

On the development of evidential 'say' in Chinese

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Sentence Final particles (SFPs) in Chinese

- SFPs form a very important grammatical category in Chinese.
- SFPs have a range of functions, including the expression of aspect, modality, evidentiality, etc.
- The use of SFPs in Cantonese is particularly pervasive and powerful. By simply altering the sentence particle at the end of a bare clause, very different meanings will result. Consider below the addition of different sentence particles (SFP) to the base utterance *Keoi lai zo* 佢嚟㗎 he-come-PERF 'he has come

<u>Base utterance</u>	<u>SFPs</u>		<u>Sentence meaning</u>
	<i>gwa</i> 㗎	⇒	It is possible that he has come.
	<i>me</i> 㗎	⇒	I am not aware that he has come.
<i>Keoi lai zo</i> +	<i>lo</i> 囉	⇒	It is obvious that he has come.
	<i>laak</i> 㗎	⇒	He has already come.
	<i>wo</i> 㗎	⇒	I was told that he has come.

Focus of this paper

- In this paper, we will examine one of the many pathways leading to SFPs, namely the development from the lexical verb SAY, to the SFP marking evidentiality.
- Speakers often indicate the source of their information when they make a claim; this linguistic phenomenon is referred to as evidentiality marking. It has been observed that many languages recruit their ‘say’ verbs to signal evidential information (e.g. Lord 1993; Aikhenvald 2004; Heine & Kuteva 2002).
- Our discussion on the examination of the grammaticalization pathways and mechanisms involved in the development ‘SAY verb > SFP’ would be based on:
 - *waa6* ‘say’ in Cantonese (A Sinitic language spoken in southern China, including Hong Kong and the Guangdong Province)
 - *shuō* ‘say’ in Mandarin
 - *kòng* ‘say’ in Taiwanese (A Sinitic language spoken in Taiwan)

The Cantonese *waa6* ‘say’

•The Cantonese *waa6* as a full lexical verb means ‘say’, as in:

- 1) 佢 話 我哋 好 嘈。
Keoi5 waa6 ngo5dei6 hou2 cou4.
3SG say 1PL very noisy
‘**He says** we are very noisy.’

•In fact, inherently the verb *waa6* already encodes evidential (source of knowledge) information. Since for most of the time the source of information is attributed to indefinite referents, the rise of expressions such as *jan4dei6 waa6* as a ‘hearsay’ marker, is facilitated, as in (2) below, where ‘others say’ is reinterpreted as a kind of evidential expression like ‘it is said that’:

- 2) 人 話 我哋 好 嘈。
jan4dei6 waa6 ngo5dei6 hou2 cou4.
others say 1PL very noisy

‘**It’s said** (<others say) that we are very noisy.’

The Cantonese *waa6* ‘say’

•The uses of the Cantonese *waa6* as a full lexical verb meaning ‘say’, and as a hearsay marker occurring in the phrase *jan4dei6waa6*, were both attested in our early Cantonese database reflecting the Cantonese usage in the 19C. Consider (3) and (4) below.

3) 你 話 夠 幾 多 人 分 ?

Nei5 waa6 gau3 gei2 do1 jan4 fan1?

1SG say enough how many person share

‘You say (they are) enough for how many people to share?’

(1828 *Jyut6au1* 粵謳)

4) 人 話 鳥語 可以 忘憂。

Jan4dei6 waa6 niu5jyu5 ho2ji5 mong4jau1.

others say chirps can forget.worries

‘It is said that you will forget your worries when listening to chirps’.

(1828 *Jyut6au1* 粵謳)

The Cantonese *waa6* ‘say’

• When co-occurring with other variants of the reportative verb such as *giu6* ‘shout’ and *gong2* ‘say’, or perceptive verbs such as *teng1gin3* ‘hear’, Cantonese *waa6* ‘say’ is reinterpreted as a quotative *waa6* and complementizer *waa6* respectively. Both functions were attested in the 19th century, with the quotative use appearing slightly earlier than the complementizer function.

