

## Direct and Indirect Objects in Archaic Chinese: A Cognitive Linguistics Perspective<sup>\*</sup>

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This paper seeks to clarify the status of direct and indirect objects in Archaic Chinese from a cognitive linguistics perspective, and with this clarification, proposes that the transitive clause in Archaic Chinese could be further sub-divided into transitive-DO clause and transitive-IO clause, and that this distinction is syntactically viable and conceptually motivated. Finally, this paper aims to provide a preliminary solution to the alternation between “V+O” and “V+*yu*+O” structure in Archaic Chinese.

Key words: direct object, indirect object, transitivity, Archaic Chinese, Cognitive Grammar

### 1. Overview: grammatical relations in Archaic Chinese

The issue of grammatical relations has not received sufficient attention in the literature of Chinese historical syntax and as a result, many important questions have been left open. Moreover, the fact that different scholars have used terms like “direct object” and “indirect object” in their descriptions of linguistic phenomena in Archaic Chinese without providing an explicit definition has certainly complicated matters here. This paper hopes to offer an account of grammatical relations in Archaic Chinese from the cognitive linguistics perspective with an aim to first differentiate the postverbal nominal in the following examples:

- (1) 周 人 殺 萇 弘 (*Zuozhuan: Ai.3*)  
zhōu rén shā cháng hóng  
Zhou people kill Chang Hong  
'The people of Zhou killed Chang Hong.'

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<sup>\*</sup> I am very grateful to and would wish to thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful suggestions and comments. All errors are certainly mine.

- (2) (蒙 恬) 竟 斬 陽 周 (*Shiji: Xiangyu benji*)  
Méng Tián jìng zhǎn yáng zhōu  
(Meng Tian) eventually kill Yang Zhou  
'Eventually, Meng Tian was killed at Yang Zhou.'
- (3) 晉 居 深 山 (*Zuozhuan: Zhao.15*)  
jìn jū shēn shān  
Jin reside deep mountain  
'Jin resided in the deep mountain.'
- (4) 居 于 曠 林 (*Zuozhuan: Zhao.1*)  
jū yú kuàng lín  
reside LOC spacious forest  
'Reside in the spacious forest.'

In examples (1) to (3), an immediate nominal follows the main verb and these examples elaborate the following structural configuration:

Verb+NP

The crucial problem is whether this postverbal nominal should be analyzed as a direct object across all the three examples. Furthermore, if the postverbal nominal in example (3) is a direct object, then the status of that in example (4) must be clarified.

This paper seeks to clarify the status of direct and indirect objects in Archaic Chinese, and with this clarification, proposes that the transitive clause in Archaic Chinese could be further sub-divided into transitive-DO clause and transitive-IO clause, and that this distinction is syntactically viable and conceptually motivated. Finally, this paper aims to provide a preliminary solution to the alternation between “V+O” and “V+yu+O” structure in Archaic Chinese as demonstrated by examples (3) and (4).

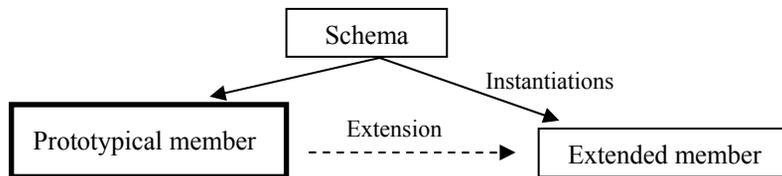
## 2. Direct object and indirect object

The difficulty in coming up with a characterization of “object” is not a recent issue in the field of Chinese historical syntax. A number of authoritative reference texts on Chinese historical syntax, such as Wang (1980, 1989), Pan (1982), Yang & He (1992), Sun (1992), and Xiang (1998) have relied on the concept of “object” in their descriptions of grammatical phenomena in various stages of the Chinese language, but few have defined them in an adequate, explicit, and revealing way.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is especially so since we have encountered enormous difficulties in making a judgment about whether an immediate postverbal nominal should be analyzed as complement or adjunct

As pointed out by Croft (1991, 2001) and Dixon (2005), there is a semantic principle determining the correspondence between semantic role and grammatical function. Hence, it is particularly helpful to explore grammatical relations in Archaic Chinese from the perspective offered by cognitive linguistics. Langacker (1987, 1991a) enriches our understanding of grammatical relations by proposing that subjects and objects both represent a universal category whose semantic characterization includes both a prototype and a highly abstract schema. This categorization of grammatical relations operates at two different levels, i.e. categorization by schema and categorization by prototype. Their intricate relationships for a category are sketched in Fig. 1:



**Figure 1**

Schematically, the subject and direct object are *focal participants*: the subject is described as the *most prominent clausal participant*, and the direct object as the *second-most prominent participant*. As to why subjects and direct objects should align themselves in this fashion, Langacker notes that a prototypical subject is highly ranked with respect to each of four topicality factors, i.e. semantic role, empathy, definiteness, and figure/ground organization. It is impossible for us to go into the intricate details here, but we can try and understand how this definition works by just looking at the first factor, i.e. topicality, and look at the relation between semantic roles and lexical-syntactic projection.<sup>2</sup> To define grammatical relations at the level of prototype, Langacker claims that a prototypical subject is both an agent and the primary clausal topic, and a prototypical object is both a patient and the secondary clausal topic. He argues:

We can rank the topicality factors by their degree of objectivity, in the sense of being intrinsic to the event described (not just a matter of how it is

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of the verb. For instance, in the example *ju yong dong* 居甬東, some have analyzed *yong dong* 甬東 as a syntactic object, while some have used the traditional term of *buyu* 補語 to argue that it is an adjunct of the verb.

