1*, as its counterpart, did not grammaticalize in a parallel manner; it has not undergone the process of subjectification and become, say, a marker of positive evaluation. We suspect that this might be related to the source meaning of the subjective sense of *maai4*. As proposed earlier in this chapter, the meaning from which the negative evaluative meaning of *maai4* developed is the ‘inclusion’ meaning of *maai4*. That is, the inclusion of an entity which originally falls beyond the speaker’s acceptance level. It is this additive meaning which might be responsible for the genesis of *maai4*’s negative sense. While *maai4* has grammaticalized into a marker with the meaning ‘inclusion’, *hoi1* has not developed into a marker with the meaning ‘exclusion’. Simply, there is not a stage when *hoi1* can mean ‘the exclusion of the outrageous’, or, ‘the exclusion of the inferior’. *Hoi1* has not undergone a parallel development with *maai4* because the source meaning for subjectification (i.e. ‘exclusion’) is not part of the meaning of *hoi1*.

While we are able to speculate about the asymmetry of *maai4* and *hoi1*, the asymmetries of *soeng5* ‘ascend’ and *lok6* ‘descend’, and *jap6* ‘move into’ and *ceot1* ‘move out’, do not seem so easily explainable. *Soeng5* has not gone very far in its pathway of grammaticalization. The various concrete/abstract meanings that *soeng5* expresses are still easily understood in terms of its lexical meaning, which denotes an upward movement, or a metaphorical sense of ‘attachment’. However, the evolution of *lok6* is more complicated. Starting as a directional particle denoting a downward movement, it has gone through a number of stages to become a particle expressing the subjective meaning ‘coming to rest in a conclusive assessment’. This subjective meaning comes from the ‘settlement’ meaning derived in the course of *lok6*’s grammaticalization, which owes its origin to *lok6*’s spatial meaning of a ‘physical settlement’. *Lok6*’s ability to take on this ‘settlement’ meaning is due to its ability to take a goal; the theme subject descends to a lower point and rests there. However, the truth is that *soeng2* as a directional particle can also take a goal. We can have both *haang4 soeng2/lok6 tou4syu1gun2* walk ascend/descend library ‘walk up/down to the library’. The reason for the asymmetry of *soeng5* and *lok6* in grammaticalization does not seem to be very obvious. This is also true for the case of *jap6* ‘move into’ and *ceot1* ‘move out’.

Through the process of metaphorical extension, *ceot1* has taken up the function of showing that some features or intentions which have been hidden from view are now uncovered, as in (149) and (150) below – something has become perceptible and is now ‘see *ceot1*’ and ‘hear *ceot1*’.<sup>116</sup> This more abstract use results from the metaphorical extension of its concrete lexical use, which is ‘to move out of a confined space and come into view’.

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116. Examples (49) and (50) from Chapter 4 are repeated here as examples (149) and (150).

- (149) 你聽得出?  
*Nei5 teng1 dak1 ceot1?*  
 you listen able *ceot1*  
 ‘Do you hear understandingly?’ (Bonney 1853)
- (150) 睇得出佢好肚餓。  
*Tai2 dak1 ceot1 keoi5 hou2 tou5ngo6*  
 look able *ceot1* s/he very hungry  
 ‘You can see they were very hungry.’ (Ball 1894)

Theoretically speaking, *jap6*, the counterpart of *ceot1*, could also grammaticalize in a similar way. If *ceot1* can develop into a marker meaning ‘something is uncovered and become invisible’, *jap6* could also have undergone a parallel development to become a particle meaning something is ‘covered’ and ‘not seen’. The particle could have developed along such a direction, so that it could be used in situations such as (151) below.

- (151) \*我答應守入你嘅秘密。  
 \**Ngo5 daap3jing3 sau2 jap6 nei5 ge3 bei3mat6.*  
 I promise keep *jap6* you LP secret  
 ‘I promise to keep your secret.’

Example (151) is a made-up example. It is ungrammatical and makes no sense to native speakers of Cantonese. The truth about *jap6*’s development is that it did not develop into grammatical markers of any kind. It remains as a particle with the directional meaning ‘move into’. The observation here leads to an interesting conclusion that even though particles *could have* developed in a certain way, they just *do not*. In fact, the observations made in this book have shown that *none* of the pairs actually displays a wholly symmetrical relation in its diachronic development. The particle counterparts *always* exhibit different paths and different degrees of grammaticalization. In other words, there are always *gaps* in the development of grammatical items. The development of individual particles is not always predictable, even pairs of particles are often found to be asymmetrical at syntactic and semantic levels. Yes, they do grammaticalize along some ‘predictable’ paths according to some general ‘tendencies’ in grammaticalization, but this does not guarantee that they *have to* develop all their potential. Individual particles have a different degree of grammaticalization and each of them can be seen as occupying a different position on an imaginary scale from ‘lexical’ to ‘grammatical’, which might be labeled the ‘grammaticalization cline’.

