

行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫成果報告

從動貌語法和語意看台灣閩南語動詞構詞現象

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一、中文摘要

本研究旨在探究台灣閩南語動貌構詞現象。出現於動詞後的動貌詞素會影響句法和語意上的不同。就句法而言，這些詞素會加強詞序的限制且決定了論元選擇的條件。在語意上，這些詞素也決定了其出現在述詞的時態類別以及特殊名義論元的指涉意義。不同的時段標誌語會導致閩南語句法和語意上細微的差別，此足以說明了某種特定的文法架構會造成這些影響，而非無跡可尋。

關鍵詞：語法。構詞，台語，時段標誌語，動貌，語彙

Abstract

The research reported in this paper seeks to bring to light a rather wide range of seemingly disparate facts concerning aspectual morphology in Taiwanese Southern Min (TSM). It is shown that the choice of aspectual morphemes appearing after the verb exhibit differential effects in the syntax and semantics. With respect to syntax, these morphemes impose different word order restrictions and condition certain argument selection alternations. Semantically, they determine the aspectual class of the predicates in which they occur and the referential readings of particular nominal arguments of those predicates. It is suggested that the subtle but robust effects of the choice of phase markers in TSM in this surprising range of syntactic and semantic phenomena offer potential evidence for what sort of

architecture of the grammar could derive these effects rather than treating them as arbitrary.

Keywords: syntax, morphology, Taiwanese, phase markers, aspect, lexicon

二、緣由與目的

The research reported in this paper seeks to bring to light a rather wide range of seemingly disparate facts concerning aspectual morphology in Taiwanese Southern Min (TSM) and demonstrate, at least to some extent, the far-reaching theoretical consequences of these facts. The effects of the morphology are uncovered in the syntax (including word order effects and argument selection alternations) and semantics (including the aspectual class of the predicates marked by the verbal morphology and the referential readings of particular nominal arguments of those predicates). It is suggested that the subtle but robust effects of the choice of phase marker in TSM in this surprising range of syntactic and semantic phenomena offer potential evidence for what sort of architecture of the grammar could derive these effects rather than treating them as arbitrary.

三、研究報告應含的內容

The first puzzle concerning the distribution of certain postverbal morphemes

has to do with word order effects. For purposes of illustration, the analysis focuses on the morphemes –khi, -liao, -wan, and –koe. A sample of the sort of facts concerning their distribution that are considered can be seen in the possible and impossible combinations of cooccurring morphemes following a simple active verb such as chia ‘eat’.

- (1) chia liao khi ah
- (2) *chia khi liao ah
- (3) chia wan khi ah
- (4) *chia khi wan ah
- (5) *chia liao wan ah
- (6) *chia wan liao ah

It is proposed that this puzzling array of distributional facts follows from a well-motivated partitioning of the morphemes into two natural classes based upon a distinction between lexical and syntactic affixation (Anderson 1992). Specifically, similar to a suggestion mentioned in passing for other TSM morphemes by Lien (1994), I hypothesize that –liao and –wan are lexical affixes whereas –khi is a syntactic affix (in Anderson’s terminology) in the sense that it does not form a lexical unit with the verb it follows but rather a syntactic constituent with that verb. Assuming this distinction, the facts in (6) follow since lexical affixes will need to appear adjacent to the verb which hosts them and the syntactic affixes will attach after such lexical processes. As independent motivation for this partitioning of phase markers into lexical vs syntactic affixes, a striking array of other facts follow from this same assumption. For example, -khi, but neither –liao nor –wan, allows an object to separate it from the verb, as (7) shows. (Note

the object is marked off with brackets.)

- (7) a. Yi chia [saN waN peng] khi ah.
S/he eat three bowl rice KHI AH
- b. *Yi chia [saⁿ waⁿ peng]liao/wan ah.
S/he eat three bowl rice L/W AH

This as well as the facts in (6) follow naturally as a consequence of treating -liao and -wan as lexically affixed to the verb and -khi as falling outside the word boundary of the verb. An affix on the verb will obviously not allow an independent syntactic constituent (like a grammatical object) to separate it from the verb.

In addition to the distributional differences between these two types of aspectual morphemes, they are distinct also with respect to certain surprising effects they have on the argument selection properties of the verbs with which they cooccur and on the referential readings of certain nominal arguments selected by those verbs. The effects on a verb’s argument taking properties can be seen on prototypical transitive verbs such as *chia* ‘eat’. These verbs, which can take postverbal objects in certain discourse contexts, typically prohibit the object from cooccurring postverbally with the phase markers. In the presence of these phase markers, the underlying object must appear elsewhere, and exactly what position is available to that object is conditioned in part by the choice of postverbal phase marker. Here again, these aspectual morphemes partition into the same two types described above, with –liao and –wan patterning like each other and distinct from –khi.

