

The Buckingham Journal of Language and Linguistics 2011 Volume 4 pp 29-52

A STUDY OF EVIDENTIAL PARTICLES IN CANTONESE: THE CASE OF *wo3* & *wo5*

*Wai-Mun Leung**

INTRODUCTION

When people communicate with each other, they often provide the source of information and express their own standpoint and attitude. Evidentiality thus refers to how people indicate the source of knowledge, attitude towards knowledge and commitment to knowledge. Evidentiality is a very important linguistic phenomenon, which is not only concerned with the source of information, whether directly seen or heard, indirectly inferred, or obtained from other people, but also reflects how much the speaker is willing to be responsible for the information he or she is providing, which is related to whether the information is reliable or not.

Evidentiality generally appears in every human language as a linguistic phenomenon (Plungian 2001), but it is expressed by different grammatical structures. The grammatical forms of evidentiality are called evidentials or evidential markers, which include two types: one is inflectional in terms of prefixes or suffixes, and the other is lexical, involving modal verbs, adverbs and adjectives etc. Evidentiality basically adheres to sentence propositions, that is, when the evidentials or evidential markers in a sentence are removed, the sentence proposition is not affected.

It is rare that people speak completely objectively without subjective feelings. Whatever degree of certainty that the speaker has about the credibility of the source of information, it is inevitable that subjective expressions are involved, conveying the speaker's standpoints, emotions and attitudes (Shen 2001). These expressions are referred to as subjectivity, a concept which is opposite to objectivity, and can be said as the speaker's "self-impression" (Lyons 1982, Finegan 1995, Shen 2001). In this regard, evidentiality definitely carries subjective expressions, because the speaker reveals to a greater or lesser extent what he or she thinks, whether positively or negatively and to what degree, about the situation. Evidentiality and subjectivity are thus two important features of human language which cannot be overlooked.

* The Hong Kong Institute of Education. E-mail: waimun@ied.edu.hk

The study of evidentiality, which has become an indispensable part of linguistic studies, has had a rapid development in the past few decades. On the contrary, studies of evidentiality in Cantonese, one of the major dialects of the Chinese language spoken by some 70 million people in Hong Kong, Macau and most of the Guangdong province of China, are relatively few. The following sections will firstly introduce evidentiality and its derived concept, mirativity (pragmatic extension of evidentiality), and subjectivity. Then the features of the Cantonese evidential particles *wo3* (mid-level tone), which indicates unexpectedness and noteworthiness (Luke 1990), and *wo5* (low rising tone), which expresses hearsay information (Matthews 1998), will be analyzed, and a discussion on how a speaker expresses his or her understanding of the objective world through language will be given.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW & DATA COLLECTION

2.1 *Literature review*

2.1.1 Evidentiality

Jakobson (1957) was among the earliest scholars to propose the concept of evidentiality. He was also the first to separate evidentiality from mood and modality clearly and categorized evidence into four types: quotative evidence, revelative evidence, presumptive evidence and memory evidence. Based on Jakobson's observations, Chafe & Nicolas (1986) further divided evidentiality into five kinds: degree of reliability, belief, inference, hearsay and general expectation. Their treating of evidentiality as a separate area of study made a great impact on the researches that followed. Aikhenvald & Dixon (2003) analyzed evidentiality as the grammatical reference to the information source, and, modifying the definition given by Chafe & Nicolas (1986), considered that in a narrow sense only belief and hearsay should be counted as belonging to evidentiality. Moreover, the Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics (Bussmann edited, 1996) had "evidentiality" as a separate entry. The semanticist Saeed (1997) included "evidentiality" as an independent term, pointing out that evidentiality is "a term for the ways in which a speaker qualifies a statement by referring to the source of the information". It can be seen that evidentiality has become an essential research topic in linguistics.

In China, Hu (1994, 1995) was among the first Chinese linguists to introduce the concept of evidentiality to Chinese scholars. Zhang (1997) systematically introduced evidentiality in western linguistics and pointed out that in Chinese evidentiality exists in three forms: 1. parentheses, mostly for showing the source of information, 2. adverbs, mostly for showing the speaker's attitude towards the credibility of the information, 3. sentence-final particles, for showing the speaker's belief in the reliability of the information. Specific studies on evidentiality in Chinese include Li et al. (1998), who

investigated into the sentence-final particle *de* and concluded that it is an evidential marker which shows subjective attitude of recognition. Zhang (2000) discussed the evidentiality and modality of Chinese adverbs. Furthermore, Matthews (1998) discussed the different features and relations of the Cantonese particles *wo3*, *wo4* and *wo5*. Other researches on evidentiality in Chinese include Zhang & Yu (2003) and Zhu (2006), which shed the light on the importance of the research on the topic.

2.1.2 SFPs *wo3* & *wo5*

As a sentence-final particle (hereafter SFP) indicating moods and attitudes, *wo3* is used very frequently in modern Cantonese. The earliest materials mentioning the SFP *wo3* is Ball's *Cantonese Made Easy* (2nd edition), which was published in 1888. In the syntax section of the book, there is a table called "List of Finals, and their Tonal Variants". It defines *wo* according to three tones: tone 3 (mid-level tone), tone 4 (low-falling), tone 6 (low departing) (p114). The low departing one does not exist in modern Cantonese. Instead we have *wo* in tone 5 (the low-rising tone) which is not mentioned in Ball's book. Ball points out that the function of *wo3* is "denoting that the statement preceding it has been made by some one before". Ever since Ball's bringing up of *wo3*, the archives of the past one hundred years including the dialectal works of missionaries, *Yünshu* of dialects, *Difangzhi* (local records), Cantonese teaching materials and other related academic books and articles etc have occasionally mentioned the SFP *wo3*, but the explanations are often too short. Luke (1990) has an entire chapter devoted to the detailed discussion of *wo3*. He takes a discourse perspective in his study and adopts a discourse model in his analysis of SFPs, using the analytical tools and research procedures of Conversation Analysis. He has concluded the meaning of *wo3* as "unexpectedness, noteworthiness, remarkableness, unusualness...etc". After Luke has noted the new status of *wo3*, there have been scholars noticing and discussing this SFP continuously in the past decade (Ouyang 1990, Leung 1992, Matthews & Yip 1994). They point out that the meaning of *wo3* is "reminding, discussing and enlightening".