lexical end

grammatical end

The ‘grammaticalization cline’ introduced here is similar to the ‘cline of grammaticality’ proposed in Hopper and Traugott (2003). The concept of a ‘cline’ represents the gradual transition from a full lexical item into a grammatical item, thus is useful in understanding the process of grammaticalization. Below is a typical ‘cline of grammaticality’ (Hopper and Traugott 2003: 7):

content item > grammatical item > clitic > inflectional affix

This ‘cline of grammaticality’ is mainly used to describe items in inflectional languages; lexical items in isolating languages, including Cantonese, would be unlikely to be involved in the last two stages of this cline.<sup>117</sup> The ‘cline of grammaticality’ that is proposed here is not a cline about how a particular item can potentially develop in its process of grammaticalization. The concept of ‘cline’ is borrowed here, representing an arrangement of items with the more lexical ones being placed nearer to the lexical end and the more grammatical ones the grammatical end. Particles with ‘fuller’ meanings only (e.g. *jap6*, *soeng5*, etc.) tend to stay near to the lexical end and have not gone far to develop into grammatical markers, while particles with more ‘abstract’, grammaticalized meanings (e.g. *faan1*, *maai4*, *lok6*, etc.) might have gone very far towards the grammatical end, demonstrating idiosyncratic, speaker-based meanings. There are also considerable number of particles lying in between the two ends.

The semantic properties of individual directional particles provide us with clues as to what kind of grammatical meanings they might come to express along the path of their grammaticalization. For instance, *faan1*’s semantics of ‘return home’ has prepared it to grammaticalize into a positive evaluative marker, while *maai4*’s semantics of ‘inclusion of the excessive’ has prepared its way to become a negative evaluative marker. Again, this does not mean that in each case the particle *has to* develop all its potential to express grammatical meanings of various kinds; those semantic features are only suggestive of a possible path for some functions to be developed if grammaticalization is to take place. Each particle has its own story of development and this is why no two particles occupy the same position on the grammaticalization cline. Each evolutionary path is in fact unique and is not totally predictable.

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117. In formal syntax, grammatical particles are sometimes analyzed as clitics. See, for instance, Ting (2003, 2008, 2010) on Classical Chinese and the Mandarin *suo*.

## Conclusion and future research

### 7.1 Summary and major findings

This book has inquired into the grammaticalization of twelve directional particles in Cantonese, namely *lai4* ‘come’, *heoi3* ‘go’, *ceot1* ‘move out’, *jap6* ‘move into’, *hoi1* ‘move away’, *maai4* ‘move towards’, *soeng5* ‘ascend’, *lok6* ‘descend’, *hei2* ‘raise (something) up’, *dou3* ‘arrive’, *faan1* ‘move back’, and *gwo3* ‘move across’. The present study has analyzed how, starting from the core directional sense, a directional particle can take on different senses in the process of grammaticalization and develop non-directional, figurative meanings in other domains. With the help of our diachronic data, the uses of each particle at different periods of time can be identified, so that *how* and *when* each has taken up different senses in its grammaticalization process can be worked out. Although all of these particles originated from the same conceptual source, they do not all develop in exactly the same way and the same manner in their grammaticalization. The differences are due not only to their different degrees of grammaticalization, but also to aspects of their meanings when used as main verbs.

A specific sequence of mechanisms has been found to have operated in the grammaticalization of all twelve particles – metaphorical extension > pragmatic enrichment > subjectification. In fact, this ordering is highly predictable, as it largely conforms to pre-existing models. For instance, it is accepted in the literature that metaphor is fundamental to semantic change and plays an important role in grammaticalization, especially in the early stages. When these directional particles acquire more abstract directional meanings in other domains via metaphorical extension, they allow pragmatic room for implicatures to be derived from uses to which speakers put them in various communicative contexts – this is the stage where pragmatic enrichment comes into play. The resulting implicature might become conventionalized and further undergoes subjectification, pushing the semantic development along the typical pathway, towards the grammaticalized, speaker-oriented end. This again echoes another tendency in grammaticalization that subjectification plays a dominant role, especially at later stages (Traugott 1982, 1989, 1995; among her other works). There is also a strong tendency for subjective senses to become intersubjective (Traugott 2003b, 2010b), as attested in the grammaticalization of the particle *faan1*. Diagram 7.1 below presents a summary of the grammaticalization paths of individual particles.