<sup>2</sup> Do note that we have restricted our discussions to unmarked coding due to a lack of space and shall therefore refer readers to Langacker (1987, 1991a, 1991b, 1999) for a more detailed and comprehensive analysis of marked coding. An example of marked coding is the passive voice. In this case, the patient of a transitive clause is projected onto the syntactic subject.

construed). The most objective factor is an entity’s semantic role, i.e. the nature of its participation in the event. Prototypically, the subject is an agent and hence the starting point with respect to energy flow along the action chain. If the profiled relationship includes a participant whose role is clearly agentive, its choice as subject represents the default-case option; choosing any other participant (as in a passive) requires special motivation and falls under the rubric of marked coding.

It is therefore clear that in an event of KILL which involves an agent (i.e. the person who do the killing) and a patient (i.e. the person who gets killed), the agent and patient would be selected as subject and direct object respectively in unmarked coding based on the nature of their participation in the event. It is therefore established that the direct object in Archaic Chinese is identified structurally by its immediate postverbal position as shown by example (1) reproduced below as example (5):

- (5) 周 人 殺 萇 弘 (Zuozhuan: Ai.3)  
 zhōu rén shā cháng hóng  
 Zhou people kill Chang Hong  
 ‘The people of Zhou killed Chang Hong.’

This is an unmarked coding of the KILL event and the person by the name *Chang Hong* 萇弘 who was killed is selected as the direct object of the clause. A schematic representation of this event is sketched in Fig. 2:

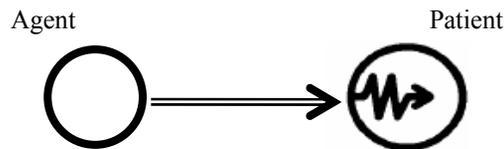


Figure 2

When an event has both a volitional, responsible, controlling agent and a clearly and fully affected patient, it is not difficult to make prediction about the lexical-syntactic projection in an unmarked coding; but not every transitive clause is prototypical. When the structure of event deviates from that in Fig. 2 as represented in Fig. 3, for instance in an event where an experiencer establishes mental contact with the stimulus, this event can also be construed as a transitive event and thus be coded as a transitive clause with the experiencer and the stimulus being mapped onto subject and direct object respectively. As Langacker (1990:223) has said, in either instance, “we can speak of an *asymmetrical*

interaction that is in some sense *initiated* by the agent or experiencer.”

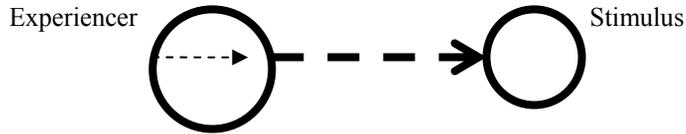


Figure 3

A good example which instantiates this event in Archaic Chinese is:

- (6) 趙 鞅 殺 士 皋 夷，惡 范 氏 也 (Zuozhuan: Ai.3)  
 zhào yāng shā shì gāo yí wù fàn shì yě  
 Zhao Yang kill Shi Gao Yi dislike Fan clan PART  
 ‘Zhao Yang killed Shi Gao Yi, as he hated the Fan clan.’

The verb *wu* 惡 ‘dislike’ is a mental verb and the experiencer in this example is conceived as mentally “reaching out and touching” the other participant, thus even though there is no transmission of energy to this participant, the downstream participant can also be projected onto the direct object based on construal.<sup>3</sup> Based on this brief discussion, categorizing relationships within the category of syntactic object is sketched in Fig. 4:

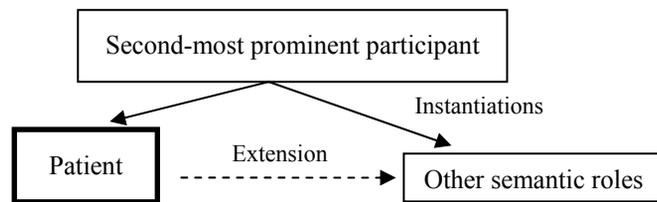


Figure 4

Although direct objects in Archaic Chinese must occupy the immediate postverbal position,<sup>4</sup> the inverse is definitely not true. In other words, not all nominals that occur in the immediate postverbal position are direct objects, as demonstrated in examples (7) and (8):

<sup>3</sup> It must be pointed out that non-prototypical transitive events such as a mental event can receive alternative coding. For instance, the two participant roles of the verb *wu* 惡 can also be projected onto indirect object. A good example is *wei hou shi wu yu gong sun xu* 衛侯始惡於公叔戌 ‘The duke of Wei began to dislike Gong Sun Xu’ (Zuozhuan).

<sup>4</sup> This statement is not valid for pronouns as they can be dislocated from their canonical syntactic position.

- (7) 與 韓、趙 戰 澮 北 (*Zhanguoce: Wei.1*)  
 yǔ hán zhào zhàn kuài běi  
 COM Han Zhao fight Kuai Bei  
 ‘Have a war with Han and Zhao at Kuai Bei.’
- (8) (蒙 恬) 竟 斬 陽 周 (*Shiji: Xiangyu benji*)  
 Méng Tián jìng zhǎn yáng zhōu  
 (Meng Tian) eventually kill Yang Zhou  
 ‘Eventually, Meng Tian was killed at Yang Zhou.’