For another SFP *wo5*, it is commonly known as a hearsay particle in modern Cantonese. This particle is not found in Ball's book (1888, 1924). A good place to start is the pioneer work on Cantonese grammar by Cheung (1972). In his book, he holds the stand that *wo5* is a quotative particle which is a combination of the verb *waa6* (speak/say) and the SFP *aa3*. Cross-linguistic studies reveal that the "say" verb across languages tends to develop into a quotative marker of a complementizer (Heine et al. 1991; Hopper & Traugott 1993; H. Sohn 1999; Klamer 2000; Heine and Kuteva 2002). For example it is worth noticing the clear case of grammaticalization regarding the relationship between the verb "say" and the final particle in Taiwanese (Chappell to appear, Wu 2000:158-178). Wu examines the ongoing creation of

a new Taiwanese particle, the element *kong* which is grammaticalizing from the verb “to say” as a complementizer-type particle in an unexpected sentence-final position. Xu & Matthews (2005) also touch on this topic and give an account on the grammaticalization of “say” in Taiwanese. In a recent work, Liu & Gu (2008) propose that the reported speech marker *di* and the reported evidential marker *di* in Nuosu Yi language are developed from the lexical verb “say”, and the grammaticalization process is triggered by argument structure change motivated by the force of structural simplification. Likewise, the quotative particle *wo5* in Cantonese might have possibly derived from the lexical verb *waa6*. Ball (1888) leaves us a clue that there was an SFP *waa5* denoting the previous statement made by other people which does not exist in modern Cantonese. However, Cheung (1972) leaves no further explanation for this. Deng (1991) claims that *wo5* is used in reported speech to express utterance or thought, and can be attached to any word class. A similar position is taken by Luke (1990) and Matthews (1994), who think that *wo5* serves to quote reported speech and hearsay information. To further discuss this particle, Matthews (1998) argues that *wo5* used in reported speech (explicit or otherwise) appears to be a typical “hearsay” evidential.

The above is a brief review on the literature concerning the study of SFPs *wo3* and *wo5*. It is fair to say that numerous scholars have noticed the characteristics of the two SFPs. However, the relation between the two is usually assumed without much comment, and very little discussion is devoted to explaining the differences between them. Therefore, it seems reasonable to proceed one step further by examining *wo3* and *wo5* in detail.

2.2 Data & Romanization

Three samples have been chosen as the basis of linguistic analysis in the following sections: the first one is three Cantonese movies produced in the 1990s, namely “Fight back to the school I” (Fight 1991), “Fight back to the school II”(Fight 1992) and “God of Cookery” (God 1996). The second one is the Hong Kong University Cantonese Corpus (HKUCC) for the collection of language examples in the 1990s. K.K. Luke of the University of Hong Kong has established a corpus made up of a large amount of Cantonese speech and conversational recordings which have been fully transcribed, segmented, tagged and parsed. In the 150 recordings of this 200,000-word corpus, 67 were conversations between 2-3 speakers, 51 were radio broadcasts and 32 were stories told by one story-teller. The main characteristic of the HKUCC is its emphasis on colloquial, everyday language. The third one is early Cantonese materials for the examples between the late 19th century and the early 20th century. I have selected Bridgman (1841), Ball (1888) and Wisner (1906) which are the records of Cantonese dialects attached with Roman phonetic transcription to indicate the actual sounds and can possibly stand for the colloquial forms in those periods of time.

According to the level of naturalness, the first sample (movies) belongs to the category of ‘Topic-restricted/text preparation needed/not reading from scripts’ and the second sample (HKUCC) goes to the category of ‘Topic free/No preparation’. The third sample (the early Cantonese materials) belongs to the category of ‘Topic-restricted/text preparation needed/reading from scripts’. The common characteristic of the above samples is that they are all natural colloquial language and highly representative. With the movies, our analysis will no longer be based on a small sample or subjective feelings.

Concerning the romanization scheme, there are about 10 or more major schemes for Cantonese up till now which is very confusing for users. There is little motivation for local people to learn any of these systems as they seem to prefer using Chinese characters. The romanization systems are not taught in schools either in Hong Kong or in Guangdong. Specialists of the Hong Kong Linguistics Society have developed a new scheme named “Cantonese Romanization Scheme” in 1993, which is used in this paper.

3. EVIDENTIALITY, MIRATIVITY AND SUBJECTIVITY

3.1 Evidentiality

The different attitudes people have towards different things can be expressed by a variety of linguistic forms. Let us take English as an illustration:

Example 1

- A. It’s raining.
- B. It’s probably raining.
- C. Maybe it’s raining.
- D. It must be raining.
- E. It sounds like it’s raining.
- F. It’s sort of raining.
- G. Actually, it’s raining.

Chafe & Nichols (1986) think that sentence A is stating a fact; B and C represent probability; D expresses a certain prediction; E and F express a not-so-certain prediction; and G shows unexpected information. In other words, the speaker conveys his or her attitude towards the stated fact or proposition using a specific linguistic form, like the words “probably”, “maybe”, “must”, “sort of” and “actually”, and these linguistic forms are called evidentials. In Mandarin, evidentiality is often expressed by projecting clauses, modal auxiliaries, verbs, adverbs, adjectives and nouns (Zhu 2006).

Evidentiality deals with the source of information for the speaker’s utterance. It allows speakers to specify why they believe a given statement, i.e. what kind of evidence they have for it. These kinds of evidence might be

divided into four criteria as: (1) Direct experience (Witness vs. Nonwitness), (2) Visual observation (Visual vs. Nonvisual), (3) Inferential and (4) Hearsay. (Givon 1984:307-308, Palmer 1986:66-67). The following evidential hierarchy is taken from De Haan (1997). Under this hypothesis, it will universally be the case that direct evidence (e.g., visual and auditory evidence) is more believable than indirect evidence (e.g., inference and hearsay).