Particles		Directional	Metaphor
嚟 <i>lai4</i> 'come'		[1] 嚟 (1841) <i>bring lai4</i>	→ [2] 煮米糊喂銀仔 (1841) <i>boil gruel lai4 feed baby</i> [purpose] → [3] 拈條頸巾嚟我 (1841) <i>bring CL neck cloth lai4 me</i> [transfer] – obsolete now
去 <i>heoi3</i> 'go'		[4] 送去 (1841) <i>send heoi3</i>	→ [5] 挽弓籃去買送 (1841) <i>carry basket heoi3 buy provisions</i> [purpose] – more restricted
出 <i>ceot1</i> 'move out'		[6] 送出門外 (1841) <i>send ceot1 door outside</i>	→ [7] 寫得出 (1841) / [8] 聽得出 (1853) <i>write able ceot1 listen able ceot1</i> [perceive something] [fused in potential constructions]
入 <i>jap6</i> 'move into'		[9] 踏入轎扛 (1841) <i>step jap6 sedan-chair pole</i>	→ [10] 踢入黑社會 (1996) <i>kick jap6 black society</i> moving into an abstract space

		Directional	Metaphor			Directional	Metaphor	Implicature	Subjectification
上 <i>soeng5</i> 'ascend'		[11] 掛上 (1841) <i>hang soeng5</i>	→ [12] 睇上 / [13] 愛上 (1947) <i>see soeng5 love soeng5</i> abstract 'up' - restricted						
落 <i>lok6</i> 'descend'		[14] 跌落水 (1828) <i>fall lok6 water</i>	→ [15] 放落個處 (1853) <i>put lok6 that place</i> occupation of space	→ [16] 住落好耐 (1853) <i>live lok6 very long</i> [physical settlement] [resided]	→ [17] 寫落張紙 (1952) <i>write lok6 CL paper</i> the settlement of the action denoted by the verb	→ [18] 諗落都抵 (HKCanCor) <i>think lok6 also worth</i> the settlement of the speaker's conclusion – often used with verbs of mental action/perception			
開 <i>hoi1</i> 'move away'		[19] 推開隻碟 (1841) <i>push hoi1 CL plate</i>	→ [20] 將個道理推開講 (1894) <i>take CL principle push hoi1 talk</i> abstract 'away'	→ [21] 寫開字 (1927) <i>write hoi1 words</i> [progressive] (c.f. Eng -ing)					
				→ [22] 寫開嗰封信 (1954) <i>write hoi1 that CL letter</i> [type] 'inceptive and continuous'	→ [24] 食開嗰隻牌子 (HKCanCor) <i>eat hoi1 that CL brand</i> [habitual]				
				→ [23] 如果你買開野，請... (1941) <i>if you buy hoi1 thing, please...</i> 'while'					

	<b>Directional</b>	<b>Metaphor</b>	<b>Implicature</b>		
埋 <i>maai4</i> 'move towards'	[25] 揸埋個邊(1853) <i>carry maai4 that side</i>	[26] 住埋一畝(1853) <i>live maai4 one lump</i> [together'] [27] 除埋個件衫(1912) <i>take-off maai4 that CL jacket</i> [also/as well'] [additive marker]	[28] 講埋啦(1912) <i>speak maai4 PRT</i> [completion']		
		[29] 學埋的嘅嘅(1950) <i>learn maai4 CL such LP magic</i> [speaker's 'negative' evaluation]			
	<b>Directional</b>	<b>Metaphor</b>	<b>Implicature</b> <b>Subjectification*</b>		
返 <i>faan1</i> 'move back'	[30] 唔括得番(1853) <i>not bring able faan1</i>	[31] 間屋起得番(1853) <i>CL house build able faan1</i> [different kinds of 're.' [i.e. reciprocate/reverse/ resume/etc.]]	[32] 巨想學番唐人一樣(1883) <i>s/he want learn faan1 Chinese same</i> [return to a role model]	[33] 應該搵返個老(1947) <i>should find faan1 CL wife</i> [implication of what one 'should' do] [should/ought to' do for the good of oneself]	[34] 沖返個涼(1974) <i>take faan1 CL shower</i> [speaker's pleasurable feeling]
	<b>Directional</b>	<b>Metaphor</b>			
到 <i>dou3</i> 'arrive'	[35] 入到二廳堂(1841) <i>enter dou3 two hall</i>	[36] 尾線要收到緊(1912) <i>end thread need tighten dou3 firm</i> [arriving at a state/topic/etc.]	[37] 講到啲大學生好似好沙塵嘅(HKCanCor) <i>say dou3 CL university student seem very arrogant such</i> [arriving at an 'extreme']		