The reason is not that these postverbal nominals denote place names, for identical nominals are treated as direct objects in examples (9) and (10):

- (9) 重 耳 居 蒲 城 (*Zuozhuan: Zhuang.28*)  
 chóng ěr jū pú chéng  
 Chong Er reside Pu city  
 ‘Chong Er resided in the City of Pu.’
- (10) 襄 公 適 楚 矣 (*Zuozhuan: Zhao.7*)  
 xiāng gōng shì chǔ yǐ  
 Xiang duke go Chu PART  
 ‘Xiang duke went to Chu.’

It might appear confusing but this proposal is justifiable since grammatical relations are defined based on force-dynamic relationships among participants of an event denoted by the specific verb. According to Croft (1994), a verb represents a self-contained event, and each and every verb would evoke a certain conceptual base for its semantic characterization. Within this base, the number of participants required to characterize the semantics of this verb is stated. Thus the verb *sha* 殺 ‘kill’ in example (5) would evoke the following semantic structure (or profile on the conceptual base):

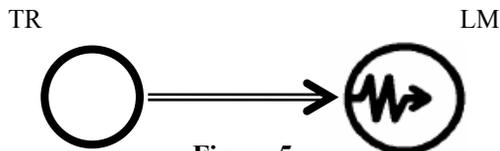


Figure 5

And the verb *ju* 居 ‘reside’ in example (9) would evoke a similar profiled conceptual base as follows:

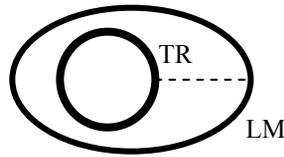


Figure 6

This verb also involves two participants for its own semantic characterization, and the primary reason that makes this static event be coded as a transitive clause is due to construal, which represents an instance of extensions from the prototypical transitive clause. But the most important observation here is that in both Figs. 5 and 6, the landmark which is coded as direct object is salient to the semantic characterization of the verb in question. Based on this understanding, the immediate postverbal nominals in examples (7) and (8) are ruled out as direct objects, even though they occupy an identical position as any direct object in the surface structure. These postverbal nominals are settings, and not participants, for the event denoted by the verb (cf. Langacker 1990: 230-237). This fundamental distinction between setting and participant is comparable to the distinction between arguments and adjuncts. Croft (2001:272) has some highly illuminating comments about the argument-adjunct distinction. Using the example *Randy chased the dog in the park*, Croft points out that the argument-adjunct distinction is gradient:

Chasing is a localizable activity: chasing takes place in a location, as well as involving a chaser and a thing being chased. This is not true for all predicates; one cannot say for instance that *\*Randy was widowed in the park* or *\*Randy inherited a million dollars in the park*. Hence the location of the chasing event is a substructure of the semantic structure of *chase*, and *in the park* elaborates that substructure of *chase*. ...

However, the substructure of *chase* elaborated by *in the park* is much less salient in the characterization of the chasing event than the substructures of *chase* elaborated by *Randy* and the *dog*.

In conclusion, Croft (2001:280) has this to say:

In other words, under scrutiny, arguments and adjuncts as global syntactic roles evaporate. In their place, however, there is a general and powerful gradient concept of semantic valence developed by Langacker, and an equally general and important classification of symbolic relations in constructions in terms of the syntactic instantiation of the semantic components in a construction.

Coming back to example (8), it is therefore clear that although the location is also a substructure of the killing event, it is much less salient than that elaborated by the agent and the patient. Based on this discussion, the location elaborated by *Yang Zhou* 陽周 is therefore not analyzed as a direct object; instead, it is considered to be an adjunct. Hence, for the structural configuration “V+NP”, only central clausal participants that elaborate the substructure of a verb will be considered to be direct objects in Archaic Chinese.<sup>5</sup>

Previously, it has been suggested that when two clausal participants elaborate the substructure of a verb, the landmark is projected onto direct object in unmarked coding. This is true to a great extent but it is not the complete picture. There has been a misguided notion about lexical-syntactic projection which claims that central clausal participants that lie downstream will always be projected onto direct object. This is definitely not true as some of these participants can also be projected onto indirect objects as shown in the example (11):

- (11) 鄭伯由是始惡於王 (*Zuozhuan: Zhuang.21*)  
 zhèng bó yóu shì shǐ wù yú wáng  
 Zheng earl because DEM begin dislike DAT king  
 ‘Because of this, the earl of Zheng began to dislike the king.’

Compare this example with example (6), reproduced here as example (12):<sup>6</sup>

- (12) 趙鞅殺士皋夷，惡范氏也 (*Zuozhuan: Ai.3*)  
 zhào yāng shā shì gāo yí wù fàn shì yě  
 Zhao Yang kill Shi Gao Yi dislike Fan clan PART  
 ‘Zhao Yang killed Shi Gao Yi, as he hated the Fan clan.’

Based on what has been discussed so far, it is concluded that only central clausal participants that elaborate the substructure of a verb can be considered to be syntactic objects. Syntactic objects can be further subcategorized as direct and indirect objects, and although both objects occur postverbally, only indirect object is marked by the preposition *yu*. This is supported by Langacker’s conception about indirect objects as “verbal complements that are object-like in some respects yet grammatically distinct

<sup>5</sup> We do not wish to make the claim that setting cannot be coded as direct object, as *can guan* 餐館 ‘restaurant’ in *chi can guan* 吃餐館 ‘eat at a restaurant’ is projected onto direct object in Mandarin. This is a complicated issue which we are unable to address adequately here. Please refer to Tao (2000) and R. Zhang (2002) for their discussions.