Direct evidence

(Confirmative)

visual < auditory < non-visual

→ More believable

Indirect evidence (Non-

confirmative)

< inference < quotative

→ Less believable

A witness evidential, which is in contrast with a nonwitness evidential, indicates that the information source was witnessed or experienced by the speaker personally. This is usually from visual observation. A nonwitness evidential indicates that the information was not witnessed or experienced by the speaker personally but was only obtained through an indirect source. An indirect evidential is used to mark information that was not observed by the speaker personally. This may include inferences or reported information. An inferential evidential, such as uncertainty or probability, indicates that the information was inferred from secondhand evidence by the speaker.

Hearsay or quotative function is now accepted as one of the basic categories of evidentiality (Aikhenvald 2004). Reportative evidentials expresses that the information was reported to the speaker by a third party. It also indicates the information may not be accurate and not open to interpretation (Aikhenvald 2004, De Haan 1997, 1999, Chafe & Nichols 1986). It is an evidential that signals that someone else is the source of the statement made. The quotative evidential might be found as a grammatical category in Cantonese because this mood is neither optional, nor expressed in diverse ways. Evidentiality is believed to be a very useful functional analysis of the multiple functions of the particle such as inference and hearsay.

3.2 *Mirativity*

According to Chafe & Nichols (1986), the term evidentiality can be described as the following:

- (1) source of knowledge: evidence, language, hypothesis, etc.
- (2) mode of knowing: belief, hearsay, induction, deduction, etc.
- (3) knowledge matched against: verbal resources, expectations, etc.

Matthews (1998) claims that “it is the third parameter, whereby knowledge is matched against expectations, that mirativity encodes.” (3) is a kind of miratives which indicates new and unexpected information for which the speaker lacks psychological preparation (DeLancey 1997:36).

“[The category mirative] marks both statements based on inference and statements based on direct experience for which the speaker had no psychological preparation, and in some languages hearsay data as well. What these apparently disparate data sources have in common... is that the proposition is one which is new to the speaker, not yet integrated into his overall picture of the world.”

In Cantonese, take the examples shown by Li (1995) to as further illustrations:

Example 2

baa4baa1 giu3 nei5 zik1 hak1 heoi3 wo3
father ask 2SG immediate go SFP
“Father asked you to go immediately!”

Example 3

baa4baa1 giu3 nei5 zik1hak1 heoi3 wo5
father ask 2SG immediate go SFP
“Father said to me: ‘Ask him/her to go immediately.’”

In Example 2 *wo3* shows a mirative which is an evidential-like category used to mark information showing “new or surprising”, while in Example 3 *wo5* indicates that the information was reported by another person, thus it is apparently a quotative evidential. The examples help clarify the relationship between mirative and quotative. Another example:

Example 4 (Fight 1991)

waa3, go3 ging2 hou2 leng3 wo3
INJ, DEM view INT pretty SFP
“Wow, the view is very beautiful!”

In Example 4, the speaker is at a friend’s home and expresses his exclamation as he is watching the beautiful sea view from the living room. *Wo3* serves as a reminder to the friend and intensifies the exclamation. This use of *wo3* with exclamatory utterances seems to be a novel one. The category mirative in this example indicates unexpected information which the speaker lacks psychological preparation. It is the semantic counterpart of pragmatic

functions and fits point (3) “knowledge matched against expectations” (Chafe & Nicholas 1998) that was mentioned at the beginning of this section.

Furthermore, Matthews (1998) shows that some other languages have the same construction or marker to express both evidentiality as generally understood (inference and/or hearsay) and mirativity, for example, in Hare (Athabaskan) language the sentence particle *lõ* has evidential or mirative value:

Example 5

Mary e-wé' ghálayeda lõ
Mary its-hide work.IMPF PRT
“Mary is working on hides (seemingly or unexpectedly).”
(cited in Matthews 1998)

The particle *lõ* here in conjunction with an imperfective form of the verb is a mirative one “where the speaker has first-hand knowledge of unanticipated information.” (DeLancey 1997: 39, cited in Matthews 1998)

3.3 Subjectivity

In verbal communication, not only should the speaker express the propositional meaning, but also the speaker’s intention, e.g. the realization of language “subjectivity”, which refers to the situation that the speaker utters a sentence to express his stance, attitude and emotion so as to leave the “self-impression” in the discourse. (Lyons 1982, Finegan 1995, Shen 2001). If this kind of subjectivity obtains a subjective function through the explicit language structure or the evolution of a language pattern, it can be called “subjectivization”. In addition, Finegan (1995) thinks that the researches on subjectivity mainly focus on three points, namely the speaker’s perspective and affection, and the epistemic status of the propositions. Affection includes emotions and attitudes, and reflects what the speaker judges on the state of affairs and its possibility.

In the theory of grammaticalization, Hopper & Traugott (1993) claim that subjectivization means that such meaning neither refers to the objective context nor indicates objects, but to the speaker’s subjective opinions and to cater for the need of discourse structure. Let us see how Traugott and Konnig characterize the change in meaning associated with grammaticalization:

“meanings grounded in more or less objectively identifiable extra-linguistic situations to meanings grounded in text-making (for example connectives, anaphoric markers etc.) to meanings grounded in the speaker’s attitude to or belief about what is said...” (1991:189).

It is generally said that speakers' stance or intention can be implicitly expressed by some of the wordings in conversation.

After Lyons' (1982) claim of subjectivization, Traugott (1989) tried to bring it within her framework. She points out that subjectivization refers to the process whereby meaning becomes more and more embodied in the speaker's subjective belief and attitude towards the proposition. It is a process of semantic-pragmatic transition. Traugott emphasizes that subjectivization is an important mechanism in the process of grammaticalization.

In verbal communication of daily life, not only should the speakers express the propositional meaning, but also the embodiment of language subjectivity. Linguists' studies of subjectivization began from the late 1980s. There are mainly two approaches, namely synchronic and diachronic; the former, especially Langacker's works (1985, 1990, 1999), investigates in what structure speakers reflect their subjectivity at a particular period from the view of cognitive linguistics, whereas the latter, especially Traugott's works (Traugott & Dasher 2002.), examines from a diachronic viewpoint the changes of the sentence structure which shows subjectivity. Traugott (1989) traces the development in English of lexical and grammatical items into markers of epistemic modal meaning. A similar approach to Japanese connectives documents their shift from propositional to discourse based meanings (Matsumoto 1988).