	<b>Directional</b>	<b>Metaphor</b>	
過 <i>gwo3</i> 'move across'	[38] 轉過橫廳(1841) <i>turn gwo3 side hall</i>	[39] 普通(1853) <i>taste gwo3</i> [experience']	[40] 再寫過(1853) <i>again write gwo3</i> [repetition']
		[41] 我留過你(1853) <i>I reserve gwo3 you</i> [abstract transfer']	
		[42] 信得過(1912) <i>trust able gwo3</i> [worthy of trust]	[43] 認得過啲(HKCanCor) <i>think able gwo3 PRT</i> [('not) worthy of' [used in potential constructions]]
	<b>Directional</b>	<b>Metaphor</b>	
起 <i>hei2</i> 'raise (something) up'	[44] 挂起佢(1841) <i>hang hei2 it</i>	[45] 我添起工錢你(1853) <i>I add hei2 wage you</i> [metaphorical 'up']	[46] 想起(1894) <i>think hei2</i> [think 'up']
			[47] 買得起(1952) <i>buy able hei2</i> [affordability] [used in potential constructions]
	<b>Directional</b>	<b>Implicature**</b>	
	[48] 起貨(1841) <i>hei2 goods</i> [commercial context] [to raise goods']	[49] 做起(1853) <i>do hei2</i> [completion' - the action completed must be current and telic]	

\* See Chor (2013) for the intersubjectification of *faan1*.

\*\* See Chor (2007) for details.

Diagram 7.1 Summary chart of developmental paths of Cantonese directional particles<sup>118</sup>

118. Complete citations (i.e. including romanization and free translation) for each example are given in the Appendix. Because of space limitations here, some long examples have been abbreviated to the part needed to understand the function of the directional particle.

## 7.2 Contributions and typological significance

In the last decade, grammaticalization has attracted the close attention of linguists of different theoretical backgrounds. This present study is a further attempt to contribute to this area of study. From a macro point of view, this book has shown how the closed category of directional particles in Cantonese has undergone grammaticalization to express a wide variety of grammatical meanings, not all of which are predictable from their lexical source as directional morphemes. From a micro point of view, with the help of our diachronic database, we have attempted to reconstruct the steps that each directional particle has taken in the course of its grammaticalization. Various claims in the study of grammaticalization, in particular the Traugottian analytical framework of grammaticalization and semantic change, have been supported with diachronic data from Cantonese. Findings in this book can be seen to contribute to the following areas in the study of grammaticalization and language change in a broader context.

A special effort has been made to specify the kind of changes that has taken place in the grammaticalization of directional morphemes in Cantonese. As pointed out in Chapter 1, systematic study of grammaticalization in Chinese has just begun in the last decade or so, while the investigation of grammaticalization in Cantonese is even younger. Although there have been studies investigating individual items in Cantonese, the current study is perhaps the first devoted to the grammaticalization of an entire, well-defined set of linguistic items. This comprehensive study hopes to serve as an example for similar future studies, demonstrating the kind of data and the method of analysis that one can rely on when doing grammaticalization studies in Cantonese.

This book also contributes to the study of Cantonese particles. As shown in Chapter 1, the use of particles is ubiquitous in Cantonese. When compared to that in Mandarin and English, the particle system in Cantonese is far richer; speakers of Cantonese make use of different particles, singly or in combination, to express many subtle nuances of meaning. The various uses of these particles have drawn the attention of many linguists and topics related to this area of study have already attracted considerable attention. In fact, many of the grammaticalized uses of the directional particles that are investigated in this study have already been mentioned in various Cantonese grammar books, dictionaries, or individual studies on Cantonese particles, particularly the ones with subjective meanings (e.g. *faan1*, *maai4*, etc.). However, despite the fact that these studies have *described* the various uses associated with these particles, few of them have sought to *explain* how these different grammatical meanings may have come about. The present study is an attempt to fill this gap by proposing steps which seem to have led to the formation of these

grammatical meanings, and most importantly, relating those steps to well-attested motivations and mechanisms of semantic change in grammaticalization.

This book is also important to the study of space, or spatial morphemes, from a typological perspective. As elaborated in Chapter 2, the mapping of space in language has been a popular topic in linguistic research. Spatial morphemes have been a focus in studies on grammaticalization and semantic change. However, as Xu has remarked, ‘none of these books were [was] based on linguistic data from Chinese’ (2008: 1). In view of this, the present study supplements the existing literature by presenting an analysis of data from Cantonese, a variety of the Chinese language.

The use of historical data (i.e. the early Cantonese texts) in this book is an important step forward in Cantonese linguistics. Cantonese is essentially a spoken language and the paucity of written materials is often acknowledged. Most previous investigations into the semantic development of grammatical items in Cantonese were mostly done from a synchronic perspective, examining synchronic variation of individual items. The present study has brought into the analysis historical data from the mid-nineteenth century, hoping to make the findings more accurate and representative. Historical evidence is, of course, indispensable in explaining semantic change because there are so few synchronic, language internal clues which allow the ‘tracking’ of diachronic shifts in meaning. Unlike phonological changes, which to a certain extent are affected by language-specific phonotactic constraints, we cannot solely rely on synchronic variation to ‘predict’ how these different senses are linked together and developed. Although semantic changes often tend to proceed in a certain direction, we cannot predict the exact meanings that will result from a certain change. This study has illustrated how we can make good use of early Cantonese texts to perform diachronic analysis in Cantonese.

