Subjectification and the Development of Special-Verb Existential/Presentative Constructions*

Hongyin Tao

University of California, Los Angeles

This paper deals with the historical development of a special type of existential/presentative construction in Chinese, i.e., existential constructions with an ‘empty’ verb (such as you 有 ‘have/exist’ and shi 是 ‘be’) as the main verb. In documenting the major changes that have taken place in this construction, I show that while some of the major existential constructions, such as the you-construction, have been present since the earliest stages of the history of the Chinese language, major grammaticalization processes have taken place, not in the form of changes in individual verbs per se, but rather in the range of verbs allowed over time in the construction: verbs of abundant quantity (duo 多 ‘be many’, rao 饒 ‘be abundant’, jie皆 ‘be all’) and verbs of vision (jian 见 ‘see’, and du 觸 ‘see’) are gradually introduced into this construction. I take this as evidence that the development of existentials in Chinese can be characterized as an increase in subjectification and that the unidirectionality principle of grammaticalization can be applied to constructions in addition to individual lexical items.

Key words: you ‘have’, existentials, presentatives, Chinese historical syntax, grammaticalization, subjectification

1. Introduction

The syntactic form that I shall discuss in this paper has been variably referred to by linguists of Chinese as cunxian ju 存現句 or existentials, which are said to express the existence of entities, and presentatives (Li & Thompson 1981:509), which are said to “perform the function of introducing into a discourse a noun phrase naming an entity.”

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In this paper the terms *existential* and *presentative* are used interchangeably.

As is known, presentative constructions in Chinese encompass a variety of syntactic forms, which can roughly be classified into two major categories: verbal and non-verbal (Chu et al. 1997, Fan 1963, Lei 1993, L. Li 1986, Nie 1989, Song 1982a, 1982b, 1988, 1991, Wang 2003, among others). The difference between verbal and non-verbal presentative constructions is that in verbal presentatives there is a main verb denoting the existential meaning (e.g., *Qiangshang you fu hua*, 墻上有幅畫 ‘There is a picture on the wall’), whereas in a non-verbal presentative construction, there is not (e.g., *Wuli san ge ren*, 屋裡三個人 ‘(There are) three people in the house’). The verbs in verbal presentatives can be classified further into two types: general action verbs (such as *zuo* ‘sit’ and *gua* ‘hang’) and ‘empty’ verbs (such as *you* 有 ‘have/exist’ and *shi* 是 ‘be’). Verbal presentative constructions involving a general action verb have been discussed fairly extensively in the literature, and they should not concern us here. The focus of this paper is rather on those presentative constructions which involve an empty verb such as *you* 有. I call such verbs *special verbs* and the associated existential/presentative constructions *special-verb existential/presentative constructions*.

More specifically, the goal of this paper is to document the major changes that have taken place in the special-verb presentatives in Chinese. My investigation shows that some of the major existential constructions, such as the *you*-construction, have been present since the earliest stages of the history of the Chinese language. What is more interesting, however, is the fact that within the special-verb existential constructions, some major grammaticalization processes have taken place, not in the form of changes in individual verbs per se, but rather in the range of verbs allowed in the existential construction. It also appears that the kinds of verbs allowed in the construction are not chosen randomly, but seem to follow a pattern of increased degree of subjectification, i.e. speaker involvement (Traugott 1982, Traugott & König 1991). The phenomenon I describe here can thus be considered to constitute a new pattern of grammaticalization.

The organization of the paper is as follows. First, I shall show briefly the variety of *you*-constructions in the history of Chinese and how they have been used as the most basic and neutral existential construction throughout the process. Then I show that, in contrast with *you*-constructions, and as existentials evolve, more special verbs are introduced into the existential construction, and they typically convey more than just the existential/presentative meaning. In general the other special verbs that I found typical of the presentative construction include the following: *duo* 多 ‘be many’, *rao* 饒 ‘be abundant’, *jie* 皆 ‘be all’, *jian* 見 ‘see’, and *du* 睇 ‘see’. Historical evidence suggests

1 For the current project I did not include the copula type in my discussion, as it seems to deserve a separate treatment.
that the addition of the existential verbs other than you took place in two different stages—the quantifying type (duo 多, rao 饒 and jie 皆) appeared in the Pre-Medieval period, and the vision type (jian 見 and du 睇) appeared in the Late Medieval period—and overall the observed developmental tendency in Chinese existentials can be characterized as an increase in subjectification over time. Finally, I conclude this paper by discussing the theoretical implications of the tendency described here for principles and mechanisms of syntactic change.

2. You (有) constructions

I begin with a profile of the semantically neutral existential structure: the you-constructon. Syntactic structures involving the use of the verb you ‘exist/have’ (negative forms: wang 亡, wu 无/無 ‘be nil’) are among the most basic and neutral existential constructions in Chinese. Here, as with many other languages, the verb of possession and the verb of existence share the same form. Our scrutiny of texts indicates that existentials containing you have been present throughout the history of the Chinese language.2 This does not mean, however, that the kind of syntactic forms in which you appears in early Chinese and Modern Chinese are the same; in fact a number of important changes have taken place in the you structure at different times. In this section I describe the various distinctive forms of the you-constructon, including the negative counterparts, wang and wu ‘be nil’. The major syntactic patterns where you appears include: you+NP, you+NP+VP, X+you+NP, NP+you__zhe, and you+VP. I now discuss each of these forms briefly.

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2 In my discussion I use Peyraube’s (1988) division for historical Chinese in describing the diachronic development of the presentative constructions. That is, the following stages of the history of the Chinese language are recognized:

(I) Archaic (XIV-III B.C.)
   (i) Pre-Archaic (XIV-XI B.C.)
   (ii) Early Archaic (XI-VI B.C.)
   (iii) Late Archaic (VI-III B.C.)

(II) Pre-Medieval or the Han Period (206 B.C.-220 A.D.)