Evidentiality studies how the speaker indicates the source of information or expresses his or her attitude. The information provided by the speaker is built to a greater or lesser degree on the knowledge or evidence that he or she holds, and it is uncommon that the inference is purely subjective without any objective supporting evidence. Since people can hardly speak purely objectively, evidentiality inevitably involves elements of subjectivity, and the elements of subjectivity are not the same in all circumstances but dependent on the speakers. Besides, the studies of evidentiality and subjectivity are closely related to epistemic modality. There are two types of modality which are said to be epistemic modality and denotic modality. Epistemic modality is used to express the judgment of the state of affairs and the possibility of the situation. Matthews & Yip (1994) categorized *wo3* and *wo5* into "epistemic particles". On the other hand, denotic modality involves obligation and permission (Frawley 1992). As evidentiality studies a speaker's attitude and judgment towards some knowledge, its content is therefore very similar to that of epistemic modality. Palmer (1986:8) calls evidentiality "evidential modality", which, same as epistemic modality, belongs to propositional modality. Subjectivity also has a close relationship with epistemic modality. In the previous section, it is mentioned that Finegan (1995) has concluded three points in his study of subjectivity, and the third point "epistemic status of the propositions" is indeed a study of the speaker's expression of moods or the recognition of propositions, which are mainly conveyed by means of verbs, adverbs and adjectives.

4. CANTONESE EVIDENTIAL PARTICLES

In Cantonese, the sentence-final particle *wo5* expresses hearsay (Kwok 1984, Luke 1990), and Matthews (1998) treats it as evidentiality. The features of *wo3* include unexpectedness and noteworthiness (Luke 1990), and Matthews (1998) regards it as mirativity. These two particles only differ in lexical tones. The following subsections explain the uses of *wo5* and *wo3* in modern Cantonese and give an analysis of them.

4.1 *The feature of wo5*

Modern Cantonese has a particularly rich inventory of SFPs, which serve various functions. To express objective attitudes, *wo5* is a typical “hearsay” particle used in reported speech (Kwok 1984; Luke 1990; Matthews 1998). *Wo5* is best translated into English with “I have heard that...”, “I hear that...”, “s/he told me that...” or “Reportedly”. According to Li (1995), *wo5* is to report what other people say with a sense of emphasis. Compared with *wo3*, *wo5* emphasizes that the quoted content was uttered by other people. Let us examine Li’s examples again:

Example 2

baa4baa1 giu3 nei5 zik1 hak1 heoi3 wo3
father ask 2SG immediate go SFP
“Father asked you to go immediately!”

Example 3

baa4baa1 giu3 nei5 zik1hak1 heoi3 wo5
father ask 2SG immediate go SFP
“Father said to me: ‘Ask him/her to go immediately.’”

Li (1995:509-510) claims that Example 2 is merely a reported speech and aims at drawing other’s attention, while the mood expressed by the latter contains “the mood of objection”. The relationship between *wo3* and *wo5* is not clear and convincing in Li’s treatment. The use of the hearsay particle *wo5* at the end of Example 3 makes the sentence an objective reported speech, and *wo5* itself does not contain any “mood of objection”. The claimed mood “of objection” is considered to be the result of intonation, rather than the meaning of *wo5* itself. Two more examples are shown as follows:

Example 6 (Fight 1991)

aa3 sir waa6 m4 sai2 zou6 wo5
SUF sir say NEG need do SFP

“he said it is not necessary to do.”

Example 7 (HKUCC)

nei1di1 je5 keoi5 m4 zi1 wo5
DEM things 3SG NEG know SFP

“he said he does not know about these things.”

Hearsay evidential *wo5* in the above examples are used to report what someone else has said. Because of that, it may also be a device for disclaiming one’s responsibility (Example 6) or even to show one’s doubt (Example 7).

4.2 *The features of wo3*

In modern Cantonese, *wo3* is an SFP used with a high frequency. Some recent researches have shown that this particle is used to show “realization and reminders” (Rao 1981, Kwok 1984, Ouyang 1990, Deng 1991, Leung 1992, Fang 2003). Consider some common examples:

Example 8 (Fight 1992)

gam1jat6 tin1hei3 hou2 hou2 wo3
today weather very good SFP
“The weather is very good today!”

Example 9 (Fight 1991)

lei1dou6 m4 zeon2 sik6 jin1 wo3
here NEG allow smoking SFP
“Smoking is not allowed here!”

Example 10 (HKUCC)

waa1 zan1hai6 gei2 so1fu4 wo3
INJ really quite wonderful SFP
“Wow, it’s really wonderful!”

In Example 8, the speaker expresses surprise or wonder at the unusually or unexpectedly pleasant weather. Example 9 is to remind the hearer that smoking is prohibited. Example 10 is an exclamatory sentence expressing the tone of surprise. *Wo3* can be used in different types of sentences expressing various tone of voices in conjunction with different lexical and intonational devices. The different uses of *wo3* deduced from the data are summarized below:

4.2.1 Realization

In Example 11, Speaker A reminds Speaker B that it is nearly three o’clock and as a result Speaker B remembers that there is a gathering.

Example 11 (God 1996)

A : saam1 dim2 laa3
three o'clock SFP
"It's three o'clock already."
B : hai6 wo3, keoi5dei6 wui5 lai4 laa3
yes SFP, they AUX come SFP
"Oh yes. They are coming soon."

In Example 12, the speaker takes some bones to feed a dog, and then remembers that in the backyard there is a cat, which might be hungry then, and so he takes some food to feed the cat also. The one who "realizes" that something has to be done is the speaker himself.

Example 12 (God 1996)

ling1 di1 gwa1tau4 heoi3 wai3 haa5 gau2 sin1, waang4dim1 mou4 je5
Take CL bone go feed ADV dog first, anyway no thing
zou6.....hai6 wo3, hau6min6 zung6 jau5 zek3 maau1, m4 zi1 ngo6
do.... yes SFP, back still have CL cat, NEG know hungry
m4 ngo6 nel?
NEG hungry SFP
"Let me take the bones and feed the dog as I have nothing to do
now...Oh, there's also a cat in the backyard, is it hungry or not?"

4.2.2 Reminding

"Reminding" and the above-mentioned "Realization" are two sides of the same coin. In "reminding", it is the speaker who reminds the hearer and consequently the hearer remembers something, while in "realization", the speaker suddenly realizes something as a result of the reminder by someone or some situations, and in this case it is the speaker who remembers something. The following examples below show a situation where the hearer remembers something as a result of the reminder of the speaker.