<sup>6</sup> As for why the verb can occur in both direct and indirect object constructions, please refer to §3 of this paper.

from direct objects” (Langacker 1991a:324). Just as we have cautioned concerning direct objects, it is also equally important to take note that not all prepositional objects marked by *yu* immediately qualify as indirect objects. The keyword here is still saliency. The postverbal nominals in examples (13) and (14), though marked by the preposition *yu*, are not indirect objects since they do not elaborate the salient substructure of the verb, and are settings, not core participants.

- (13) 丁 未， 戰 于 宋 (*Zuozhuan: Huan.12*)  
 dīng wèi zhàn yú sòng  
 Ding Wei fight LOC Song  
 ‘On the day of Ding Wei, there is a fight at Song.’
- (14) 哭 於 大 門 之 外 (*Zuozhuan: Cheng.2*)  
 kū yú dà mén zhī wài  
 cry LOC big door GEN outside  
 ‘Cry outside the main entrance.’

The distinction between direct and indirect objects is conceptually motivated, as observed from the examples below:<sup>7</sup>

- (15) a. 獲 叔 子 與 析 朱 鉏， 獻 於 王 (*Zuozhuan: Ai.8*)  
 huò shú zǐ yǔ xī zhū chú xiàn yú wáng  
 catch Shu Zi COM Xi Zhu Chu offer DAT king  
 ‘After Shu Zi and Xi Zhu Chu were captured and offered to the king...’
- b. 獻 馬 於 季 孫 (*Zuozhuan: Ai.6*)  
 xiàn mǎ yú jì sūn  
 offer horse DAT Ji Sun  
 ‘Offer some horses to Ji Sun.’
- c. \*獻 於 馬 於 季 孫  
 xiàn yú mǎ yú jì sūn  
 offer DAT horse DAT Ji Sun

Altogether, three participants are required for the semantic characterization of the verb *xian* 獻 ‘offer’, but only the role of RECIPIENT can be mapped onto indirect object. Moreover, a strict contrast in linguistic coding is also observed between the two semantic roles of THING and RECIPIENT: only the former can occur immediately after the verb

<sup>7</sup> Concerning the question of why there is sometimes a morpheme *yu* between a verb and its object, scholars have generally adopted a rhythmic thesis. This is not tenable as is evident from the discussion below.

as direct object, and only the latter is projected onto indirect object and must always be introduced to the main verb by the preposition *yu*.<sup>8</sup> This reveals that there is conceptual import to the characterization of indirect object. Although both direct and indirect objects encode the landmark of the event denoted by the verb, only those landmarks not affected by the transmission of energy from the upstream source can it be selected for coding by indirect object. By affectedness, we refer to a change in physical location or a change in physical state. Thus, this accounts in a straightforward manner why only the role of recipient in a giving event is coded as indirect object. The difference in conceptualization between direct and indirect objects can be best illustrated by the following two figures. Fig. 7 demonstrates a highly transitive event where the landmark undergoes some change of state, as denoted by the arrow within the circle. This landmark is therefore mapped onto direct object as shown in example (16), which is reproduced from example (5).

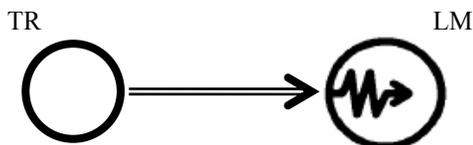


Figure 7

- (16) 周 人 殺 萇 弘 (*Zuozhuan: Ai.3*)  
 zhōu rén shā cháng hóng  
 Zhou people kill Chang Hong  
 ‘The people of Zhou killed Chang Hong.’

Fig. 8 represents a trajector establishing a sensory contact with the landmark schematically:

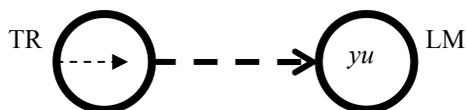


Figure 8

An example that elaborates the above profiled relationship is:

<sup>8</sup> Another good example is the verb *wen* 問 ‘ask’ which will be discussed in greater details in §3.

- (17) 仲 見 于 齊 侯 (*Zuozhuan: Wen.18*)  
 zhòng jiàn yú qí hóu  
 Zhong see DAT Qi duke  
 ‘Zhong saw the duke of Qi.’

Since a sensory experience does not cause a change of physical state or change of physical location in the landmark, the landmark in this event is coded as indirect object.

Moreover, the proposal to analyze the immediate postverbal object as direct object and the *yu*-marked object as indirect object can also be supported by distribution of the pronoun *zhi* 之. This pronoun has been called a “generalized object marker” by Reynolds (1996). According to Reynolds (1996:49-50),

Another strong test for verbs in Classical Chinese is the use of the particle 之 *tjeg*. If this particle is sentence final, the word preceding it is always functioning as a transitive verb. It may therefore be treated as a generalized object marker.

The notion “generalized object marker” might still be too vague since syntactic objects can be further divided into direct and indirect objects. Reynolds appears to have some impression about this fact since he comments that:

As a general test for verbs, however, we believe that *tjeg* is less than complete. The main reason is that it does not appear with intransitive verbs. (Reynolds 1996:50)

It is possible that he is actually referring to the empirical observation that the pronoun *zhi* 之 cannot occur after the preposition *yu*. This is indeed an important characteristic of the pronoun. It can easily occupy the direct object position in transitive clauses in examples such as:

- (18) 鄭 人 惡 而 殺 之 (*Zuozhuan: Ai.5*)  
 zhèng rén wù ér shā zhī  
 Zheng people dislike and kill 3:SG  
 ‘The people of Zheng disliked and killed him.’
- (19) 以 戈 擊 之 (*Zuozhuan: Xiang.18*)  
 yǐ gē jí zhī  
 INST dagger-axe hit 3:SG  
 ‘Hit him with a dagger-axe.’