(III) Medieval (III-1250)
   (i) Early Medieval (III-VI)
   (ii) Late Medieval (VI-1250)

(IV) Pre-Modern (1250-1400)

(V) Modern (XV-XVIII)

Although Chinese historical linguists may differ with respect to details of the division scheme (see Tai & Chan 1999 for a recent discussion of this issue), for my purpose this will be adequate.
2.1 You+NP

The earliest forms we find are simple you-constructions without any preverbal elements. This is to be dated back to the period of bone and bronze inscriptions (often written in the form of 你 (sometimes 又). Below are examples from the Pre-Archaic and the Late Archaic periods.3

3 Abbreviations of grammatical terms used in the glosses:
- (?): uncertain pronunciation
- ASSC: associative
- CLF: classifier
- CNJ: conjunction
- NEG: negative
- NOM: nominalizer
- PRF: perfective
- PRT: utterance final particle
- QUO: quotative
- 1SG/PL: first person singular/plural
- 2SG/PL: second person singular/plural
- 3SG/PL: third person singular
- 3:PRT: combination of a third person pronoun and a final particle

Texts surveyed in this paper and their versions used are listed below; (X) indicates the abbreviation used in the paper.

Pre-Archaic:
- 甲骨文合集，郭沫若等，北京：中華書局，1979-83。
- 小屯·殷墟文字甲編（甲編），董作賓。
- 小屯·殷墟文字乙編（乙編），董作賓。
- （簡周），劉翔等《簡周古文字讀本》，北京：語文出版社，1989。

Early Archaic:
- （金），選段見劉翔等《簡周古文字讀本》，北京：語文出版社，1989。
- 尚書（書），蔡沈注《書經》，上海：上海古籍出版社，1987。
- 詩經（詩），朱熹《詩集注》，上海：上海古籍出版社，1980。

Late Archaic:
- 論語，洪業等《論語引得》，上海：上海古籍出版社，1986。
- 左傳（左），洪業等《春秋經傳引得》，上海：上海古籍出版社，1983。
- 孟子（孟），洪業等《孟子引得》，上海：上海古籍出版社，1986。
- 荀子（荀），洪業等《荀子引得》，上海：上海古籍出版社，1988。
- 墨子（墨），洪業等《墨子引得》，上海：上海古籍出版社，1988。
- 韓非子（韓），《諸子集成》本，上海：上海書店，1986。
- 戰國策（戰國），張清常、王延棟《戰國策箋注》，天津：南開大學出版社，1993。

Pre-Medieval:
- 史記，王伯祥《史記選》，北京：人民文學出版社，1957。
- 又，《史記》，北京：中華書局，1959。
- 漢書，陳直、冉昭德《漢書選》，收入鄭天挺主編《中國史學名著選》，北京：中華書局，1962。

Early Medieval:
- 世說新語（世說），張永言主編《世說新語校釋》，成都：四川人民出版社，1992。
- 梁國記，郭朋等《梁國記注譯》，長春：長春出版社，1995。
- 蘭陽伽藍記（伽藍記），譚祥耀《蘭陽伽藍記校注》，上海：上海古籍出版社，1978。
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In this excerpt, the negative form of you, wang, is used without any preverbal element. Below are two examples of you from Shang Shu (尚書), which are used in a similar pattern.

(2) 日月之行則有冬有夏。 (書·洪範)
ri yue zhi xing ze you dong you xia
sun moon ASSC motion CNJ have winter have summer
‘The motion of the sun and the moon results in the seasons of winter and summer.’

Late Medieval:
敦煌變文 (變), 项楚《敦煌變文選注》, 成都:巴蜀書社, 1989。
入唐求法巡禮行記 (巡禮行記), 劉堅、蔣紹愚主編《近代漢語語法資料彙編‧唐五代卷》, 北京: 商務印書館, 1990。
祖堂集, 劉堅、蔣紹愚主編《近代漢語語法資料彙編‧唐五代卷》, 北京: 商務印書館, 1990。
祖堂集, 劉堅、蔣紹愚主編《近代漢語語法資料彙編‧唐五代卷》, 北京: 商務印書館, 1990。

Pre-Modern:
劉知遠諸宮調 (諸宮調), 劉堅、蔣紹愚主編《近代漢語語法資料彙編‧唐五代卷》, 北京: 商務印書館, 1992。
永樂大典戲文三種校注, 錢南揚《永樂大典戲文三種校注》, 北京: 中華書局, 1979。
古今小說, 蕭乾編校《古今小說》, 南京: 江蘇古籍出版社, 1991。
警世通言, 嚴敦易校注《警世通言》, 北京: 人民文學出版社, 1956。

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Beginning with *Lun Yu* (論語) and *Xun Zi* (荀子), or the Late Archaic period, the NP in the simple *you*+NP construction became quite complex:

(4) 子曰：“君子而不仁者有矣夫？
zi yue junzi er bu ren zhe you yi fu
Confucius say sage but not virtue NOM have PRT PRT
未有小人而仁者也！”（論語·憲問）
wei you xiaoren er renzhe ye
never have uncivilized:man but virtue PRT
‘Confucius said: “Is there any sage who is not a man of virtue? Never exist any uncivilized man who is virtuous.”’

(5) 有父子訟者,孔子拘之。（荀·宥坐）
you fu zi song zhe Kongzi ju zhi
exist father son suit NOM, Confucius arrest 3 PL
‘There was a case where a father and a son were engaged in a lawsuit. Confucius arrested them.’

In both examples, the NPs in the *you*+NP structure are not simple nouns, but a nominalization structure marked by the nominalizer *zhe* (者). At the same time, some NPs in the *you*+NP construction are found to become somewhat simple. Attenuated pronominal forms started to appear as the object of the verb *you*. Here are examples of the pronominals *zhu* 諸 and *zhi* 之 as the object of *you* from *Lun Yu* (論語), *Meng Zi* (孟子), and *Zhan Guo Ce* (戰國策):

(6) 定公問：“一言而可以興邦，有諸？”
Dinggong wen yi yan er ke yi xing bang you zhu
NAME ask one speech CNJ may use establish nation exist 3:PRT
…曰：“一言而喪邦，有諸？”（論語·子路）
yue yi yan er shang bang you zhu
say one utterance CNJ lose nation, exist 3:PRT
‘Duke of Ding asked: “I heard that one saying could be enough to make a nation prosper, and one saying could also destroy a nation. Is there such a thing?”’
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(7) 以 羊 易 之，不 識 有 諸？
yi yang yi zhi bu shi you zhu
use sheep change 3SG NEG know exist 3:PRT
曰： "有 之。"（孟・梁惠王上）
yue you zhi
say exist 3:PRT
‘Exchange it with a sheep. Did that ever happen? Menchius said: “Yes, it did.”’