Consider (5) and (6) below:

- 5) 佢 越發 大 聲 叫 話 可憐 我。
Keoi5 jyuut6.faat3 daai6 seng1 giu3 waa6 ho2lin4 ngo5.
 3SG more and more big voice shout QUOT pity 1SG
 ‘He shouts louder and louder: pity me!’
 (1865 *Getting close with Jesus* 親就耶穌)

- 6) 我 聽見 話 佢 唔 曉得。
Ngo5 teng1gin3 waa6 keoi5 m4 hiu2dak1.
 1SG hear COMP 3SG not know
 ‘I heard **that** he doesn’t know.’
 (1877 *Forty Chapters on Cantonese Phrases* 散語四十章)

Cantonese *wo* as evidential marker

- Interestingly, from having a quotative and complementizer function, *waa6* in Cantonese has further developed into a sentence-final stance particle *wo3* (later realized as *wo5*), marking evidentiality, and then counter-expectation. Consider (7) below:

7) 唔曾，佢話挨晚至擰嚟啲。
M4ceng4, keoi5 waa6 aai1maan1 zi3 ling1 lai4 wo3.
not.yet 3SG say evening then bring come EVID
'No, not yet, but he promised to bring it this evening'.
(1883 *Cantonese Made Easy*)

- Chao (1947: 121) suggested that fusion between *waa6* in post-predicate position and sentence final *o3* (a tone softener) resulted in the evidential marker *wo3*.
- As we can see from (7), uses of the evidential (or 'hearsay') *wo3* was already attested in the mid-19C texts.

Cantonese *wo* as counterexpectation marker

- Upon its pathway of evolution, *wo*₃ has further developed into a counterexpectation marker, with examples attested in Cantonese films from the mid-20C. Consider (8) below:

(8) 你 睇 下 隔 離 檯 幾 粒 鑽 石 ， 正 啲 。

Nei5 tai2 haa5gaak3lei4 toi4 go2 gei2 nap1zyun3sek6, zeng3 je5 wo3.

2SG see ASP neighbor table that several CL diamond precious thing CE

‘You see the diamonds on the next table? Precious stuff!’

(Leung 2006: 69, from the movie New White Golden Dragon 新白金龍 1947)

- In (8), there is no sense of evidential meaning, but only the meaning of counterexpectation. Arguably, the development from evidential *wo*₃ to counterexpectation *wo*₃ is in contexts where the evidential ‘hearsay’ information is accompanied by an expression of speaker surprise, like the following:

(9) A: 佢話乜 呢？

Keoi5 waa6 mat1 je5 ne1?

3SG say what thing PRT

‘What did he say?’

B: 冇銀嘞。

Mou5 ngan2 wo3.

neg money EVID/CE

‘(He said) no money!’

(1883 *Cantonese Made Easy*)

EVID *wo3* > EVID *wo5*

- The rise of counterexpectation marker *wo3* may have been (partly) responsible for the phonological change whereby evidential marker *wo3* is later phonologically realized as *wo5*.
- We suspect that since *wo3* is a mid level tone, slightly higher than the mid-low level tone for lexical verb *waa6*, and thus is appropriate for the expression of mild surprise and counterexpectation (the mirativity effect). However, *wo5* is a low rising tone that allows for a more elastic range of phonological modulations such as vowel lengthening. This more elastic phonological range in turn allows a wider range of speaker mood expressions to be further encoded.

EVID WO3 > EVID WO5

- For example, in *Keoi5 lai4 zo2 wo5*, instead of simply encoding evidential information as in ‘(S)he is not coming, *they say*’, the speaker could modulate the rising tone *wo5* so as to embellish the evidential information such that we can get a more subjective readings like ‘(S)he is not coming, *so they say*’, where the phonological variation in Cantonese *wo5* (here translated as English *so*) helps to convey the speaker’s skepticism as well.
- Thus, as *wo3* extends from evidential marking to counter-expectation marking, the former comes to be phonologically realized as *wo5*.

- Schematically:
 - CE WO3
 - EVID WO3
 - EVID WO5

The Taiwanese *kòng* 講

- A similar phenomenon about the Taiwanese SAY verb *kòng* is also observed in Simpson and Wu (2002). Originally a lexical verb meaning ‘say’, *kòng* has also evolved into a sentence final particle expressing evidentiality and counterexpectation. Consider the example *kòng li bo lai* 講伊無來 SAY-you-NEG-come.

a. *kong li bo lai* 講伊無來

‘(S)he **said** you didn’t come.’

OR ‘It’s **said** (< people said) you didn’t come.’

b. *siunn kong li bo lai* 想講伊無

‘(S)he/people thought **that** you didn’t come.’

c. *li bo lai kong* 伊無來講

‘You didn’t come(,) **it’s said.**’

d. *li bo lai kong* 伊無來講

‘You didn’t come(,) **I’m surprised to hear.**’

The Mandarin *shuō* 說

- Well, how about Mandarin?
- Su (2004) suggested that the verb *shuō* in Mandarin has grammaticalized from a lexical verb meaning ‘say’ to a sentence final stance marker expressing the speaker’s subjective feelings. Consider the examples below.
- *Shuō* as a lexical verb:

(10) 我 在 這 兒 聽 阿秀 說 故 事 。

Wo zai zher ting A-xiu shuo gushi.