Another contribution this book has made is the construction of a diachronic database. Not only is historical data rarely used in studies on Cantonese, corpora of contemporary Cantonese are not commonly used either, most studies still tending to rely on the author’s own intuitions and made-up examples. Empirically tested data and made-up examples are equally important, especially to studies of semantic change and grammaticalization. In diachronic studies, empirical data is important as it reflects the real instances of earlier language use, which helps in reconstructing the development of linguistic items under investigation. Materials such as recordings of everyday dialogues and films are also valuable in the sense that they represent real instances of language use. Made-up examples by native speakers are not to be neglected as they supplement what might have been missed in the database, and provide examples which are simply too recent to have been included into the database. The present study has demonstrated that every type of data is essential to gaining a comprehensive picture of the linguistic objects/

processes under investigation. The fact that our analysis is grounded on these empirical data (with supplementary made-up examples occasionally used to highlight certain key points in the argumentation) has enhanced the reliability of this study, and, at the same time, facilitated the testing of various claims about the ‘universals’ or ‘predicted paths of grammaticalization’ made by previous scholars, in particular Traugott et al.’s claimed typical pathways in grammaticalization.

### 7.3 Trends and future studies

Extending from the domains of syntax and morphology, this study has moved towards the discourse-pragmatic domain and has explored how directional particles have grammaticalized to give pragmatic or even interpersonal functions in the later stages of their grammaticalization processes. That is to say, grammaticalization is not only a process from lexical to grammatical (as understood in traditional grammaticalization study), but a process that can further go into the pragmatic domain. There has been a growing interest in this area and more attention has been paid to how the pragmatic weight of an item is increased in the process of grammaticalization. In fact, many aspects within the pragmatic domain are worth exploring in the context of grammaticalization. More studies are awaited to find out how grammaticalized markers can be used to maintain speaker-hearer/interpersonal relationship, or in what ways that they can become pragmatic markers of various kinds, such as politeness markers, evidential markers, and (inter)subjective markers.

Another trend that is worthy of our attention would be the increasing number of studies in digital humanities. In grammaticalization study, the diachronic component is extremely important and should not be neglected. With the increasing availability of online corpora, different types of analyses within the context of grammaticalization and language change can be facilitated.

Moving from these trends at the macro-level and coming back to Chinese or Sinitic languages, there are also things that are worth exploring. This book only serves as a starting point for grammaticalization studies on particles, and certainly more work is needed before other broader generalizations can be made. For instance, we might expand this present study by pursuing a comparative analysis of directional morphemes in different Chinese dialects. Each variety has its own directional morphemes and they might also have evolved into grammatical markers of different kinds, serving a variety of meanings in different domains. Knowing how lexically identical and/or functionally analogous items develop in different varieties of Chinese will definitely have typological significance to grammaticalization studies in the broader context.

To pull our attention closer to Cantonese and focus on Cantonese directional particles, there are also follow-up works to do. A related area which might reward further investigation is the interactions between verbal particles (in particular evaluative particles) and sentence final particles. This book has identified three directional particles which have an evaluative function in the post-verbal position, namely *maai4*, *lok6*, and *faan1*. It would be interesting to know how these evaluative particles interact with sentence final particles to express the speaker's affective evaluations. For instance, the particle *lok6* is used to settle the speaker's thought process in an evaluation or assessment (i.e. to mark the speaker's final conclusion). We might thus expect that *lok6* is more compatible with sentence particles like *ze1* and *aa1*, which convey the idea of 'reassurance' and 'insistence' respectively (Kwok 1984: 54, 72), than with particles like *gwaa3*, which is used to 'suggest that what is said is merely conjecture on the speaker's part' (ibid: 66). These expectations need further empirical testing.

In addition to the above possibilities, some topics that have been mentioned in this study without being discussed in detail can also be seen as fruitful avenues for future research. One of these is a more in-depth discussion of the grammaticalization of the verbs of coming/going (i.e. *lai4* and *heoi3* in Cantonese, *lái* and *qù* in Mandarin, etc.) cross-dialectally or cross-linguistically. Verbs of coming/going in Cantonese behave differently from other directional verbs when undergoing grammaticalization because of their special feature, namely that they require the location of the speaker as the deictic centre of the movement (i.e. the movement is not with respect to just *any* location, but the location where the speaker is situated). Despite the fact that nearly every variety of language has verbs of coming/going, they do not necessarily follow the same direction when undergoing grammaticalization. The exploration of Cantonese in this book only adds to the data available, and there is still a lot of room for further cross-linguistic research in this area.