(8) 客 見 趙 王 曰： "臣 聞 王 之 使 人 買 馬 也，
ke jian Zhao wang yue chen wen wang zhi shi ren mai ma ye
guest see NAME king say servant hear king NOM order man buy horse PRT
有 之 乎？” 王 曰： "有 之。"（戰國・趙四）
you zhi hu wang yue you zhi
exist 3SG PRT king say exist 3SG
‘The guest met with the King of Zhao and asked: “I have heard that you sent someone to buy horses. Is it true?” The King said: “Yes. it’s true.”’

These forms are typically used in a question-and-answer context, where the introduction of referent is not done by the existential itself but by a separate utterance preceding the you-construction. Thus in the last example above, there is an introduction sentence ‘I have heard that you sent someone to buy horses’ before the use of the existential ‘Does it exist/Is it true’. In modern Chinese, however, the postverbal anaphoric form tends not to be a simple pronoun, since the use of pronouns for third person referents is much more restricted now than in Classical Chinese.

‘You+NP’ can also be used as a vocative. This is found even in the bone inscriptions, as shown in (9).

(9) 王 見 曰： 有 稟。（甲骨文合集 5067）
wang zhan yue you sui
king divine say exist evil
‘The King made the divination, and proclaimed: “Evils!”’

In general all the you-constructions in the data can be said to be neutral in meaning, i.e., they are used simply to express the existence of an entity. However, as Z. Li (1994) points out, sometimes you is used to indicate the appearance of unusual entities. We believe that you in vocatives, as in (9), falls into this category. In the texts I examined, I find another vocative case in the Early Medieval text Shi Shuo Xin Yu (世說新語):

(10) 魏 武 少 時，嘗 與 貢 紹 好 爲 遊 俠，
Wei Wu shao shi chang yu Yuan Shao hao wei youxia
NAME young time once with NAME ike be knight-errant
When the King of Wei Wu was young, he enjoyed being a knight-errant with Yuan Shao. Once they secretly entered a garden to watch a private wedding. Then at night they shouted: “Thief!”

From the above, we can safely say that simple you+NP constructions appeared even in the Pre-Archaic period, and the semantics of the you-construction is mostly neutral.

### 2.2 You+NP+VP

An extended use of the you+NP construction is for the NP to take a complex predicate in the form of you+NP+VP, a construction previously termed presentative serial verb construction (Li & Thompson 1981). This kind of syntactic construction appeared first in the Early Archaic (Shang Shu 尚書) period and has been used throughout the history of Chinese. Here I give three examples from Shang Shu, Zuo Zhuan (左傳), and Shi Shuo Xin Yu respectively.

11. 我 有 大 事 休。（書·大誥）
   wo you da shi xiu
   1SG have grant undertaking magnificent
   ‘My undertaking is magnificent.’

12. 君 有 大臣 在 西南隅。（左·哀 16）
   jun you dachen zai xinan yu
   majesty have minister be:in west south corner
   ‘Your majesty has ministers in the southwest region.’

13. 謝奕 作 刻 令，有 一 老翁 犯法。（世說·德行）
   Xie Yi zuo Yan ling you yi laoweng fanfa
   NAME be NAME chief exist one old:man commit:crime
   ‘While Xie Yi was the chief of Yan, an old man committed a crime.’

As can be seen, the above examples represent several kinds of semantic relationship between the post-you NP and the VP. In (11) the VP xiu (休) expresses properties of the NP da shi (大事); in (12) the VP zai xinan yu (在西南隅) indicates the location of the NP dachen (大臣); and finally in (13) the VP fanfa (犯法) is the action of the NP laoweng (老翁).
It appears, then, that presentative serial verb constructions are found even in Early Archaic Chinese and it is still commonly used in modern Chinese (Li & Thompson 1981, Wang 2003).

2.3 X+\text{you}+\text{NP}

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, a typical existential construction usually has a preverbal element. This is the case for many \text{you}-constructions. The pre-verbal element (designated X here) is manifested in a variety of forms. First, a very common preverbal element is the temporal expression. We also find this kind of construction as early as the Pre-Archaic bone inscriptions.4

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example.png}
\caption{Example of a preverbal temporal expression.}
\end{figure}

Here the preverbal temporal expression is \textit{zi jin Xin zhiyu lai Xin} ‘from this Xin to the next’.

Another major type of preverbal element can be considered a topic expression, where the \text{you} structure is used both to express the existence of entities and to add further information about the preverbal topic element (Wang 2003). We found such examples mostly in \textit{Lun Yu}. Consider the following:

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example.png}
\caption{Example of a topic expression.}
\end{figure}

\begin{quote}
\begin{flushleft}
\textbf{子曰：}“\text{志士仁人，無求生以害仁，有殺身以成仁。” (論語‧衛靈公)}
\end{flushleft}
\end{quote}

‘Confucius said: “No ambitious and noble man will sacrifice virtue to live. He only sacrifices himself to attain virtue.”’

\footnote{This seems to suggest that the temporal structures appeared earlier than Wang (2003) admits.}
In this example, *zhishi renren* ‘ambitious and noble men’ can be considered the topic expression, and the *you* clause that follows functions to comment about it.

However, by far the most common type of preverbal element in existential *you*-constructions is a spatial or locative expression (Wang 2003). The spatial/locative expressions can be divided further into three major types: (i) those which comprise a direction/locative morpheme only, as the cases of *nan* 南 ‘south’ and *han* 漢 ‘Han River’ in the following example:

(16) 南 有 乔 木，不 可 休 思。
nan you qiao mu bu ke xiu si
‘In the south, there are arbor trees which cannot be rested upon.’

