

## Form-function mismatches in the non-referential interrogative:

### A case study of *iu1 mag8-ge3 ho2 V* constructions in Hakka

In English, as indicated by Polinsky (2007), the *wh*-question 'What in the world did you buy?' expresses the speaker's indignation and bewilderment over some property of the commodities, without any special reference to a presupposed set of those things. Based on this property, many researchers classify this type of *wh*-expression as non-discourse-linked or non-referential (cf. Polinsky 2007; Pesetsky 1987; Dikken and Giannakidou 2001, 2002). A corresponding construction with more complex functions can be found in Hakka. In Hakka *iu1 mag8-ge3 ho2 V* construction, whereas V stands for a schematic element, the other three are fixed: *iu1*, literally meaning 'have' denotes the meaning of existence; *mag8-ge3* is a *wh*-word meaning 'what'; *ho2*, literally meaning 'good', is grammaticalized into an adverb denoting 'suitably' (e.g. *Ge3 gien1 diam3 iu1 mag8-ge3 ho2 mai1?* (that CL shop have what suitably buy) 'What can be bought in that shop?') Adhering to the tenets of Construction Grammar, insisting that both item-specific knowledge and generalizations coexist (cf. Goldberg 1995, 2006; Jackendoff 2008; among others), the generalizations and peculiarities displayed will be shown in this study.

Three subtypes of form-meaning pairings can be found. In the first type, the form is [N<sub>possessor</sub> *iu1 mag8-ge3* N<sub>possessed\_object</sub> *ho2 V*], in which the predicate *iu1* 'have' is preceded by a noun phrase denoting a possessor or a location and the other noun phrase referring to the possessed object follows the *wh*-word *mag8-ge3*. In this case, as the regular referential interrogatives, the constructional function is to ask for information concerning the condition available to perform the action V (e.g. *Lia2 zak4 ngiet8 Costco iu1 mag8-ge3 pien5-ngi5 ge3 dung1-xi1 ho2 mai1?* 'What goods are at bargain prices in Costco this month?'). Unlike this subtype of construction, the other two subtypes belong to the non-referential interrogatives mentioned above. In the second type, the form is [*iu1 mag8-ge3 ho2 V*] with the function to question the necessity of certain behavior of someone (mostly the hearer). This type of construction expresses the negative evaluation of the action, which brings about the speech act of warning or advising (e.g. *Ng5 m5 he3 teu5-bai2 cam1-ga1 bi2-soi3, iu1 mag8-ge3 ho2 giang1?* 'This is not the first time that you participate in the contest; what are you so afraid of?' (intended meaning: 'Don't be afraid.')). Finally, the third type of constructional form is [N<sub>obj</sub> *iu1 mag8-ge3 ho2 V*] with the function of expressing the speaker's mistrust of the good properties of N<sub>obj</sub> (e.g. *Lia2 bun2 su1 iu1 mag8-ge3 ho2 kon3?* 'Why do you think this book is worth reading?' (intended: 'I don't think it is worth reading at all.')).

Based on the preliminary classification of this partially-filled idiomatic construction in Hakka, this study intends to examine the activation of different pragmatic functions displayed by this family of constructions, the semantic constraints on V, and the constructional relationships that bring these three subtypes together. After examining this construction from the formal as well as the functional perspectives, this study will provide a complete and full-fledged analysis of this specific construction in Hakka.