In addition to the more in-depth exploration of the verbs of coming/going, it would also be interesting to look into the relationship between verbs of perception and directional morphemes in different languages. In this book, we have already seen that the perception verb *tai* 'see' when combined with a number of directional particles (namely *soeng5* 'ascend', *lok6* 'descend', and *lai4* 'come') always gives an idiosyncratic meaning – a meaning which is not the combined meaning of 'see' and the directional meaning. For instance, *tai2-lok6* does not mean to 'look down' (either spatially or metaphorically), it means the *settlement* of one's evaluative process after *looking* at a certain object for a considerable amount of time. While we have looked at the interaction between the verb *tai* 'see' and various directional particles in Cantonese, it would be worthwhile to pursue a deeper investigation of the relationship between verbs of perception and directional morphemes in other Chinese

dialects (e.g. between *kàn* 'see' and directional morphemes like *qílái* 'up-come', *shànglái* 'ascend-come', etc. in Mandarin). Comparing the results in Chinese with analogous data from other languages would also be worthwhile.

It is hoped that this book will have an impact on research in grammaticalization studies, with special relevance to studies on the development of grammatical markers indicating the speaker's subjective stance. This is an area of study that has received increasing attention, and is valuable in today's increasingly multilingual and multicultural communities

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## Complete citations of examples used in the Summary Chart

- (1) 佢話挨晚至擰嚟和。  
*Keoi5 waa6 ngaai1maan1 zi3 ling1 lai4 wo3.*  
 s/he say evening then carry *lai4* PRT  
 ‘He promised to bring it (here) this evening.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (2) 煮米糊嚟餵仔。  
*Zyu2 mai5wu2 lai4 wai3 zai2.*  
 boil gruel *lai4* feed baby  
 ‘Boil some rice gruel to feed the baby.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (3) 拈條頭巾嚟我。  
*Nim1 tiu4 geng2 gan1 lai4 ngo5.*  
 bring CL neck cloth *lai4* me  
 ‘Bring me a neckcloth.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (4) 如此吩咐小子送去。  
*Jyu4ci2 fan1fu3 siu2zi2 sung3 heoi3.*  
 such order servant send *heoi3*  
 ‘The host sends it by the hands of a servant to the persons to be invited.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (5) 挽弓籃去買送。  
*Waan5 gung1laam2 heoi3 maai5 sung3.*  
 carry market basket *heoi3* buy provision  
 ‘Take the market basket on your arm and go and buy some provisions.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (6) 客告辭主人送出門外。  
*Haak3 gou3ci4 zyu2jan4 sung3 ceot1 mun4 ngoi6.*  
 guest leave host send *ceot1* door outside  
 ‘When the visitor says he will take leave, the master of the home accompanies him to the outer gate.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (7) 寫得出唔寫得呢?  
*Se2 dak1 ceot1 m4 se2 dak1 ne1?*  
 write able *ceot1* not write able PRT  
 ‘Are you able to write them?’<sup>119</sup> (Bridgman 1841)

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119. It might be more appropriate to translate (7) as ‘Are you able to write it out?’ The words that the person is going to write might already be in his brain, but just need to be externalized.

- (8) 你聽得出?  
*Nei5 teng1 dak1 ceot1?*  
 you listen able *ceot1*  
 ‘Do you hear understandingly?’ (Bonney 1853)
- (9) 客踏入轎扛內。  
*Haak3 daap6 jap6 giu2 gong1 noi6.*  
 visitor step *jap6* sedan chair pole inside  
 ‘The visitor steps in between the shafts.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (10) 我嘅仔都俾佢哋踢埋入黑社會。  
*Ngo5 ge3 zai2 dou1 bei2 keoi5 dei6 tek3 maai4 jap6 hak1 se5wui2.*  
 I LP son also PASS s/he PL kick also *jap6* black society  
 ‘My son has also been kicked into the triad by them.’ (Cookery 1996)
- (11) 掛上  
*gwaa3 soeng5*  
 hang *soeng5*  
 ‘to hang up’ (Bonney 1853)
- (12) 我睇上呢架靚車。  
*Ngo5 tai2 soeng5 nei1 gaa3 leng3 ce1.*  
 I see *soeng5* this CL nice car  
 ‘I fancy this luxurious car.’
- (13) 我愛上一個女仔。  
*Ngo5 ngoi3 soeng5 jat1 go3 neoi5zai2.*  
 I love *soeng5* one CL girl  
 ‘I fell in love with a girl.’ (Dragon 1947)
- (14) 跌落水  
*dit3 lok6 seoi2*  
 fall *lok6* water  
 ‘to fall into water’ (Morrison 1828)
- (15) 放落個處  
*fong3 lok6 go2 syu3*  
 put *lok6* that place  
 ‘put it down there’ (Bonney 1853)
- (16) 係呢處住落好耐  
*hai2 nei1 syu3 zyu6 lok6 hou2 noi6*  
 at this place reside *lok6* very long  
 ‘have resided here a long time’ (Bonney 1853)
- (17) 佢寫落張紙,走咗嘞。  
*Keoi5 se2 lok6 zoeng1 zi2, zau2 zo2 laak3.*  
 s/he write *lok6* CL paper go PERF PRT  
 ‘After s/he had written something on the paper, s/he went away.’ (Couple 1952)