Example 13 (HKUCC)

A : jam2 naai5caa4 tung4 jam2 caa4 dou1 m4 tung4 wo3, m4 zi1
dim2gaa2
drink milk tea and drink tea ADV NEG same SFP, NEG know
why
jam2 naai5caa4 wui6 soek3 di1 ge2, jan1wai6 keoi5
drink milk tea AUX weaken-stomach ASP SFP, because it
nung4 dak1 zai6 aa4

concentrated COM excessive SFP?

“Milk tea and plain tea taste different. I don’t know why milk tea weakens the stomach. Is it because it is too concentrated?”

B : hai6 aa3 nung4 di1

COP SFP concentrated ASP.

“Yes, it’s more concentrated.”

In Example 13, Speakers A and B are discussing Chinese tea and milk tea. Prior to this exchange, Speaker B said that milk tea certainly does no harm to the stomach. He always drinks Chinese tea. Here, Speaker A reminds Speaker B that Chinese tea is different from milk tea.

Example 14 (HKUCC)

nei5 cin1kei4 m4 hou2 wan2 ngo5 aa3, ngo5 ji5ging1 gau2 go3 project
aa3,

2SG ADV NEG good find 1SG SFP, 1SG already nine CL project
SFP,

nei5 zi6gei2 heoi3 waan4 laa1, nei5 zi6gei2 deoi2 maai4 heoi3 wo3

2SG self go return SFP, 2SG self hand in ASP go SFP.

“Don’t ask me to do it as I have nine projects at hand already. Why don’t you go yourself? You just need to drop it.”

In Example 14, someone asks the speaker to return some books to the library, but the speaker refuses and replies that he is too busy, and he also reminds the hearer that returning books to the library is very simple as one needs only to place the books in the bookdrop.

Example 15 (Fight 1991)

jat1zan6 nei5 jiu3 gan1 sat6 ngo5 wo3

later 2SG must follow closely 1SG SFP

mai5 jau6 zoi3 cong2wo6 aa1

NEG again again make trouble SFP

“Remember, follow me closely and don’t make trouble again.”

The above example is a dialogue between a leader and his attendant. “Follow me closely” is an order to be followed strictly. The imperative tone-of-voice seems to be expressed by the particle *wo3* but actually *wo3* serves no more than expressing a strong sense of reminder to the hearer in the case. If *wo3* is replaced by another particle such as *aa3*, the tone-of-voice of the utterance is not changed.

4.2.3 Contrasting

The following example demonstrates another function of *wo3* which is to “Show an element of Contrast”:

Example 16 (Fight 1991)

A : jau5 mou5 je5 aa3

have NEG thing SFP?

“Is there something wrong?”

B : gaa3 ce1 mou5 je5 wo3

CL car NEG thing SFP.

“There’s nothing wrong with the car.”

A: gam2 dim2gaa1 wui5 jau5 seng1 ge2

DM why AUX have sound SFP?

“Then why are there some noises?”

B : zau1wai4 tai2 haa5

Around look ASP.

“Let’s look around.”

In this example, Speaker A hears some noises in the car park and feels worried, as there are valuables in the car. He then asks Speaker B whether everything is fine. Speaker B replies that there is no problem with the car. In Speaker B’s reply, *wo3* appears at the end of the utterance and conveys the meaning “in spite of appearances or what you think, the car is okay”. Thus, the particle shows that the message contains an element of “contrast”.

Example 17 (Fight 1992)

A : fong2 jap6min6 mou5 jan4

room inside no person

“There’s nobody in the room.”

B : aa3maa4 hai2 dou6 wo3

PRE-grandmother COP here SFP

“Hey Granny is here.”

A : m4 sai2 lei5 keoi5 gaa3

NEG need care about 3SG SFP

“No need to care about her.”

Similarly, in Example 17, speaker A says that there is no one in the room, but speaker B discovers that the grandmother is in the room and reminds speaker A that the actual situation is different from the one he described,

despite the fact that speaker A implies that whether the grandmother is present or not will not affect them in any way. *wo3* at the end of speaker B's utterance again has an element of "contrast".

4.2.4 Hearsay

That is reporting other people's speech. In Cantonese, there are two particles which express hearsay, namely *wo3* and *wo5*. In many situations, these two particles are interchangeable, but there are subtle differences between the two. These differences will be discussed in the next section, and here we will concentrate on the particle *wo3*.

wo3 appeared 11 times in the selected textbooks of the late 19th century to the early 20th century. It occurred in reported speech and its main function was "quotative" at that point, there seemed to be no SFP *wo5*. As such, the function of *wo3* in the past was very different from those meanings carried by the modern Cantonese particle *wo3*. "Quotative" is one of the main functions of modern *wo3* only and is not the principal one. In contrast, in the late 19th century to the early 20th century, *wo3* was mainly used to report other's speech, thus having a quotative function, which can be seen in the following two examples:

Example 18 (BC 1906)

A : keoi5 gei2si4 lai4 ne1
3SG when come SFP?
"What time will he come?"

B : keoi5 waa6 jat1zan6gaan1 zau6 lai4 wo3
3SG say a while ADV come SFP
"He said he would come after a while."

Example 19 (CME 1888)

A : keoi5 waa6 mat1je5 ne1
3SG say what SFP?
"What did he say?"

B : mou5 ngan4 wo3, ngan4loeng2 gan2 wo3
NEG money SFP, money pressing SFP.
"No money.- Short on cash, he said."

The two examples above clearly show that *wo3* is used for reporting other's speech. The English translations were provided by the textbook authors, and from the translations "he said" and "he says", we can judge that they are examples of indirect speech. In Example 18, speaker A asks speaker

B what time “he” will come, and speaker B uses the structure “He said...wo3” (佢話...嗰) in his reply. In Example 19, in speaker B’s reply to speaker A’s question “What did he say?”, the clause “佢話...” (“He said”) is omitted as it is known from the context, and the particle *wo3* alone signals that the answer is not speaker B’s but a report of the speech of that person they are talking about. In terms of sentence structure, there have not been any major changes in the past one hundred years; both “He/She said...wo3” (佢話...嗰) and “...wo3” (...嗰) are acceptable.