(ii) those which consist of regular nominal expressions naming places of various sorts:

(17) 野 有 死 麂，白 茅 包 之。
ye you si jun bai mao bao zhi
‘There are dead water deer in the field; wrap them with white congoggrass.’

(18) 周 易 有 之。
Zhou Yi you zhi
‘Zhou Yi has it.’

(19) 狗 畜 食 人 食 而 不 知 棄，
gou zhi shi ren shi er bu zhi jian
dog pig eat human food CNJ NEG know restrain
塗 有 饑 萬 而 不 知 發。
tu you er piao er bu zhi fa
road exist hungry body CNJ NEG know start
‘Dogs and pigs do not know restraint when they eat human food. (You) don’t even know that things need attention when there are dead bodies on the road.’
(20) **函谷有关兵守关。**（史記·項羽本紀）

\[ \text{Hangu guan you bing shou guan} \]
\[ \text{Name fort have soldier defend fort} \]
\[ \text{‘Fort Hangu has soldiers defending it.’} \]

Many of these uses in modern Chinese would require a locative marker (e.g. 周易有之 < 周易中有此, 塗有餓莩 < 路上有餓死的人).

(iii) Those which consist of a more complex spatial expression in the form of an NP plus a locative noun or a locative marker. The nominal expression is usually a noun naming a place, a mountain, a river, and so forth.\(^5\)

(21) **井上有关李。**（孟·滕文公下）

\[ \text{Jingshang you li} \]
\[ \text{well:up exist plum} \]
\[ \text{‘Plums are on the well.’} \]

(22) **長安東北有關神氣。**（史記·封禪書）

\[ \text{Chang'an dongbei you shen qi} \]
\[ \text{Name east:north exist god spirit} \]
\[ \text{‘In the northeast of Chang'an there is divine spirit.’} \]

(23) **言曰此牛腹中有关奇。**（史記·封禪書）

\[ \text{Yan yue ci niu fuzhong you qi} \]
\[ \text{say QUO this cow belly:in exist wonder} \]
\[ \text{‘It has been said that there is something extraordinary in this cow.’} \]

In these examples, we see the combinations of nouns with locative markers (井上, 腹中) and nouns with a locative noun (長安東北). In Medieval Chinese, it is found that these complex spatial expressions started to be more elaborate and were even extended to references of non-spatial domains, such as 人中, 生死之中, 我這裡:

(24) **時五百人中，有一人最上智慧。**（生經·卷一）

\[ \text{Shi wu bai ren zhong you yi ren zui shang zhihui} \]
\[ \text{then five hundred person:in exist one person most top intelligence} \]
\[ \text{‘Among these five hundred people, there is one who is most intelligent.’} \]

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\(^5\) According to Ch. Li (1992), locative nominals in Archaic Chinese are more semantically than syntactically motivated, i.e., their function was mainly to indicate an exact location rather than grammatical/morphological per se, as is the case in the later stages. The use of locative markers, in a much bleached sense, on regular nominals, seems to have increased substantially from Pre-Medieval texts (as in Shi Ji).
In summary, there are a variety of pre-verbal elements in the you presentative constructions. Again, except for some uses, e.g. you+third person pronoun, these forms are almost all preserved in present-day Chinese.

2.4 (NP)+you__zhe (者)

NP+you__zhe (者) was a widespread syntactic structure in Late Archaic Chinese. The structure involves two nominals: the initial NP and a nominalization structure marked by the morpheme zhe 者. These are linked by the special verb you. The main function of this structure is to introduce an entity into the discourse by anchoring it to a general NP at the beginning of the utterance. Typical examples are shown below.

(27) 葉公語孔子曰: “吾黨有直躬者,其父攘羊而子證之。” (論語・子路)
Ye Gong yu Kongzi yue wu dang you zhigong zhe qi fu rang yang er zi zheng zhi
NAME tell Confucius QUO 1 SG party exist blunt 3 SG father steal goat CNJ son report 3 SG
‘Ye Gong told Confucius: “There is a fellow countryman of mine who is very blunt. His father stole a goat and he reported it.”’

(28) 宋人言閉其苗之不長而揠之者,芒芒然歸。(孟・公孫丑上)
Song ren yu min qi miao zhi bu zhang er ya zhi zhe
NAME person exist hate 3 SG shoot ASSC NEG grow CNJ pull 3 SG NOM
mangmangran gui
bewilderedly return
‘There was a man in Song, who hated the fact that the shoots of his crop were not growing tall, so he pulled them up, then returned bewilderedly.’
In the first example, the general NP is *wudang* 吾黨 ‘countryman’, and the nominalization is *zhigongzhe* 直躬者 ‘an honest one’. The whole structure literally means: ‘Among my countrymen, there is one who is very honest’.

Sometimes there is no general NP preceding the *you*+nominalization combination,

(29) 王坐於堂上，有牽牛而過堂下者，
wang zuo yu tangshang you qian niu er guo tangxia zhe
king sit at court:up exist lead cow CNJ pass court:down NOM
王見之。(孟‧梁惠王上)
wang jian zhi
king see 3SG
‘While the King was at the court, he saw a man go by leading a cow.’

In this example, there is no general NP before *you*. The main function of the *you* structure is basically the same as those with a general NP, i.e., to introduce a referent into the discourse, but the referent introduced is either less specific, or does not need to be specified.

It appears that this device is most prolific in the Late Archaic period. Thereafter, only sporadic examples are found. Here is an example from *Shi Ji* (史記).

(30) 淮陰屠中少年有侮信者(史記‧淮陰侯列傳)
Huai Yin tuzhong shaonian you wu Xin zhe
NAME market:in young:man exist bully NAME NOM
‘There was a young fellow in the Huai Yin market who bullied Han Xin.’