- (18) 個價錢諗落都抵。  
*Go3 gaa3cin4 nam2 lok6 dou1 dai2.*  
 CL price think *lok6* also worth  
 ‘After some thought, (I think) it is actually a good price.’ (HKCanCor)
- (19) 推開隻大銀碟。  
*Teoi1 hoi1 zek3 daai6 ngan4 dip2.*  
 push *hoi1* CL large silver plate  
 ‘Push away that large silver plate.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (20) 將呢個道理推開講  
*Zoeng1 nei1 go3 dou6lei5 teoi1 hoi1 gong2*  
 take this CL principle push *hoi1* talk  
 ‘take this principle and extends its application to other things’ (Ball 1894)
- (21) 寫開字唔好講說話。  
*Se2 hoi1 zi6 m4 hou2 gong2 syut3waa6.*  
 write *hoi1* words not good say talk  
 ‘Do not talk while writing.’ (Wisner 1927)
- (22) 你無信俾我,我連寫開俾你個封信都捫埋。  
*Nei5 mou5 seon3 bei2 ngo5, ngo5 lin4 se2 hoi1 bei2 nei5 go2 fung1*  
 you no letter give me I even write *hoi1* give you that CL  
*seon3 dou1 dam2 maai4.*  
 letter also throw as-well  
 ‘Since you have sent me no letters, I have thrown away the letter which I actually started writing a while ago.’ (Butterfly 1954)
- (23) 如果你係買開野,  
*Jyu4gwo2 nei5 hai6 maai5 hoi1 je5,*  
 if you BE buy *hoi1* thing  
 請你同我買本書。  
*cing2 nei5 tung4 ngo5 maai5 bun2 syu1.*  
 please you with me buy CL book  
 ‘If it be that you are buying things, please buy a book for me.’ (O’Melia 1941)
- (24) 我的貓食開個隻牌子。  
*Ngo5 di1 maau1 sik6 hoi1 go2 zek3 paai4zi2.*  
 I CL cat eat *hoi1* that CL brand  
 ‘My cats are used to eating that brand (of cat food).’ (HKCanCor)
- (25) 抽埋個邊。  
*Cau1 maai4 go2 bin1.*  
 carry *maai4* that side  
 ‘Carry it over that side.’ (Bonney 1853)

- (26) 住埋一執  
*zyu6 maai4 jat1 zap1*  
 live *maai4* one lump  
 ‘live together in a cluster’ (Bonney 1853)
- (27) 天時熱都除埋個件衫添。  
*Tin1si4 jit6 dou1 ceoi4 maai4 go2 gin6 saam1 tim1.*  
 weather hot also take-off *maai4* that CL jacket also  
 ‘In hot weather they take off the jacket as well.’ (Ball 1912)
- (28) 先生講埋啦。  
*Sin1saang1 gong2 maai4 laa1.*  
 sir speak *maai4* PRT  
 ‘Finish what you have to say, sir.’ (Ball 1912)
- (29) 好學唔學,學埋啲嘅嘅幻術。  
*Hou2 hok6 m4 hok6, hok6 maai4 di1 gam2 ge3 waan6seot6.*  
 good learn not Learn learn *maai4* CL such LP magic  
 ‘You don’t learn things worth learning, but instead (useless) things like magic.’ (Blessings 1950)
- (30) 唔拈得番  
*m4 nim1 dak1 faan1*  
 not bring able *faan1*  
 ‘cannot bring it back (to the original place)’ (Bonney 1853)
- (31) 個間屋起得番唔起得?  
*Go2 gaan1 uk1 hei2 dak1 faan1 m4 hei2 dak1?*  
 that CL house build able *faan1* not build able  
 ‘Can the house be rebuilt or not?’ (Bonney 1853)
- (32) 佢想學番唐人一樣。  
*Keoi5 soeng2 hok6 faan1 tong4jan4 jat1joeng6.*  
 s/he want learn *faan1* Chinese same  
 ‘They want to be like Chinese.’ (Ball 1883)
- (33) 而家老爺過咗身,你都應該搵返個老婆㗎。  
*Ji4gaa1 lou5je4 gwo3 zo2 san1, nei5 dou1 jing1goi1 wan2 faan1 go3*  
 now master pass PERF body you also should find *faan1* CL  
*lou5po4 aa1.*  
 wife PRT  
 ‘Now that your father has passed away, you should find a wife.’ (Dragon 1947)
- (34) 沖返個涼。  
*Cung1 faan1 go3 loeng4.*  
 wash *faan1* CL shower  
 ‘(Let me) enjoy a shower’ (Gamblers 1974)