In modern Cantonese, *wo3* still carries the function of hearsay. In Example 20, the speaker conveys good wishes to the hearer from someone else who is not present.

Example 20 (Fight 1991)

keoi5 waa6 man6hau6 nei5 wo3, wong4 sir
3SG say greet 2SG SFP, Wong Sir!
“He has asked me to send his regards to you, Mr. Wong!”

In Example 21, *wo3* also has a quotative function, as the speaker asks A who plays most wildly and A answers that B plays most wildly, and the particle *wo3* expresses the fact that this assessment is from someone else other than the speaker. It is added by the speaker to express his surprise that Mr A gave this response.

Example 21 (HKUCC)

ngo5 man6 aa3gaap3 ne1, bin1go3 waan2 dak1 zeoi3 din1 ne1,
1SG ask PRE-A SFP, who play COM most wildly SFP,
keoi5 waa6 keoi5 wo3
3SG said 3SG SFP.
“I asked Mr. A who played the most wildly, and he said Mr. B did.”

4.3 Discussions

In Cantonese, *wo5*’s main characteristic is hearsay (see 4.1), a feature which is included in “mode of knowing” of evidentiality by Chafe & Nicholas (1986). The first three features of *wo3*, realization, reminding, contrast, fit Luke’s (1990) generalization that *wo3* is to show “unexpectedness, noteworthiness and remarkableness”. Matthews (1998) concludes that:

“[Luke’s observations] fit Delancey’s notion of mirativity as a conceptual category within the realm of evidentiality, coverings surprise and unexpectedness.”

This kind of mirativity can be classified as “knowledge against verbal resources or expectations” in the evidentiality classification scheme of Chafe & Nicholas’ (1986) (see 3.2). We see that both *wo5* and *wo3* can be called evidential particles. With the advancement of evidentiality studies, what we now know about the features of *wo5* and *wo3* is much more complicated than previously recognized. These particles do not simply show the moods of the speaker, but reflect how they recognize the external world as well.

The fourth feature of *wo3* is hearsay which is considered to be more complex to account for. It is said not to be easy to differentiate *wo3* and *wo5* in some situations because *wo3* overlaps with *wo5* in hearsay evidentiality. Both are often used in the reported speech. Subjectivization, however, gives us a very good explanation of the two particles. We can prove it from the following minimal pair:

Example 22

maa4maa1 waa6 m4 hou2 tai2 din6si6 wo3
mother say NEG good watch TV SFP
“Mama said ‘do not watch TV’ ”

Example 23

maa4maa1 waa6 m4 hou2 tai2 din6si6 wo5
mother say NEG good watch TV SFP
“Mama said ‘do not watch TV’ ”

If we analyze this closely, we can see that there is a semantic difference when the two SFPs are employed to express speaker’s modality. Although sometimes they can be substituted by each other, the difference of modality can more or less be seen. *Wo3* reflects “unexpectedness, noteworthiness, remarkableness, unusualness...etc” (Luke 1990), and *wo5* is used when the speaker is reporting other people’s views, and at the same time shows uncertainty about the reliability of the information and unwillingness of the speaker to be held responsible for the information. If language is regarded as a reflection of human’s cognitive activity, *wo5* is the interpretation of the original message for the first time, i.e. the speaker reports only other people’s point of view, while *wo3* is the interpretation of the original message for the second time, i.e. the speaker reveals his/her comment when reporting other people’s point of view. *Wo5* is the citation of speech and *wo3* is the interpretation of action, connotes the speaker’s assessment of the evidence for his or her statement with his or her own attitudes. From this point, the two examples above show the different attitudes and stances of the speakers. Thus, *wo5* and *wo3* obviously have different social functions from the pragmatic point of view.

Moreover, the quotative evidential *wo5* used in indirect speech shows that the speaker is not willing to take the responsibility of the quoted content, and the SFP *wo3* explains others' motivations behind his/her behavior by the speaker's own speculation and emotion, which connotes the speaker's assessment of the evidence for his or her statement. From daily conversations, it is found that the hearsay evidential *wo5* is used when the speaker is not involved in the reported content so as to speak objectively, irrespective of personal opinion and subjective speculation on the issue. Aikhenvald (2004) points out that evidentiality is neutral as to the speaker's commitment to the reported information. It can be seen that the speaker does not show his stance when *wo5* is employed, just merely reports other people's wording unchangeably and objectively, or explains other people's intention. However, *wo3* is employed when the speaker is involved in the reported content, or shows the quotation based on his/her own speculation or intention. The apparent difference can be seen in the example below:

Example 24 (Private 1976)

(An employee at a detective agency)

cam4jat6 aa3 zau1jat6fu3 ne1, sai2 jan4 sung3 keoi5 lou5po4
yesterday PRE Chow Yat-fu SFP order people give 3SG wife
zoeng1 soeng1 lai4, waa6 keoi5 gam1jat6 heoi3 sai2tau4, keoi5
CL photo come say 3SG today go wash hair 3SG
waa4ji4 keoi5 tung4 jan4 jau5 lou6 wo5, aai3 ngo5dei6 wan2
suspect 3SG with person have affair SFP ask 1PL find
jan4 heoi3 gan1 gan1 keoi5 wo3
person go follow follow 3SG SFP

“Yesterday Mr Chou Yat-fu had his wife’s photo sent to us, saying that she is going to the barber shop today. Mr Chou suspects that his wife is having an affair with another man, so he asked us to follow her and to collect some evidence.”