But no instance has been found to show that the pronoun *zhi* 之 can be introduced to the main verb by the preposition *yu*, which is incidentally also the grammatical marker for indirect object. Thus, it cannot occur in the indirect object position.

### 3. Indirect object construction in Archaic Chinese

It is a pity that indirect object construction has not been accorded apposite attention in the literature. A cursory look at how indirect object is analyzed in the literature will reveal why this is so. Pulleyblank (1995:31-32) analyzes the grammatical relation of indirect object in the following manner:

Verbs of giving, telling, teaching, and the like take two objects. The first, usually personal, corresponds to the indirect object in English and the second corresponds to the direct object.

68. ... néng yǔ rén guī jǔ 能與人規矩  
... can give a man a compass or a square ... (*Mêng* 7B/5)

.....

In English one can, in general, replace an indirect object by a prepositional phrase introduced by ‘to’ — ‘to give a house to Mencius,’ etc. In Chinese it is more usual to replace the direct object by a phrase introduced by *yǐ* ‘with, by means of.’ Compare this with English ‘to present someone with something.’

.....

It is also possible with some of these verbs to replace the indirect object by a locative phrase introduced by *yú* 於.

74. ... bú gào yú Wáng 不告於王  
... without reporting it to the king ... (*Mêng* 2B/8)

Based on the above analysis, it is unquestionable that Pulleyblank does not consider *wang* 王 in the clause *bu gao yu wang* 不告於王 as an indirect object. He clearly reserves the term “indirect object” only for the semantic role of RECIPIENT in a double-object construction. By so doing, Pulleyblank has unknowingly restricted the grammatical relation of indirect object only to the semantic role of RECIPIENT.<sup>9</sup> Peyraube (1986, 1987, 1988) also adopts a restrictive definition of indirect object by representing the three dative constructions in Archaic Chinese as:

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<sup>9</sup> This paper differs by claiming that the indirect object in Archaic Chinese is a radial category and its prototypical member is the semantic role of RECIPIENT.

Verb + Indirect Object(IO) + Direct Object(DO)  
 V + Direct Object(DO) + *yu* + Indirect Object(IO)  
*yi* + Direct Object(DO) + Verb + Indirect Object(IO)

This exceptionally restrictive definition for indirect object is also questionable. The immediate ramification that the aforementioned analyses have on the study of Chinese historical syntax is enormous. In a way, the grammatical relation of indirect object has been consigned to obscurity in the field of Chinese historical syntax. As a result, the literature has failed to observe that apart from transitive and intransitive clauses, there is another type of clause in Archaic Chinese that is neither transitive nor intransitive in the traditional sense. Previously, clauses in Archaic Chinese are only classified as transitive or intransitive, but based on earlier discussion, it is hereby suggested that there should be three—not two—types of clausal structures in Archaic Chinese.<sup>10</sup> These three clausal structures are:<sup>11</sup>

- Transitive clause: S+V+O
- Indirect object construction: S+V+*yu*+O
- Intransitive clause: S+V

In the literature, the absence of indirect object structure has caused a large group of examples which elaborate the same syntactic structure “S+V+*yu*+O” to be artificially and erroneously divided and separated into two different clause types (see Li 2003a: 195-214). At times, some have even covertly suggested that “S+V+*yu*+O” is actually “S+V+O” since it is a mistake to have the grammatical morpheme *yu* inserted between the verb and the syntactic object (Yang 1985). Chen (2000) disagrees but instead proposes that the *yu* inserted between the verb and the direct object is an auxiliary word which carries no semantic content. The main function of this auxiliary word is rhythmic. According to this line of reasoning, this preposition is meaningless, and is therefore optional and dispensable. The grammatical morpheme *yu* has not received an appropriate analysis in the literature and the main reason is simply because previous analyses have explored the meaning of *yu* solely from an objective semantics perspective. It is therefore clear that without an understanding about the schematic meaning of *yu* from a cognitive perspective, much progress cannot be made to establish a third clausal structure in

<sup>10</sup> For simplicity’s sake, this paper has not taken copula clause as mentioned in Dixon (2005) into consideration.

<sup>11</sup> This observation reminds us that the classification of verbs into the categories of transitive and intransitive verbs in Archaic Chinese is based on a misguided theoretical assumption grounded in the structuralist research paradigm.

Archaic Chinese. In view of this, it will be argued that the grammatical morpheme *yu* can be ascribed a schematic semantic value that motivates its grammatical distribution. First, consideration must be given to the contrast between the following pair of examples:

- (20) a. 齊人殺無知 (*Zuozhuan: Zhuang.9*)  
 qí rén shā wú zhī  
 Qi people kill Wu Zhi  
 ‘The people of Qi killed Wu Zhi.’
- b. 楚人囚之，以獻於秦 (*Zuozhuan: Xiang.26*)  
 chǔ rén qiú zhī yǐ xiàn yú qín  
 Chu people imprison 3:SG PURP offer DAT king  
 ‘The people of Chu imprisoned him in order to offer him to the king.’

