From Classifier to Stance Marker: On the Diachronic Development of Cantonese $go^3$

WONG, Tak-Sum 黃得森 & YAP Foong Ha 葉鳳霞
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
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General Classifier 個

- Cantonese: ɡo³ [kɔ¹]
- Mandarin: ɡè [kɐ˥]

(1) 一 個 人
Jat⁠ ɡo³ jan⁴
Yī ɡè rén
one CL person
‘one person’

- 個/箇/個
Research Questions

• How did the general classifier 個 $g_0^3$ develop diachronically and acquire other functions (including stance marking) in Cantonese?

• Is there an etymological relation between the classifier 個 $g_0^3$ and adnominal marker 嗽 $g_3^e$ in Cantonese?
Previous Studies

• Shí (2002) and Wāng (2008) explores the inter-relation among the classifier, demonstrative and genitive marker among the southern dialects.

• Yao (2009) identifies similar inter-related functions of 個 in Hakka.

• Sio (2012) explores the usage and properties of the Cantonese adnominal marker and SFP 嘿 ge³.
Etymology of 个/箇/個

• 箇

• Radical: 竹 = bamboo

(2) zhú  gān  wàn  gè

竹  竅  萬  个

bamboo  pod  myriad  GE
‘Ten thousand pieces of bamboo pod’

《史記》卷129〈貨殖列傳〉
W. Han, 1st c. B.C.

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As a Measure Word

(3) lù pí sì gè
鹿皮四个
‘Four pieces of deer leather’

— 《國語》 (Warring States, ca 5th c. B.C.)
As a Demonstrative

• 德正徑造坐席，連索熊白。之才謂坐者曰：「箇人諱底？」眾莫知。之才曰：「生不為人所知，死不為人所諱，此何足問？」
   ——《北齊書》卷三十三：列傳第二十五 (NSD, 6th c.)

• 箇人諱底？

(4) DEM person name what

‘What is this/that person’s name?’
Lit. ‘This/that person names what?’

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As a Adnominalizer?

(5) 好個人家男女有什麼罪過？

‘A good family of male and female, what guilt do they have?’

―《祖堂集·丹霞和尚》(Five Dynasties, 10th c.)

• Potential source: 好一個人家男女 > 好個人家男女？

• Classifier > adnominalizer (also known as modification marker, association marker, genitive marker or relativizer)
Cantonese historical documents used in this study

• 《花箋記》, *Anonymous*, 17\(^{\text{th}}\) c.
• 《二荷花史》, *Anonymous*, 17\(^{\text{th}}\) /18\(^{\text{th}}\) c.
• 《粵謳》, by 招子庸 Chiw Tsz-yung, 1828
• *Vocabulary of the Cantonese Dialect*, by Morrison, 1828
• *Cantonese Made Easy*, by Ball, 1888
花箋

Hua-teien

CHINESE COURTSHIP.

IN VERSE.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN APPENDIX,
TREATING OF THE REVENUE OF CHINA,
&c. &c.

BY

PETER PERRING THOMS.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY PARR.BY, ALLEN, AND KINGSBURY, LEADENHALL-STREET,
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BLASHBARD, 14, CITY-ROAD.

MACAO, CHINA:
PRINTED AT THE HONORABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S PRESS.
1824.
As a Classifier, Demonstrative in Cantonese

- 《花箋記》 (late Ming, 17th c., opera lyrics)
- Classifier Demonstrative
As a Adnominalizer(?) in Cantonese

(6) 好個鹹蠶懵大仙，你休兩眠睜睜將姐看，
唔止倚花人懵望天孫，算起數來該五注，
快斟令酒請嬌完。
——《二荷花史》(17th/18th c., opera lyrics)

• ‘What a Haam-Ma Silly god!’

• 好一個鹹蠶懵大仙 > 好個鹹蠶懵大仙？
• cf. 好一個人家男女 > 好个人家男女？
As an Adverbializer in Cantonese

(7) 紫玉即時抽個氣： “講奴真個好傷心，我係姓秦年十七，世家原係北京人。”
——《二荷花史》(17th/18th c.)

• 講 奴 真 個 好 傷心
talk 1SG real GE very heartbreaking
‘Talking about me, it is really heartbreaking!’

• Cf. Mandarin 講奴真的好傷心

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As a Nominalizer in Cantonese

(8) 你睇池畔這雙穿白個，
唔止月中飛下兩雲仙！
—《二荷花史》(17th/18th c.)

• ‘Look at these two who dress in white in the poolside…’

(9) 穿白個
dress white GE
‘the ones who dress in white’

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As a Nominalizer in Cantonese

- Cantonese
  - Mandarin
  - *穿白個
  - possible in Early Mandarin??

(10) 穿 白 個
dress white GE
‘the ones who dress in white’

(11) 穿 白 的
dress white NMZ
‘the one who dress in white’
(12) 但係娶老婆呢種福，我哋又咪可以響係？
‘But for the fortune of getting a wife, why can't we have it?’
—《難兄難弟》(a HK film production)

• 個嚟: affirmative and reminder

• *我哋唔可以同享個！(modern Cantonese)

13. 咖,  an emphatic affirmative.
14. 駕,  somewhat similar to the last, or simply euphonic.
15. 唠,  same as last.
16. 個,  same as last.
Nominalizer as Sentence Final Particle

- **Southern Dialects**
- **Cantonese**
- 個-type SFP
- 的 is not used in colloquial Cantonese
- “唔係咁樣嘅！”

- **Northern Dialects**
- **Mandarin**
- *個-type SFP
- 的-type SFP
- “不是這樣子的！”

- Cantonese use ご3 (attested in the 19th century) and 佢 ge3 (attested from the 20th century).