Example 24 is the only example that the mirative *wo3* and the quotative *wo5* appear in the same utterance in our data. *Wo3* and *wo5* are certainly not interchangeable in this example, otherwise the meanings conveyed will be totally different. The sentence with the SFP *wo5* is used to show the speaker does not stand for the opinion of the reported speech, which is “Madam committed adultery”. On the contrary, what we discover from *wo3* used in the last sentence is when *wo3* is used; the speaker shows his stance explicitly. The reported content and the speaker are closely related, as the speaker interprets others' behavior subjectively. Specification associated with *wo3* may have subsequently become reanalyzed and absorbed directly into the element *wo3* as an inherent restriction on its use. From such a contrast, we can say that SFP *wo5* focuses on the source of information and *wo3* focuses on the speaker's

reactions (surprise and unexpectedness). *wo3* can also be used for reporting others' speech, where the speaker's stance is still clearly shown, implying that the speaker does not report exactly what others mean, or just reports others' messages by his/her own understanding, or shows how true the reported speech is (to share the responsibility with the person being cited):

Example 25 (God 1996)

A : mou5 lei5jau4 gaa3, daai6so4 go3 sai3mui2 go3 lou5mou2
go3

NEG reason SFP Daiso CL younger sister CL mother CL
daai6lou2 go3 zai2 waa6 jau5 gaa3 wo3, maai2 laa3, nei5
elder brother CL son say have SFP SFP NEG SFP 2SG
faan2 lai4 sin1 laa1
back come first SFP

"This is strange! Daiso's sister's mother's brother's son said he had it.
Well, now you come back first."

B : bin1 jau5 zek1
where have SFP

"He does not have it!"

This example shows that *wo3* cannot be substituted by *wo5* in many situations. It is because the SFP *wo3* expresses the speaker's stance which conceals a complicated meaning. The sentence does not only reveal what "Daiso's sister's mother's brother's son" says, but also the speaker's own viewpoint, i.e., he does think "it did have" something. In addition to this, one of the situations we should be aware of is, when SFPs *wo3* and *wo5* are used to interpret others' motivations behind their behavior, *wo3* is preferred once the behavior is generally accepted and obligatory, and *wo5* is preferred once the intentions of the behavior are unclear.

Based on this difference, *wo5* has developed another usage, and the two cannot be substituted by each other. That they are not interchangeable is shown in the following minimal pairs, where in Example 26 *wo3* shows reminder, and in Example 28 *wo5* shows that the information gathered is not correct and the tone-of-voice is disapproving:

Example 26 (Private 1976)

ceot1 lai4 haang4 gong2 haa5 dou6ji6 hou2 wo3
out come walk talk ADV virtue good SFP

Example 27

*ceot1 lai4 haang4 gong2 haa5 dou6ji6 hou2 wo5
out come walk talk ADV virtue good SFP

“Being in the society, won’t you try and be kind and loyal?”

Example 28 (Private 1976)

ji5wai4 keoi5 jik1 nei5 wo5, lei6 jung6 nei5 zaa3
think 3SG benefit 2SG SFP take advantage of 2SG SFP

Example 29

*ji5wai4 keoi5 jik1 nei5 wo3, lei6jung6 nei5 zaa3
think 3SG benefit 2SG SFP take advantage of 2SG SFP
“Don’t think he will benefit you, he is just taking advantage of
you!”

One more point to add, from the pragmatic point of view, the elements in the language are being used to achieve communicative purposes is worth studying since the combined meaning of the individual words in a sentence may differ from what the speaker or writer intends to mean. In pragmatics, a speech act is divided into three parts: locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. Of which the illocutionary act is the core of the speech act. A locutionary act is to express the literal meanings of the sentences. An illocutionary act means to perform some intended action by producing the speech. A perlocutionary act is to use language to bring about some consequences. Austin thinks that every utterance produced by a speaker contains all the above three effects or forces. The theory of speech acts underscores the importance of the distinction between linguistic meaning and language use, and from this viewpoint Example 3 is clearly a locutionary act, where the utterance with *wo5* merely expresses the fact and is a simple reporting of other’s speech. In contrast, Example 2 is an illocutionary act, where *wo3* is used by the speaker to achieve an action, that is, the speaker is actually reminding and requesting the hearer: “Father asked you to go immediately! Don’t do anything else!” It is clear that *wo5* and *wo3* differ in that the former concerns with linguistic meaning while the latter concerns with language use.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Evidentiality refers to how the speaker explains the source of knowledge, attitude towards knowledge and commitment to knowledge, and it reflects whether the information is from personal experience, inference or other people. Evidentiality is present in every language, but it exists in different linguistic forms, which may be grammatical inflections or lexical items, and as sentence-final particles in Cantonese. *Wo3* expresses mirativity, while *wo5* expresses hearsay. According to Chafe & Nicolas (1986), the categories of mirativity and hearsay belong to the realm of evidentiality. Matthews’ (1998)

observation that “the category of mirativity identified by DeLancey enables *wo3* to be related systematically to the hearsay evidential *wo5*” brings in a new insight for the investigation of the relationship between the SPFs *wo3* and *wo5*.

The final point to emphasize is that there is a complicated situation in that *wo3* and *wo5* overlap in the feature of hearsay, and this makes some people to believe that these particles are interchangeable. But on close inspection it is found that they are apparently distinct, and their difference can be explained using the concept of subjectivity. Aikhenvald (2004:209) thinks that quotative evidentials commonly develop “mirative extensions”. Using *wo3* as an illustration, we can postulate that the features of *wo3* may have undergone a quotative-to-mirative movement and may have been shifted from “this is the news I heard” (hearsay) to “this is new to me/you” (newsworthiness). However, DeLancey (1997: 37) argues that the reverse derivation is at least as plausible, that is, the mirative feature rather than the quotative is the basic one. In modern Cantonese, the main features of mirative *wo3* are realization and reminding, and further diachronic studies are needed before which of the above situations it belongs can be decided to.

REFERENCES

English

- Aikhenvald, A. Y. (2004). *Evidentiality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Aikhenvald, A. & R. Dixon (eds.) (2003) *Studies in Evidentiality*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Austin, J. L.(1962). *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Ball, J. D. (1888). *Cantonese Made Easy (2nd edition)*. HK: The China Mail Office.
- Ball, J. D. (1924). *Cantonese Made Easy (4th edition)*. HK: Kelly and Walsh Ltd.
- Bridgman E.C. (1841). *Chinese Chrestomathy in the Canton Dialect.*, Macao: S. Wells Williams.
- Bussmann, H. (1996). *Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*. (Translated and edited by G. Trauth & K. Kazzazi). London: Routledge, 1996.
- Chafe, W. & J. Nicolas. (1986). *Evidentiality: The Coding of Epistemology in Language*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Chafe, W. L. & Nichols, J. (Eds.). (1986). *Evidentiality: The linguistic encoding of epistemology*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Chappell, H. To appear. The grammaticalization of the verb *kong* ‘say’ in Taiwanese Southern Min: A case of reanalysis. In C. N. Li and A. Peryraube (Eds.), *Morphological Change in Chinese*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

De Haan, F. (1997). *The Interaction of Modality and Negation: A Typological Study*. New York: Garland.