Many studies have ignored the fact that there is a syntactic contrast (hence a semantic contrast) here. This is not an overstatement since, if this contrast had been dutifully recognized, many would have realized that example (20b) cannot be simply categorized as an intransitive or a transitive clause, and a third clausal type must be advanced. Instead, many have maintained the assumption that *yu* is not meaningful and can be easily omitted from the surface structure without any loss in grammatical meaning. They have conveniently pointed toward the alternation between a direct object and a prepositional object marked by *yu* after the same verb to justify this assumption. Examples illustrating such an alternation are:

- (21) a. 君告於天子 (*Zuozhuan: Ai.23*)  
 jūn gào yú tiān zǐ  
 ruler tell DAT heaven son  
 ‘The ruler told the Emperor that ....’
- b. 范宣子告析文子曰 (*Zuozhuan: Xiang.18*)  
 fàn xuān zǐ gào xī wén zǐ yuē  
 Fan Xuan Zi tell Xi Wen Zi say  
 ‘Fan Xuan Zi tell Xi Wen Zi that ....’

This is not a viable solution as it fails to take note that the verb *xian* 獻 ‘offer’ cannot have the *yu* omitted when the prepositional object denotes the semantic role of recipient. Thus, the syntactic contrast in the examples (20a) and (20b) cannot be eliminated easily:

*sha wu zhi* 殺無知 ‘kill Wu Zhi’ vs. *xian yu qin* 獻於秦 ‘offer to Qin’  
**Verb+Obj vs. Verb+yu+Obj**

The tradition of treating *yu* as a semantically empty element also fails to offer a convincing account as to why THING in a GIVE event is always barred from projecting onto the prepositional object, given that *yu* is supposed to be meaningless in the first place. Moreover, it also fails to explain why we seldom find *yu* being inserted between the verb and its direct object in a transitive sentence, if this morpheme has been said to make no contribution to the overall semantics.

From a cross-linguistics perspective, one important observation must be made. It has been observed that *yu* evolved from an allative marker to a dative marker (Yan 2003); and as pointed out by Harris & Campbell (1995) and Dixon (2005), what is done by morphology in one language may be achieved through syntax in another. Hence, by taking particular attention to how the morphological marker for recipient is used among languages without attested genetic or contact relationships, a partial resolution to the above predicament faced would be possible. It is based on this understanding that the dative marker *yu* in Archaic Chinese is compared with the dative case in languages equipped with morphological inflections. Questions will probably be raised as to whether such a comparison is justifiable. Our answer is affirmative for the simple reason that the dative marker *yu* in Archaic Chinese and the dative case in other languages share one essential characteristic, i.e. the marking of recipient in a giving event. Thus, the contrast between *sha Wu Zhi* 殺無知 ‘kill Wu Zhi’ vs. *xian yu Qin* 獻於秦 ‘offer to Qin’ is comparable to the contrast between accusative case and dative case in languages with morphological inflections.<sup>12</sup> Based on an extensive study which examines the contrast between accusative and dative morphological cases in modern German by Smith (1987), Langacker (1991a:399-400) proposes the following general theory from the Cognitive Grammar (hereafter CG) perspective:

Accusative case can thus be considered meaningful to the same extent, and in the same way, as the direct object relation itself. ... Prototypically, therefore, ACC marks a thematic participant (with the status of secondary figure) that lies downstream from a participant subject (primary figure) in regard to the flow of energy, along an action chain. ... dative case will almost certainly (and somewhat redundantly) mark a participant that clearly and exclusively instantiates the indirect-object prototype (experiencer and/or recipient).

This certainly needs a further elaboration. It has been pointed out that grammatical prototypes represent the situation types that are most often kept formally distinct from one another across languages. Thus a prototypical transitive sentence encodes a situation

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<sup>12</sup> CG regards case markers as meaningful elements. Please refer to Langacker (1991a).

which involves a successful transfer of energy from a human participant to an inanimate participant; and as a result of this transmission of energy, the downstream participant is affected (Langacker 1987, 1991a, 1991b). Contrastingly, the prototypical intransitive sentence encodes a situation which does not involve any transfer of energy and usually there is only one participant involved in the act. In between these two extreme poles, there are a variety of situations experienced by human beings which have to be coded by human languages for the purpose of communicating. In coding these situations that are neither prototypical transitive nor intransitive, the dative morphological case has been called upon in languages equipped with inflections, while Archaic Chinese takes full advantage of the dative marker *yu*. The grammatical morpheme *yu* is put on the participant lying downstream from a participant subject (primary figure) in regard to agentivity, along an action chain. This participant differs from that which is marked by ACC or is projected to direct object in one crucial way, i.e. it is not affected by the action directed by the participant subject. By affected, we mean a change in physical location or a change in physical state.

There is one observation which seems to contradict our claim above. Readers can always point to the fact that the dative marker *yu* can easily be omitted from the surface structure which therefore enables an unaffected downstream participant to be coded as direct object, as shown in the pair of examples (21a) and (21b). This pair of examples might pose a huge challenge to any investigation that upholds the objectivist semantics stance, but CG can account for such alternation between direct object (ACC) and prepositional object (DAT) by positing that different conceptualization processes have been imposed on the same conceptual content, which therefore causes dissimilarity in their respective semantic structures. Moreover, it can also be shown that the so-called alternation between direct object and indirect object construction for the same verb in Archaic Chinese is the result of diachronic change. Below, we shall first establish the second point before expounding on the conceptual motivation behind such an alternation.

Pulleyblank (1995:55) points out that that it is possible to omit the preposition *yu* in locative complements in Archaic Chinese while He (1994a, 1994b) highlights the diachronic significance of such an omission. Omission of *yu* can also be found in dative complements, as illustrated by the following pairs of examples:

- (22) a. 王 問 於 子 洩 (*Zuozhuan: Ai.8*)  
 wáng wèn yú zǐ xiè  
 king ask DAT Zi Xie  
 ‘The king asked Zi Xie [about something].’