There are also cases where the whole NP+*you* construction is used as a predicate, and not for referent introducing. For example,

(i) 卫懿公好鹤，鹤有乘轩者。(左·閔2)
Wei Yi gong hao he he you cheng xuan zhe
NAME duke favor crane crane exist ride carriage NOM
‘Since Duke Wei Yi likes cranes, there have been cranes that ride in the royal chariot.’

(ii) 至於趙之為趙，趙主之子孫侯者，其继有在者乎？（戰國·趙太后新用事）
zhiyu Zhao zhi wei Zhao Zhao zhu zhi zisun hou zhe
regard NAME ASSC govern NAME NAME king GEN offspring be:titled NOM
qi ji you zai zhe hu
3PL offspring exist present NOM PRT
‘With regard to Zhao’s ruling, among those Zhaos who were conferred titles, are their offsprings still alive now?’

These are, however, relatively rare in my data.
2.5 *You* taking a verbal structure

In all of the syntactic patterns we discussed above *you* takes a nominal element. It is also possible for *you* to take a verbal structure. Some appear with a negative morpheme *wu* 無 or *bu* 不,

(31) 無 有 作 好。（書，洪範）
wu you zuo hao
NEG exist fate good
‘None is has a good fate.’

(32) 臣 無 有 作 福 作 威。（書，洪範）
chen wu you zuo fu zuo wei
servant NEG exist do fortune do power
‘I did not abuse my power.’

Others stand without a negative morpheme,

(33) 降 年 有 永 有 不 永。（書，高宗肜日）
jiang nian you yong you bu yong
descending year exist lasting exist NEG lasting
‘In the future some may last long, some may not.’

(34) 有 能 一日用 其 力 於 仁 哉 乎？（論語，里仁）
you neng yi ri yong qi li yu ren yi hu
exist able one day use 3SG power at virtue PRT PRT
‘Is there anyone who can use his energy for one day in the pursuit of virtue?’

(35) 萬 民 多 有 勤 苦 滅 綏。（墨，兼愛）
wan min duo you qin ku dong sui
ten:thousand people many exist hard:work bitter cold hungry
‘There are thousands of people out there who work hard but are starving and dying.’

The *You*+VP structure occurs mainly in the Early Archaic period. This may be attributed to the fact that nominalization was not fully developed in Early Archaic Chinese. The lack of differentiation in form renders verbal and nominal expressions very similar to each other.

There is yet another type of *you*+VP structure. Consider the following examples.

(36) 有 告 陳桓子 曰。（左，昭10）
you gao Chen Huanzi yue
exist report NAME QUO
‘Someone reported to Chen Huanzi.’
In these examples there is no NP after *you*, nor is there a nominalizer *zhe* after the NP and before the final VP. According to Z. Li (1994:148), this kind of structure appears typically when the agent of the verb is not specifiable.

*You* taking a VP is not found after the Archaic period. We can speculate that this is perhaps due to the later proliferation of nominalization devices.7

3. Summary of the *you*-constructions

The previous sections have demonstrated that the *you*-construction, with variant forms, has been present since the very early stages of the Chinese language. With few exceptions, most of the syntactic forms associated with the existential verb *you* have continued to survive into modern Chinese. The semantics of the *you*-constructions are basically neutral, i.e., they typically express the existential or presentative meaning, only occasionally a sense of unusual appearance.

We now turn to the development of other forms of existentials which supplement the *you*-construction. Historical evidence indicates that the addition of special verbs other than *you* took place at two different stages, corresponding to two different classes of special verbs: the quantifying type, which appeared during the Pre-Medieval period, and the vision type, which appeared during the Late Medieval period. I now describe these two stages in the following two sections respectively.

4. The introduction of quantifying verbs: *duo*（多）, *rao*（饒）, and *jie*（皆）

Although *you* is undoubtedly the most commonly used verb throughout the history of Chinese, beginning in the Pre-Medieval period, we also see the introduction of other special verbs into the existential construction. The first group of special verbs that appeared after the Late Archaic (VI-III B.C.) period consists of those which express the

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7 In some southern Chinese dialects, such as Min, *you* as an experiential auxiliary has been widely noticed and seems spreading to spoken Mandarin (Cheng 1990). It is not clear whether there is any connection between the use of *you* here and the dialectal use. Whatever the connection may be, one difference is that, in the classical cases, *you* merely expresses existence or presentation, not experience.
quantity of objects. They differ from *you*-constructions in that they also convey the speaker’s subjective judgment regarding that quantity. These verbs include *duo* 多 ‘be many’, *rao* 饒 ‘be abundant’, and *jie* 皆 ‘be all’.

*Duo* is by far the most common verb in this category, which can be found in many Pre-Medieval texts such as *Shi Ji* (史記) and *Gu Shi* (古詩).

(38) 齊 地 多 變詐，不 習 於 禮義。 (史記·廣陵王策)

Qi di duo bianzha bu xi yu liyi
NAME place be:many cheating NEG learn at civilization
‘Qi is a place full of cheats, the people are not civilized.’

(39) 臨邛 中 多 富 人 (史記·司馬相如列傳)

Lingqiong zhong duo fu ren
NAME:in be:many rich person
‘There are many rich people in Linqiong.’

(40) 然 左右 多 竊 聽 者, 范雎 恐。(史記·范雎蔡澤列傳)

ran zuoyou duo qieting zhe Fan Ju kong
but left:right be:many eavesdrop NOM NAME fear
‘Since there were many people eavesdropping on both sides, Fan Ju was worried.’

(41) 內 無 良 將 而 外 多 敵 國。(史記·范雎蔡澤列傳)

nei wu liang jiang er wai duo di guo
inside be:nil good general CNJ outside be:many enemy state
‘There are not many able generals inside, but many enemy states outside.’

(42) 黯 對 曰∶ "陛 下 內 多 欲

An dui yue bixia nei duo yu
NAME answer QUO majesty inside be:many desire
er wai shi ren yi
CNJ outside apply humanity trust
‘Ji An replied: “Your majesty, you have many desires inside, yet you pretend outwardly to be humane and trustworthy.”’