1SG at here listen A-xiu say story

‘I am here listening to Axiu telling a story.’

- *Shuō* as a quotative/reportative marker:

(11) 住 台北縣 的 王 小姐 來 信 說 : 我 有 一 個 男 友 。

Zhu taibei-xian de Wang xiaojie lai xin shuo: wo you yi ge nanyou

live Taipei-province DE Wang miss come letter QUOTE 1SG have one CL bf

Letter from Miss Wang in Taipei Province says: I have a boyfriend.’

The Mandarin *shuō* 說

- Su (2004) further suggested that *shuo* is further reanalyzed as a complementizer:

(12) 你堅持 說 這些 作品 平淡無奇。

Ni jianchi shuo zhexie zoupin ping-dan-wu-qi.

2SG insist COMP these works plain

‘You insist that these works are plain.’

The Mandarin *shuō* 說

- As with the Cantonese *wo* and the Taiwanese *kong*, the Mandarin *shuo* has developed into a quotative marker and a complementizer marker. And, following a similar path verb > particle, *shuo* has also developed into a sentence final particle. However, semantically speaking, the sentence final *shuo* has evolved along a slightly different direction, and is used to express the speaker's subjective stance (rather than evidentiality and counterexpectation). As Su suggested, *shou* in the sentence final position is used to express the speaker's preference, or belief, towards the proposition. As in:

(13) 這 家 麵 包 店 的 西 點 很 好 吃 說

Zhe jia mianbao dian de xidian hen hao chi shuo

This CL bread shop DE cake very good taste PRT

'The cakes of this bakery are rather delicious (I'm telling you).'

The puzzle: where does the sentence final ‘say’ come from?

- Now, an interesting question about Cantonese (and other Sinitic) evidential and subjective markers that develop from ‘say’ verb is ***how they come to be in sentence final position.***
- We posited an utterance tag development for the sentence final ‘say’ verb in Cantonese and Taiwanese. This strategy involves a simple process whereby the say verbs such as *waa3* and *kong* appear after the complement clause, and are then reinterpreted as evidential (‘hearsay’) markers when its accompany subject NP (which overtly indexes the source of information) is elided. The elision of the subject NP would facilitate clause combining, leaving the evidential *say*, which then comes to gain a syntactic status similar to a sentence final particle.

Evolution of Cantonese *wo* (< *waa* 話)

- a. *keoi* **waa6** *nei mou lai*
'(S)he **said** you didn't come.'
佢**話**你冇。
- b. *keoi gong* **waa6** *nei mou lai*
'He **said**: you didn't come.'
佢講**話**你冇
- c. *keoi tenggong* **waa6** *nei mou lai*
'He heard **that** you didn't come.'
佢聽講**話**你冇
- d. *Keoidei* **waa6** *nei mou lai*
'**It's said** (< **people say**) you didn't come.'
佢哋**話**你冇
- e. *nei mou lai* (*keoi5dei6*) **waa6 o3**
'You didn't come, **so they say**.'
你冇 (佢哋)**話**哦
- f. *nei mou lai* **wo3** (>**wo5**)
'You didn't come(,) **so they say**.'
你冇 **嗰**(>嗰)
- g. *nei mou lai* **wo3**
'You didn't come(,) **I'm surprised to hear**.'
你冇 **嗰**

Evolution of Taiwanese *kòng* 講

- a) (*l lang*) ***kong*** *li bo lai*
these.people say 2SG NEG come
'It's said (< they say) you didn't come.'
- b) (*l lang*) *siunn* ***kong*** *li bo lai*
these.people thinkCOMP 2SG NEG come
'They thought **that** you didn't come.'
- c) *li bo lai*, (*i lang*) ***kong***
2SG NEG come these.people say
'You didn't come **it's said** (< they say).'
- d) *li bo lai*(,) ***kong***
2SG NEG come EVID
'You didn't come(,) **it's said**.'
- e) *li bo lai*(,) ***kong***
2SG NEG come CE
'You didn't come(,) **I'm surprised to hear**.'

Evolution of Mandarin *shuo* 說

- The development of *shuo* from a verb to a particle is still a puzzle. Su (2004) has proposed a possible pathway, but it doesn't seem to be strongly evident. Her suggestion is that the syntactic position of the complementizer *shuo* is quite flexible in the way that it may precede the subordinate clause, or it may be placed sentence finally. Consider again this example:

你堅持 說 這些 作品 平淡無奇。

Ni jianchi shuo zhexie zoupin ping-dan-wu-qi.

2SG insist COMP these works plain

'You insist that these works are plain.'

Thank you!

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