- b. 然 友 復 之 鄒 問 孟 子 (*Mengzi: Tengwengong shang*)  
 rán yǒu fù zhī zōu wèn mèng zǐ  
 hence You again go Zou ask Meng Zi  
 ‘On this, You went again to Zou and consulted Mencius.’
- (23) a. 獲 叔 子 與 析 朱 鉏， 獻 於 王 (*Zuozhuan: Ai.8*)  
 huò shū zǐ yǔ xī zhū chú xiàn yú wáng  
 catch Shu Zi COM Xi Zhu Chu offer DAT king  
 ‘After Shu Zi and Xi Zhu Chu were captured and offered to the king, ...’
- b. 明 年 之 請 以 頭 獻 王 者 歲  
 míng nián zhī qǐng yǐ tóu xiàn wáng zhě suì  
 next year GEN request INST head offer king NR yearly  
 十 餘 人 (*Hanfeizi: Neichushuo shang*)  
 shí yú rén  
 ten over people  
 ‘There are more than ten people requesting to offer their heads to the king the following year.’
- (24) a. 邾 人 告 於 鄭 (*Zuozhuan: Yin.5*)  
 zhū rén gào yú zhèng  
 Zhu people tell DAT Zheng  
 ‘The people of Zhu informed [the earl of] Zheng.’
- b. 楚 子 疾， 告 大 夫 曰 (*Zuozhuan: Xiang.13*)  
 chǔ zǐ jí gào dà fū yuē  
 Chu viscount ill tell great officer say  
 ‘The viscount of Chu was ill, and addressed his great officers, saying ...’

This paper proposes that the verbs in the above examples initially appear in the constructional schema “V+*yu*+IO” at an earlier stage in Archaic Chinese, but as time progresses, the *yu* is omitted and they gradually occur in the constructional schema “V+DO”. Although it is possible to suggest that the evolutionary change proceed from direct object construction to indirect object construction (i.e., the morpheme *yu* has been inserted and not omitted from the surface structure), such a possibility is remote. A survey of the verb *wen* 問 ‘ask’ suffices to prove this point.

Many impressive works have studied the grammatical behavior of this specific verb. Among them are Chou (1972) and Liu (1998:1-17). This is a verb which we have a very clear and in-depth understanding of. The verb *wen* 問 ‘ask’ involves an event of communication between two human participants in which what is being asked is denoted here as CONTENT (C), and the person who is being asked is denoted as PERSON (P). According to Liu’s (1998:1-17), which is a study of the verb in question across different

pre-Qin texts such as *Zuozhuan*, *Lunyu*, *Guoyu*, *Mozi*, *Mengzi*, *Zhuangzi*, *Xunzi*, *Hanfeizi* and *Zhanguo*, a strict distinction is maintained between the linguistic coding of the two semantic arguments in *Zuozhuan* and *Lunyu*. Some examples are:

- (25) a. 子重 問 晉 國 之 勇 (*Zuozhuan: Cheng.16*)  
 zǐ zhòng wèn jìn guó zhī yǒng  
 Zi Zhong ask Jin country GEN courage  
 ‘Zi Zhong asked [me] in what the valor of Jin was seen.’
- b. 韓 宣 子 問 於 叔 向 曰 (*Zuozhuan: Zhao.11*)  
 hán xuān zǐ wèn yú shú xiàng yuē  
 Han Xuan Zi ask DAT Shu Xiang say  
 ‘Han Xuan Zi asked Shu Sun Zhe [about a matter].’
- (26) a. 葉 公 問 孔 子 於 子 路 (*Lunyu: Shu'er*)  
 yè gōng wèn kǒng zǐ yú zǐ lù  
 Ye duke ask Kong Zi DAT Zi Lu  
 ‘The duke of Ye asked Zi Lu about Kong Zi.’
- b. 南 宮 适 問 於 孔 子 曰 (*Lunyu: Xianwen*)  
 nán gōng shì wèn yú kǒng zǐ yuē  
 Nan Gong Shi ask DAT Kong Zi say  
 ‘Nan Gong Shi asked Kong Zi and said ....’

For these two pairs of examples, CONTENT is mapped onto direct object and PERSON is mapped onto indirect object. The distinction in linguistic coding is so strict that when presented with an example such as (27) which is confusing at first sight, only one interpretation is allowed:

- (27) 叔 向 問 鄭 故 焉， 且 問 子 皙 (*Zuozhuan: Zhao.1*)  
 shú xiàng wèn zhèng gù yān qiě wèn zǐ xī  
 Shu Xiang ask Zheng affair DAT-PRN and ask Zi Xi  
 ‘Shu Xiang asked him about the affairs of Zheng, and especially about Zi Xi.’

This strict distinction begins to break down in *Guoyu* and thereafter, many examples showing the role of PERSON being projected onto direct object can be observed in Archaic Chinese for this verb. Examples are:

- (28) 然 友 復 之 鄒 問 孟 子 (*Mengzi: Tengwengong shang*)  
 rán yǒu fù zhī zōu wèn mèng zǐ  
 hence You again go Zou ask Meng Zi  
 ‘On this, You went again to Zou and consulted Mencius.’
- (29) 秦 昭 王 問 孫 卿 子 曰 (*Xunzi: Ruxiao*)  
 qín zhāo wáng wèn sūn qīng zǐ yuē  
 Qin Zhao king ask Sun Qing Zi say  
 ‘Zhao king of Qin asked Sun Qing Zi [about something].’