(43) 項王 所 過 無 不 殘 滅 者，天 下 多 怨。(史記·項羽列傳)

Xiangwang suo guo wu bu canmie zhe tianxia duo yuan
NAME NOM pass NEG NEG kill PRT heaven:under be:many hatred
‘Chief Xiang killed wherever he went; people hated him very much.’

(44) 右 內 史 界部中 多 貴 人 政室， 難 治。(史記·汲鄭列傳)

you nei shi jiebuzhong duo guiren zongshi nan zhi
right inner history division:in be:many royal clan difficult govern
‘The Right Inner Imperial Archive Division is full of royal clansmen. It’s very difficult to govern.’
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(45) 愬 滿 履 萬 中 多 英 藁。 (樂府‧孤兒行)

chuangchuang li shuang zhong duo jili

‘Walking bleakly on the frost, where puncture vines abound.’

(46) 燕 趙 多 佳 人，美 者 颜 如 玉。 (古詩‧燕趙多佳人)

Yan Zhao duo jia ren mei zhe yan ru yu

NAME NAME be:many gorgeous person beautiful NOM face as jade

‘Yan and Zhao are full of gorgeous women, whose beauty is likened to jade.’

(47) 邊 城 多 健 少，

bian cheng duo jian shao

outer city be:many healthy young

內 舍 多 寡 妇。(漢魏‧陳琳‧飲馬長城窟行)

nei she duo gua fu

inner house be:many single woman

‘Too many young men are on the border outposts, while many single women are at home.’

(48) 京都 多 妖 女，京 洛 出 少年。(曹植‧名都篇)

jingdu duo yao nü jing Luo chu shaonian

capital be:many elegant woman capital NAME produce young:man

‘Metroplitan cities are full of elegant women; the capital Luoyang has many fine young men.’

(49) 高 台 多 悲 風，朝 日 照 北 林。(曹植‧雜詩其一)

gao tai duo bei feng zhao ri zhao bei lin

high platform be:many sorrowful wind morning sun cast north forest

‘The high platform is full of sorrowful winds when the morning sun shines on the north woods.’

(50) 從 此 山 南 三 里 行，到 一 山，

cong ci shan nan san li xing dao yi shan

from this mountain south three mile walk arrive one mountain

…此 山 棟木 茂盛，又 多 獅子、虎、狼，

ci shan zhenmu maosheng you duo shizi hu lang

this mountain hazel exuberant also be:many lion tiger wolf

不可 妄 行。(佛國記)

buke wang xing

NEG reckless pass

‘If you go about three miles from this mountain, there is another mountain, where hazels flourish and there are also many lions, tigers, and wolves. never pass there recklessly.’

(51) 別 有 淮 財，金 肆 二 里，富 人 在 焉。

bie you Zhun Cai Jin Si er li fu ren zai yan

additionaly exist NAME NAME two street rich people be:in there
凡此十里，多諸工商貨殖之民。（伽藍記‧卷四）

There are also these two streets called Zhun Cai and Jin Si, where many rich people reside. For about ten miles all sorts of business and trading people live in the area.

It is clear that the semantics of the verb *duo* is different from *you*, in that it has two components: “existence” and “abundance/many”. *Duo* is used instead of *you* when the speaker wishes to express his belief that the quantity is indeed great or abundant.

*Duo* is also found as an adverb quantifying *you*,

然門外多有長者車轍。（史記‧陳丞相世家）

‘But there are lots of wheel prints of senior people’s carriages.’

This shows that the semantics of *duo* is never merely “existence”. This usage is occasionally found in some Archaic texts:

萬民多有勤苦凍絪。（墨‧兼愛）

‘There are so many people out there who are hard at work but are starving and dying.’

But this is much more frequently seen in Medieval texts. Consider the following,8

沙河中多有惡鬼熱風。（佛國記）

‘The Sandy River has many devil ghosts and hot winds.’

城中多有抄賊，遇輒無全。（佛國記）

‘In the city there are many robbers. You are sure to die if you encounter them.’

8 An alternative structure is found in the following serial verb construction.

博山亦有諸羅漢坐禪石窟甚多。（佛國記）

‘Boshan also has a lot of grottoes depicting arahants sitting in meditation.’
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(56) 寺内部多有枳樹而不中食。（伽藍記·正始寺）
sinei duo you zhi shu er bu zhongshi
‘There are many trifoliate orange trees in the temple, but the fruit is inedible.’

Besides duo, there are other similar verbs, jie (皆) and rao (饒), but they are much less frequently used.

(57) 夜聞漢軍四面皆楚歌。（史記·項羽本紀）
ye wen Han jun simian jie Chu ge
‘At night the Chu army heard Chu regional songs on all sides of the camp.’

(58) 門戶階陛左右，皆王僚之親戚也。（史記·刺客列傳）
men hu jiebi zuyou jie Wang Liao zhi qinqi ye
‘All around were Wang Liao’s relatives.’

(59) 山中饒霜露，風氣亦先寒。（陶淵明·庚戌歲九月中於西田獲早稻）
shanzhong rao shuang lu
‘The mountains are filled with frost and dewdrops, the wind and the air are also cold.’

To summarize, then, the addition of such quantifying verbs in the Pre-Medieval period constitutes a new development in the history of special-verb existential constructions, as they not only add to the variety of verbs in the presentative construction, but also add more pragmatic nuances that are not available from you alone. Specifically, they express not just the existence of entities but also the speaker’s subjective judgment regarding the quantity.

5. The introduction of verbs of vision: jian (見) and du (睹)

Perhaps the most interesting grammatical change in the special verb existential construction is the admission of another class of special verbs, verbs of vision or verbs of seeing, into the structure. This process is found to take place during the Late Medieval period (VI-1250 A.D.). Verbs of seeing include verbs such as jian 見 ‘see’ and, occasionally, du 睇 ‘see’. Both were originally used to indicate what was seen by the protagonists in the story. Around the Late Medieval period, however, they seemed to
have grammaticalized into a way of introducing referents into the discourse. Consider the following:

(60) 台上 忽 见 一点 雲 起，
platform:up suddenly see one bit cloud rise
俄爾 之間，重 雲 遍 天。（巡禮行記‧卷三）
short:while between heavy cloud all sky
‘A tiny bit of cloud suddenly rose from the platform, then in a short time heavy clouds covered the sky.’

