

The Encoding of Subjectivity by third person anaphors in TSM

This paper proposes that the third person anaphors following thematic marker *ka*⁷ and causative marker *hou*⁷ involve speakers' subjectivity in Taiwanese Southern Min (henceforth TSM), a Sinitic language spoken in Taiwan. In TSM, a sentence whose arguments are already satisfied is often inserted with *ka*⁷*i*¹ or *hou*⁷*i*¹ to repeat the patient, as shown in (1-2). The third personal pronoun *i*¹ 'he/she/it' at first sight may seem to be redundant since the arguments of the predicates are filled. However, its occurrence is essential in that it distinguishes subjectivity from objectivity and reflects the speaker's attitude.

(1) png⁷ ka⁷ chiah⁸ **hou**⁷(*i*¹) oan⁵
 rice ka⁷ eat hou⁷ he/she/it particle 'Finish off the meal!'

(2) khít⁴hou⁷hit⁴ke¹kut⁴ **ka**⁷ *i*¹ kenn² si²
passive that chicken bone ka⁷ he/she/it choke die '(s.o.) choked to death on a chicken bone.'

*Hou*⁷ can be either a passive or a causative marker (Lien 2003). The anaphoric relationship of the pronoun following *hou*⁷ can be specified in the contexts. As in (1), the pronoun *i*¹ 'it' refers to *png*⁷ 'rice' mentioned earlier. *Hou*⁷*i*¹ is highly speaker-oriented, not compatible with the subject in the third person and the objective perspective. Without providing new information, *hou*⁷*i*¹ occurs in TSM dialogues with a fairly high frequency, for it expresses a hortative meaning emphasized by the speaker. In (1), the speaker stresses the degree of completion that should be reached. Since *i*¹ is old information, it is often phonetically empty.

The same phenomenon occurs in the third pronoun following *ka*⁷. *Ka*⁷, as a poly-functional marker, can be used to specify goal, source and patient (Tsao 2005). In (2), *ka*⁷ as a patient marker introduces the choked person mentioned earlier. The insertion of *ka*⁷*i*¹ does not affect the already saturated argument structure, but it adds the speaker's opinion, a sense of regret or pity, toward the event. (2), instead of being a reportorial statement, reflects the speaker's attitude.

*Ka*⁷*i*¹/*hou*⁷*i*¹ realigns the relationship from the objective axis to the subjective axis (Langacker 2006). It evokes a ground on which subjectification is based. In (1), the speaker subjectively sets a degree of completion revealed by *hou*⁷*i*¹. Then a hortative sense of reaching the degree is coerced in the sentence (Goldberg 1995). With the help of *ka*⁷*i*¹, the speaker in (2) can serve as a reference point. The addressee can then infer the speaker's subjective attitude from *ka*⁷*i*¹/*hou*⁷*i*¹. Thus the property of subjectivity in *ka*⁷*i*¹/*hou*⁷*i*¹ is gradually conventionalized through implicational inferences (Traugott 1995). *Hou*⁷*i*¹ undergoes grammaticalization, making subjectivity its conventional meaning. As in (3), *i*¹ has no anaphoric function, but *hou*⁷*i*¹ involves an epistemological mode, involving an imperative mood.

(3) thiau³ hou⁷ *i*¹ song²
 dance hou⁷ he/she/it pleasant 'Dance to ecstasy!'

In brief, even though *ka*⁷*i*¹ and *hou*⁷*i*¹ seem redundant due to their encoding of old information, they can make an utterance subjectively construed. They reflect the perspectives and affections of a speaker. Through subjectification, the conventional inferencing of subjectivity becomes part of *ka*⁷*i*¹ and *hou*⁷*i*¹. In *ka*⁷*i*¹/*hou*⁷*i*¹, both synchronic semantic extension and diachronic semantic change are observed.

References

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