- (8) lingko chia liao ah
apple eat LIAO AH
- (9) lingko chia wan ah.
apple eat WAN AH
- (10) lingko, ??(hong) chia khi ah.
apple (HONG) eat KHI AH

The relevant distinction is that all of the speakers consulted detected a clear intuitive distinction between (8-9) on the one hand and (10) on the other. Specifically, with -liao and -wan no pause or break is necessary between the clause-initial argument ‘lingko’ and the following verb whereas in the presence of -khi in (10), speakers sense a gap or pause needed or even prefer a passive morpheme hong. In other words, with -liao and -wan the underlying object can be promoted to subject in a sort of ergative alternation (cf the alternation in English “Someone opened the door” and “The door opened.”). With -khi in (10), however, the underlying object seems to have been simply fronted or topicalized with no corresponding shift in grammatical relation; rather than having been promoted to subject it is simply a preposed object, hence requiring the pause unless passive morphology is introduced.

Another quite different area where the phase markers show the same differential effects partitioning them into the same two types seen above has to do with their semantic effects on the referential readings of the verbs nominal arguments.

- (11) hoe lak khi ah.
flower fall
- (12) hoe lak liao ah
flower fall

Sentences (11) and (12) form a minimal pair,

differing superficially only in the choice of -khi versus -liao following the verb.

Corresponding to this difference, however, they also differ in the permitted readings of the subject argument hoe ‘flower’. In (11), hoe can be read as either plural or singular (‘the flower’ or ‘the flowers’) whereas in (12) hoe allows only the plural reading, not the singular.

Finally, the phase markers exhibit another sort of semantic effect ostensibly quite independent of the differential restrictions they place on the readings of nominal arguments. In particular the two types of aspectual morphemes have different effects on the aspectual class of the predicates they appear in or the “type-shifting” effects they have on the aspect of those predicates.

Evidence comes from the available interpretations of sentences like (13).

- (13)a. Lingko banban a hong chia liao ah.
apple slow-slow A pass eat LIAO AH
- b.* Lingko banban e hong chia khi ah.
apple slow E PASS eat KHI AH

Note again that the (a-b) counterparts form a minimal pair, differing only in the choice of -khi vs. -liao after the predicate. (13) illustrates that -khi forces a punctual reading, that is, an achievement reading in Vendler’s terms, and is thus incompatible with adverbials such as ‘slowly’ which are inconsistent with such a reading. In contrast, -liao entails an incremental change or an accomplishment reading and correspondingly, permits modification by such adverbs.

This same difference in aspectual class entailed by -khi versus -liao can be seen from

another sort of data, in this case, data involving a different adverbial expression: *chha-chit-diam* ‘almost’. Notice that the (a) and (b) members of the minimal pair in (14) again differ only with respect to the choice of postverbal morpheme: *-liao* in (a) and *-khi* in (b). While both sentences are acceptable, the relevant point to notice here is that the selection of *-liao* vs *-khi* entails different readings for the two sentences.

(14) Gina chachitdiam ka lingko chia liao ah.
child almost KA apple eat LIAO AH

(15) Gina chachitdiam ka lingko chia khi ah.
child almost KA apple eat KHI AH

In (14) the expression *chha-chit-diam* ‘almost’ can mean that the children have eaten almost all of the apples. That is, apple-eating has occurred to the extent that most of the apples have been consumed, but not all of them. Strikingly, this reading is not available for (15). Here, the expression *chha-chit-diam* entails that none of the apples have been eaten yet, but the children nearly started and perhaps were stopped just before they got to the apples. This distinction follows if we treat *-liao* as marking accomplishments, which can be incremental in their progress, and *-khi* as marking achievements, which are punctual and therefore do not allow the event to be seen as broken down into increments of progress.

The research reported here has uncovered a striking variety of apparently disparate facts which exhibit a surprising range of effects wielded by a small set of aspectual morphemes or phase markers in TSM. In each case, moreover, the phase markers differentiate themselves into the same two types. Since these effects touch upon not

only word order but also argument selection, verb class alternations, aspectual class type shifting and referential readings, the data presents a deep and formidable challenge. Any satisfying account of these facts must derive from a theory which can specify the relation of morphology to the lexicon, syntax, argument structure, aspect and event structure and nominal interpretation whereby the facts above could be made to follow rather than treating their striking convergence as arbitrary and unrelated.

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