(61) 地上 見 金光 一道 分明，
ground:up see golden:light one CLF clear
認 是 一 個 小 蛇 兒 連 七 寸。（諸宮調）
recognize COP one CLF small snake long seven inch
‘There was a bright golden ray of light on the ground, which was a small snake about seven inches long.’

(62) 漸 觸 雲中 有一 僧 人， 年 約 十五。（取經詩話‧十六）
gradually see cloud:in exist one monk age about fifteen
‘Gradually a monk about fifteen years old appeared in the clouds.’

As can be seen from the above examples, jian- and du-constructions are used to introduce both human protagonists (xingzhe 行者, sengren 僧人 ‘monk’) and non-human protagonists (yun 雲 ‘cloud’, xiaoshe 小蛇 ‘small snake’), i.e., to indicate the presence of certain entities in the story.

The change of jian (and to some extent du) from a verb expressing visibility to a grammaticalized verb of presentation is supported by the following evidence.

First, jian can be substituted by you without significantly altering the meaning of the construction. Consider the following examples.

(63) 空中 只 見 天 花 墜:
air:in only see heaven flower cascade
雲裡 唯 間 龍 頭 煙。（編 詩話）
cloud:in only smell dragon:head smoke
‘There are flowers cascading from the heaven, and all one smells is dragon-head shaped smoke.’
(64) 不多時，見一個婦人問楊玉道，⋯(話本‧楊溫攔路虎傳)

bu duo shi jian yi ge funü wen Yang Yu dao
NEG long time see one CLF woman ask NAME QUO
‘Soon a woman asked Yang Yu’

(65) 青松影裡，依稀見寶殿巍峨。(話本‧楊溫攔路虎傳)

qingsong yingli yixi jian baodian wei’e
pine shadow:in dimly see palace lofty
‘In the shadow of pine trees, the lofty palaces are dimly seen.’

(66) 冒著雨又行了數十步，

mao zhe yu you xing le shu shi bu
brave DUR rain again walk PRF several ten step
見一個小小竹門樓。(小說‧一窟鬼)

jian yi ge xiao xiao zhu men lou
see one CLF small small bamboo door tower
‘Walking a little further in the rain, one finds another small bamboo tower with a door.’

Here, all the instances of jian can be substituted by you without much change in meaning.

Second, jian and you (or shi 是) are used as alternative existential verbs.

(67) 會中有八千菩薩，

huizhong you ba qian pusa
meeting:in exist eight thousand Bodhisattva
宴中見五百個聲聞。(變‧文殊問疾)

yanzhong jian wu bai ge shengwen
banquet:in see five hundred CLF Bodhisattva
‘There were eight thousand Bodhisattvas in the gathering, and five hundred at the banquet.’

(68) 從天井裡一跳跳將下去。兩邊是廊屋，

cong tianjingli yi tiao tiao jiangxiaqu liang bian shi langwu
from courtyard:in one jump jump downward two side COP side:room
去側首見一碗燈。(古今小說‧宋四公大鬧禁魂張)

qu ce shou jian yi wan deng
go side end see one CLF lamp
‘Jumping into the courtyard, (he) could see side rooms on the two sides, and there was a bowl lamp at the end of one side.’

This again indicates the similar functions that all three verbs perform in the texts.

Third, jian (and sometimes du) is followed by special verbs you or shi (ex. (61)), or an action verb which denotes existence of entities (ex. (64)): 
In such cases, one can infer that if the expression is truly vision-oriented, that is, if it is really being used to show what is being seen, then there is probably no need to use the “locative NP+you” structure which follows, since just jian or du plus the post-you NP would suffice for this purpose. In other words, we would expect that the following forms would suffice (# indicates that the construction is hypothetical):

1. # 見一具枯屍,長四十餘里。
   jian yi ju ku shi, chang sishi yu li
2. # 漸睹一僧人,年約十五。
   jian du yi sengren, nian yue shiwu

But these forms mean something different from what is expressed by the original texts.

Fourth, frequently, what follows jian cannot be a specific object, which would be needed to warrant the use of a truly vision-oriented verb. Also, the event involving jian often cannot be expressed as a single action of seeing, as the use of a vision-oriented jian or du would imply. Consider the following examples:

1. 又 見山中有一村寺，並無僧行。（取編詩話·五）
   you jian shanzhong you yi cun si be:nil monk
   ‘Again a village temple appeared in the mountains, but no monks were to be seen.’
2. 見崔寧開個碾玉鋪，
   jian Cui Ning kai ge nianyu pu
   ‘Cui Ning runs a jade shop, the woman behind the counter is Xiuxiu.’
In (71) it is not difficult to infer that the existence of the village temple and the absence of monks in the village cannot be detected by a single action of seeing, nor could it be possible for the state of Cui Ning’s running of the shop in (72). In other words, jian in these examples should not be understood as a real verb of vision.

Finally, in texts where jian is used there is usually no specific agent with which it can be associated, which suggests again that it is not truly a verb of vision:

(73) 當日茶市方罷，相是日中，
dang ri cha shi fang ba xiang shi rizhong
same day tea market just finish scence COP noon
只見一個官人入來。(話本‧簡貼和尚)
zhi jian yi ge guanren ru lai
then see one CLF official enter come
‘The same day at noon time, when the tea market had just closed, a government official entered the shop.’

Here in the story it is not specified, and also not necessary to specify, who the agent was that saw the appearance of the official.