- (35) 入到二廳堂中。  
*Jap6 dou3 ji6 teng1tong4 zung1.*  
 enter *dou3* two hall middle  
 ‘He went to the middle of the second hall.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (36) 尾線要收到緊致得。  
*Mei5 sin3 jiu3 sau1 dou3 gan2 zi3 dak1.*  
 end thread need draw *dou3* tight extent proper  
 ‘You must fasten the ends of your thread very firmly.’ (Ball 1912)
- (37) 佢講到啲大學生好似好沙塵噉。  
*Keoi5 gong2 dou3 di1 daai6hok6saang1 hou2ci3 hou2 saa1can4 gam2.*  
 s/he talk *dou3* CL university student seem very arrogant such  
 ‘S/he went so far as to say that university students seem (to her) very arrogant.’ (HKCanCor)
- (38) 轉過橫廳個邊。  
*Zyun3 gwo3 waang4 teng1 go2 bin1.*  
 turn *gwo3* side hall that side  
 ‘He passed over to the side hall.’ (Bridgman 1841)
- (39) 嘗過  
*soeng4 gwo3*  
 taste *gwo3*  
 ‘have tasted it’ (Bonney 1853)
- (40) 再寫過  
*zoi3 se2 gwo3*  
 again write *gwo3*  
 ‘write it once more’ (Bonney 1853)
- (41) 我留過你  
*ngo5 lau4 gwo3 nei5*  
 I reserve *gwo3* you  
 ‘I will reserve it for you’ (Bonney 1853)
- (42) 估信得過佢咯  
*gu2 seon3 dak1 gwo3 keoi5 lok3*  
 guess trust able *gwo3* s/he PRT  
 ‘thought you could trust him’ (Ball 1912)
- (43) 係啊,呢個方法諗得過啊。  
*Hai6 aa3, nei1 go3 fong1faat3 nam2 dak1 gwo3 aa3.*  
 yes PRT this CL method think able *gwo3* PRT  
 ‘Yes, it’s worth thinking about using this method.’ (HKCanCor)
- (44) 使隻簍挂起佢。  
*Sai2 zek3 lei1 gwaa3 hei2 keoi5.*  
 use CL tray hang *hei2* it  
 ‘Use a tray to hang it up.’ (Bridgeman 1841)

- (45) 我添起工錢你。  
*Ngo5 tim1 hei2 gung1cin4 nei5.*  
 I add *hei2* wage you  
 'I will increase your wages.' (Bonney 1853)
- (46) 心處不歇想起  
*sam1 syu3 bat1 hit3 soeng2 hei2*  
 heart place not stop think *hei2*  
 'thought about them all the time' (Ball 1894)
- (47) 你點買得起咁貴嘢吖?  
*Nei5 dim2 maai5 dak1 hei2 gam3 gwai3 je5 aa1?*  
 you how buy able *hei2* so expensive stuff PRT  
 'How could you afford to buy such expensive stuff?' (Couple 1952)
- (48) 後船定了保商通事,方能起貨。  
*Hau6 syun4 ding6 liu5 bou2soeng1 tung1si6, fong1 nang4 hei2 fo3.*  
 after ship settle PERF guarantor translator then able *hei2* cargo  
 'After the ship has obtained a security merchant and linguist, she may discharge her cargo.' (Bridgman 1841)
- (49) 睇呢張大餐檯,新整起。  
*Tai2 nei1 zoeng1 daai6 caan1 toi2, san1 zing2 hei2.*  
 see this CL big dining table new make *hei2*  
 'Look at this dining table. It is just newly made.' (Ball 1912)

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This book is the first on Cantonese that deals with the grammaticalization phenomenon systematically. Focusing on a group of twelve directional particles, this book tracks their grammaticalization pathways from full-fledged directional verbs, to directional particles indicating meanings relating to tense-aspect, modality, and quantification, in the post-verbal position. Some of these particles have undergone further grammaticalization to convey speaker's subjective as well as intersubjective stances. This book is also unique in its diachronic component. Examples in the book are drawn from various sources including early Cantonese pedagogical texts, Cantonese films, and contemporary Cantonese corpora, with data ranging from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. This book will be a valuable resource not only for all linguists interested in the development of grammatical forms, but also for teachers and students in conversation/discourse analysis, psychology, and anthropology interested in deepening their understanding of the interaction between language structure and use.



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