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## Frequency Usage of 個 in 17th to 19th c.

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<th>demonstrative</th>
<th>adverbializer</th>
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<th>classifier ~ adnominalizer</th>
<th>SFP</th>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>go²</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>ge³</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Contemporary Cantonese

- 兩個
- *個邊 /go³ bin¹/
- *真個好傷心
- *穿白個
- *我哋唔可以同享個！

- 們邊 /go² bin¹/
- 真係好傷心
- 着白衫嘅
- 我哋唔可以同享嘅！

*嘅: functional counterpart of Mandarin的

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慨 in Cantonese

- **Nominalizer**: 着白衫慨 ‘one dressing in white’
- **Adnominzlier**
  - **Relativizer**: 我做慨事 ‘the thing that I do’
  - **Associative marker**: 我慨叔叔 ‘My uncle’
  - **Genitive marker**: 我慨蘋果 ‘My apple’
- **Modification marker**: 好慨貓 ‘good cat’
- **Sentence final particle**: 我啲唔可以同享慨！
- **Pronunciation**:
  - Stressed [kɛ˧]
  - Unstressed [kɛ˩]
VOCABULARY
OF THE
CANTON DIALECT.

BY R. MORRISON, D. D.

PART. I.
ENGLISH AND CHINESE.

MACAO, CHINA.
PRINTED AT THE HONORABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S PRESS,
BY G. J. STEYN, AND BROTHER.
1828.
Earliest Examples of 嘚

nominalizer

Genitive marker

relativizer

Associative marker

Adjective suffix

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Why 嘢 can be a SFP?

- Morrison (1828): VCD
- 或者係啲喢
- 歷來都係啲喢
- 上下係啲喢
- 應理係啲喢
- 係啲喢
- 有啲喢
- 本性天生喢，不是學來喢
- Nominalizer ~ SFP
- Adjective suffix?? ~ SFP

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Why 嘅 can be a SFP?

(13) 或者 係 咁 既
     waak6ze2 hai6 gom2 ge3
perhaps COP DEM NMZ~SFP
‘May be it’s like this.’

• In Cantonese, we virtually utterance every sentence with SFP, the sentence-final nominalizer was reanalyzed as a stance marker with affirmative/emphatic meaning.

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Source of 嘅?

13. 「嘅, 嘅」 emphatic-affirmative.
14. 「嘅, 嘅」 somewhat similar to the last, or simply euphonic.
15. 「嘅, 嘅」 same as last.

- 個 \(go^3\) versus 嘅 \(ge^3\): very similar in pronunciation
- 我啲唔可以同享個嘅 == 我啲唔可以同享嘅嘅
- SFP: 個 > 嘅
- What about the nominalizer and adnominalizer?

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（14）尋日嘅蛋糕呢？= 尋日個蛋糕呢？

'Where is yesterday’s cake?' Lit. ‘Yesterday’s cake [Q] ?’

• Ø: zero marker for adnominal marker
• N + Ø + 個 + N: CL 個 looks like adnominal usage
• 渠個花園 (花箇記)、你個家翁 (二荷花史)
• Mandarin
  – 好的人 ‘good [’s] person’
  – Adj + 的 + N: 的 looks like an associative marker

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個 > 嘅

- 尋日 嘅 蛋糕 呢？ ≡ 尋日 個 蛋糕 呢？
- Function words tend to be unstressed over time
  - English: of /əv/ > /əv/
  - Mandarin: 的 [ti] > [tə]
- 嘅: Stressed [kə̯] Unstressed [kə̯]
- Hypothesis
  - 個 frequently appears in N + CL + N context ⇒ reanalyzed as a productive adnominal marker
  - 個 [kə] > [kə̯] > [kə] 嘅 (vowel centralized and weakened)
  - Stressed > unstressed, suggesting greater integration
  - [kə] > [kə̯] in stressing context
The family of 嘢 as SFP

- 嘢 ke˧  <factal>
- 嘢 ke˧ + ↗  > ke˧  <complain; defense; Q>
- 嘢 ke˧ + 呀 a˨  > 嘢 ka˨  <factal+mild tone>
- 嘢 ke˧ + a˨  > ka˨  <factal+question>
Semantic Map of 個

箇 Measure word (of bamboo?)  →  general classifier  →  demonstrative  →  DEM.distal

竹竿萬個

鹿皮四個

箇人譚底

個

好個人家男女/渠個花園

穿白個

作書嘅

adnominal marker?

→ nominalizer → kə → kə 嘅

好個人家男女/渠個花園

講奴真個好傷心

唔可以同享個嘅

假嘅

adverbializer?

→ SFP  → adj suffix

講奴真個好傷心

唔可以同享個嘅

假嘅

+ a」  ↓  + 呀

ka」 ← 嘅  → 嘅

係咗嘅

↓ +

嘅

Sam WONG & Foong Ha YAP
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Q&A

Contact:

cs04wts@alumni.ust.hk
wong_taksum@hotmail.com
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