Even though the evidence is, in my view, quite strong for my proposal of the grammaticization of jian, I do not intend to dispute the fact that some of the uses of jian (e.g. in ex. (68)) may still be viewed as action oriented, i.e. used for describing what the protagonist is actually seeing in the narrated event, rather than merely to introduce referents into the discourse. The vision interpretation of jian, however, does not really constitute a counterexample to my claim regarding the grammaticalization of jian, as I am arguing that as this morpheme transforms from a full-fledged verb of vision to a discourse device for referent introducing, it is bound to carry over its original propositional meanings during the process of grammaticalization. This kind of phenomenon is explainable in terms of one of Hopper’s principles of grammaticalization: persistence, which says that a grammaticalized morpheme is bound to be constrained by its original meaning, especially during the early stages of its grammaticalization process (Hopper 1991).

This construction was widely employed in the vernacular literature in the Modern era (Pan 1982:210). Below are examples from Jin Ping Mei (金瓶梅) and Hong Lou Meng (紅樓夢). In both cases jian is used to introduce characters into the story:

(74) 薛嫂請西門慶正面椅子上坐了，
Xue Sao qing Ximen Qing zhengmian yizishang zuo le
NAME invite NAME front chair:up sit PRF
Cross-linguistically, it can be shown that verbs of seeing which are grammaticalized
to construct presentatives/existentials are by no means rare. In English, for example,
verbs such as see and witness are commonly used to construct existentials.

(76) The end of 1997 could see at least one vendor reaching 5GB of capacity. (PC
Magazine Online, September 20, 1996)

(77) Instead of this the 1930’s witnessed a tragic economic depression, the rise of Fascist
dictators in Europe, … (The Brown Corpus)

6. Summary

Basic presentatives consisting of special verbs typically involve verbs such as you. At the same time, we saw two types of verbs, quantifying verbs and verbs of vision, being admitted, during the Pre-Medieval and Late Medieval periods respectively, to the existential construction. I discuss the theoretical implications of these changes next.

7. Discussion and conclusions

In the preceding discussion, I have shown that among the special verbs that constitute the existential construction, you has been no doubt the most basic and dominant one throughout the history of this construction, since its main function has been to convey a pure existential meaning (and occasionally that of “unusual appearance”) and its
associated syntactic forms are still widely used in Modern Chinese. Major changes have been realized through the introduction of two types of verbs, quantifying verbs (duo, jie, and rao) and verbs of vision/seeing (jian and du), into this construction.

The introduction of verbs other than you is significant in a number of ways. One fairly obvious feature to be noted is that by allowing more verbs into this construction the semantic scope of this construction has been enlarged. Thus not only the meaning of pure existence is seen in this construction, a variety of meanings have been added, namely ‘quantity’, ‘abundance’, and ‘appearance’.

The most important change to the verb itself, however, has been the grammaticalization of increased subjectification. The introduction of quantifying verbs (duo, jie and rao) can be seen to have added a subjective judgment and verbs of vision (jian and du) a point of view to this otherwise objective structure. These changes have important theoretical ramifications for both the unit of language change and the principle of unidirectionality of grammaticalization.

One of the most important insights of current grammaticalization theory is the proposal that grammaticalization proceeds in a unidirectional fashion: If grammatical changes happen to a lexical or a grammatical item, they usually take place from coding concrete and lexical meanings to coding more abstract and grammatical meanings, and not the other way around. In a series of influential papers, Traugott (1982) and Traugott & König (1991) point out that another manifestation of the principle of unidirectionality in grammaticalization processes is the change of a lexeme from non-subjectification (less speaker involvement) into subjectification (increased speaker involvement). Thus, in English, for example, while has changed from a pure temporal noun meaning ‘time, period’ in Old English to a concessive conjunction meaning ‘although’ in modern English, which entails higher speaker involvement. The unidirectional principle accounts well for the overall development in special-verb existentials in Chinese, as shown in the diagram below.

![Figure 1: Change as increased subjectification in special verb presentatives](image-url)

What is unique in our case, however, is the fact that changes did not happen in one lexeme, you, but rather by the addition of new lexemes, such as duo and jian, which encode judgment and perspective, hence the increased involvement of the speaker/writer. This suggests that the unidirectionality principle takes effect not only on single lexemes, as has previously been assumed, but also on a construction as a whole.
Based on the data we have examined, it may be suggested that when paradigmatic changes (Saussure 1955) occur, new lexemes attracted to the construction can be expected to show equal or higher speaker involvement than the extant ones. In fact, all the newer special verb forms in the presentatives discussed above are all higher in speaker involvement than the initial objective you. In the case of verbs duo and rao, they can be decomposed into “existence” and “abundance/many”; and jie can be “existence” and “all”. As can be inferred, all those quantifying verbs are dual-functional: they convey the meaning of existence while also expressing the speaker’s judgment. In the case of the verbs of vision, jian and du, their dual function is to express both ‘existence’/‘appearance’ as well as the intended visibility of the object.

To conclude, the history of Chinese special-verb presentatives exhibits two tendencies. On the one hand, the you-construction has been the dominant form throughout the process, and most of its associated syntactic forms are preserved up to the present day. On the other hand, as we have demonstrated, several other verbs have been admitted into the existential structure, resulting in increased complexity in the semantics and discourse pragmatics of the construction. The theoretical import of the latter pattern can be captured with an extended view of unidirectionality: that is, unidirectionality of grammaticization can be realized not just in individual lexemes, but also in constructions as a whole.

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本文探討漢語抽象動詞存現句的歷史發展。抽象動詞存現句指的是由“有”和“是”等構成的存現句式。考察發現，雖然“有”之類的格式自古以來就是佔主導地位的格式，其內部構成在歷史上出現過較大變化。最主要的变化是動詞類型的擴大，即從單純的存現動詞“有”擴大到表示數量大或全的“多”、“飽”、“皆”等以及表示視見活動的“見”和“睹”等。這些新增入的動詞在存現格式裡都有語法化的意義，它們除了表示存在的意義之外還增加了作者和說話人的主觀意願或視點。這個現象似乎說明，所謂語法化的從單純的語義內涵到主觀化的過程不單是單個詞語的問題，也是整個句子格式的問題。

關鍵詞：有，存現句，語法化，主觀化