De Haan, F. (1999). Evidentiality and epistemic modality: Setting boundaries. *Southwest Journal of Linguistics*, 18, 83-101.

Finegan, E. (1995). Subjectivity and Subjectivisation: an Introduction. In Stein, D. & Wright, S. (Eds.) (1995) *Subjectivity and subjectivization: Linguistic perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Frawley, W. (1992). *Linguistic Semantics*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Givón, T. (1984). *Syntax: A functional-typological introduction. Volume I*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. p307-308.

Heine & Kuteva (2002). *World Lexicon of Grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heine et al. (1991). *Grammaticalization: a conceptual framework*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hopper, P. J. & Traugott, E. C. (1993). *Grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Klamer, M. (2000) How report verbs become quote markers and complementizers. *Lingua*: 110. 69-98.

Kwok, H. (1984). *Sentence Particles in Cantonese*. Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong.

Langacker, R. W. (1985). 'Observations and Speculations on Subjectivity'. In John Haiman (ed.) *Iconicity in Syntax*. Amsterdam : Benjamins.

Langacker, R. W. (1990). 'Subjectification'. *Cognitive Linguistics* 1:5-38.

Langacker, R. W. (1999). 'Losing Control: Grammaticalization, Subjectification, and Transparency'. In Blank, A. and Koch, P. (eds.) *Historical Semantics and Cognition*, p147-176, Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Luke, K. K. (1990). *Utterance Particles in Cantonese Conversation*. Amsterdam ; Benjamins.

Lyons, J. (1982). 'Deixis and Subjectivity'. In Jarvella, R. J., & Klein, W. (Eds.) *Speech, Place ,and Action: Studies in Deixis and Related Topics*. Chichester and New York: John Wiley.

Matsumoto, Y. (1988). From bound grammatical markers to free discourse markers: History of some Japanese connectives. In S. Axmaker, A. Jaisser, & H. Singmaster (eds.) *Proceedings of the 14th Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*.

Matthews, S. & Xu, H. (2005). Direct and Indirect Speech in Cantonese and Chaozhou (Southern Min). Paper presented at RCLT local workshop, La Trobe University.

Matthews, S. & Yip, V. (1994). *Cantonese: A Comprehensive Grammar*. London and New York: Routledge.

Matthews, S. (1998). Evidentiality and mirativity in Cantonese: wo3, wo4, wo5! *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Languages and Linguistics*, Academia Sinica.

O.F. Wisner (1906). *Beginning Cantonese*. Canton: China Baptist Publication.

O'Melia, T. A. (1954). *First Year Cantonese*. HK Catholic Truth Society.

Palmer, F. R. (1986). *Mood and Modality*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University. p66-67.

Plungian, Vladimir A. (2001) The Place of Evidentiality within the Universal Grammatical Space. *Journal of Pragmatics* 33: 349-357

Saeed, J. I. (1997). *Semantics*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers.

Sohn, Ho-Min (1999). *The Korean Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Traugott, E. C. & Dasher, R. B. (2002). *Regularity in Semantic Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Traugott, E. C. & Konnig E. (1991). The Semantics-Pragmatics of Grammaticalization Revisited. In Traugott, E. C. and Heine, B., (Eds.). *Approaches to grammaticalization*: 189-218. Amsterdam: John Benjamins and Co.

Traugott, E. C. (1989). 'On the Rise of Epistemic Meanings in English: an Example of Subjectification in Semantic Change'. *Language* 65:31-35.

Traugott, E. C. (1995). 'The Role of the Development of Discourse Markers in a History of Grammaticalization'. Paper presented at ICHL XII, Manchester 1995.

Wu, X. Z. (2000). *Grammaticalization and the Development of Functional Categories in Chinese*. PhD thesis, University of Southern California.

Wu, X. Z. (2004). *Grammaticalization and Language Change in Chinese: A Formal View*. London & New York: Routledge Curzon.

Chinese

Cheung, H. N.

張洪年：《香港粵語語法的研究》。香港：香港中文大學，1972年。

Deng, S. J.

鄧少君：〈廣州方言常見的語氣詞〉，載《方言》。1991年第2期。

Fong, X. Y.

方小燕：《廣州方言句末語氣助詞》。廣州：暨南大學出版社，2003年

Hu, Z. L.

胡壯麟：〈漢語的言據性和語篇分析〉。《湖北大學學報》第2期，1995年，頁13-23。

Hu, Z. L.

胡壯麟：〈語言的言據性〉。《外語教學與研究》第4期，1994年，頁9-15。

Leung, C. S.

梁仲森：《香港粵語語助詞的研究》。香港：香港理工大學，哲學碩士論文，2005年。

Li et al.

李納等：〈從話語角度論證語氣詞"的"〉，載《中國語文》。1998年第2期。

Li, X. H.

李新魁等：《廣州方言研究》。廣州：廣東人民出版社，1995年。

Liu & Gu

劉鴻勇、顧陽：〈涼山彝語的引語標記和示證標記〉，載《民族語文》。2008年第2期，頁16-23。

Ouyang, J. Y.

歐陽覺亞：〈廣州話的語氣助詞〉，載《王力先生紀念論文集》。北京商務印書，1990年。

Rao, B. C.

饒秉才等：《廣州話方言詞典》。香港：商務印書館，1981年。

Shen, J. X. 沈家煊：〈語言的“主觀性”和“主觀化”〉，《外語教學與研究》第4期，2001年。

Zhang & Yu

張成福、余光武：〈論漢語的傳信表達〉。《語言科學》，2003年5月，頁50-57。

Zhang, B. J.

張伯江：〈認識觀的語法表現〉。《國外語言學》第2期，1997年，頁15-19。

Zhu, Y. S. 朱永生：〈試論現代漢語的言據性〉。《現代外語(季刊)》第29卷4期，2006年，頁331-337。

香港語言學學會粵語拼音字表編寫小組：《粵語拼音字表》。香港：香港語言學學會。