The following table reproduced from Che (2000) too supports the aforementioned observation:

**Table 1**

The verb <i>wèn</i> 問 ‘ask’ in various structural configurations	<i>Lunyu</i>		<i>Mengzi</i>		<i>Hanfeizi</i>	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Pattern A: Verb+C	65	74	33	69	20	21
Pattern B: Verb+ <i>yu</i> +P	13	15	6	12	13	14
Pattern C: Verb+C+ <i>yu</i> +P	10	11	0	0	9	10
<b>Pattern D: Verb+P</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>
Pattern E: Verb+C+P	0	0	0	0	2	2
<b>Pattern F: Verb+P+C</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Total	88	100	48	100	93	100

It is important to take note of the two columns that are in shade. It is apparent that pattern D emerges much later than pattern B. Furthermore, the same phenomenon can also be observed for indirect object construction which takes a locative object. Below are some figures which show an alternation between direct and indirect object construction for the same locative verb *ju* 居 ‘reside’ across time:

**Table 2: Zuo zhuan (pre-Qin)**

	Number	%
<i>Ju</i> + PP (LOC)	22	42.3%
<i>Ju</i> + NP(LOC)	30	57.7%

**Table 3: Mengzi (pre-Qin)**

	Number	%
<i>Ju</i> + PP (LOC)	4	19.0%
<i>Ju</i> + NP(LOC)	17	80.9%

**Table 4:** *Hanshiwaizhuan* (Han)

	Number	%
<i>Ju</i> + PP (LOC)	0	0%
<i>Ju</i> + NP(LOC)	15	100 %

In *Zuozhuan*, the locative construction can already take two forms, but none of the two forms can be considered as unmarked since their percentage figures are too narrow to make any meaningful distinction. But the situation seems to have changed during the times when *Mengzi* was composed, as the verb *ju* 居 ‘reside’ is used less frequently in indirect object construction, and it is obvious that during the Han period, this form becomes highly marked. This is an interesting phenomenon, which demonstrates that the omission of the morpheme *yu* is a new linguistic innovation at some point in time before *Zuozhuan* was composed, and such omission has slowly displaced the more dominant form “*ju* 居+*yu*+IO”. Coming to the allative construction, we shall look at the omission of *yu* after two specific verbs of motion. First, it is important to examine the verb *shi* 適 ‘move’. Li (1994:78) concludes that this verb cannot occur in the indirect object construction in Late Archaic Chinese. There is much truth to this conclusion since no such occurrence has been found in almost all available pre-Qin texts. Thus, the verb *shi* 適 ‘move’ is clearly a transitive verb which only takes a locative direct object. But what is interesting about this verb is that, although we cannot locate any alternation between direct and indirect object construction in Late Archaic Chinese, we do find one in *Shangshu*:

- (30) 古 我 先 王， 將 多 于 前 功，  
 gǔ wǒ xiān wáng jiāng duō yú qián gōng  
 ancient 1:SG ancestral king PART more CRP previous accomplishment,  
 適 于 山 (*Shangshu: Pan'geng*)  
 shì yú shān  
 move ALL hill  
 ‘Of old, my royal predecessor, that his merit might exceed that of those who had gone before him, proceeded to the hill-site.’

Thus, this verb of motion can occur in the direct object frame as well as the indirect object frame:

- (31) 伊 尹 去 亳 適 夏 (*Shangshu: Yinzhen*)  
 yī yǐn qù bò shì xià  
 Yi Yin depart Bo move Xia  
 ‘Yi Yin left Bo and move to Xia.’

Since two forms are present in Early Archaic Chinese but only one form is observed in Late Archaic Chinese, this is a strong indication that the direction of change is from the indirect object construction to the direct object construction. Taking into account what we have discussed so far, it is evident that the omission of the morpheme *yu* is not a linguistic innovation that emerges only in a particular period of time of the Chinese language. There seems to be an ongoing process to omit the morpheme *yu* all along and what makes such a phenomenon not easily detectable is that the omission diffuses across verbs, allowing the existence of both forms. It is important to note that this omission can be traced back to as early as the Shang oracle-bone inscriptions. Two such examples are:

- (32) 今 六 月 王 入 于 商<sup>13</sup>  
 jīn liù yuè wáng rù yú shāng  
 actual six month king enter ALL Shang  
 ‘In this sixth month, the king [will] enter Shang city.’
- (33) 王 惠 六 月 入 商<sup>14</sup>  
 wáng huì liù yuè rù shāng  
 king PART six month enter Shang  
 ‘It must be [during the] sixth month [that] the king [will] enter Shang [city].’

A brief study of another two verbs of motion, *viz.* *zhi* 至 ‘arrive’ and *zhi* 之 ‘arrive’ also supports the above claim. The two verbs appear to be in complementary distribution in *Mengzi*: the verb *zhi* 至 ‘arrive’ can only occur in indirect object construction and not direct object construction, while the verb *zhi* 之 ‘arrive’ could take a direct object. A quick survey also shows that the syntactic contrast between these two verbs is confused during the Han period when *zhi* 至 begins to take a nominal phrase as direct object. But if we look at earlier text such as *Zuozhuan*, the verb *zhi* 至 can occur in either the indirect object construction or direct object construction as shown below:

- (34) 公 先 至 于 陽 穀 (*Chunqiu Zuozhuan: Ai.21*)  
 gōng xiān zhì yú yáng gǔ  
 duke before arrive ALL Yang Gu  
 ‘The duke arrived before either of the others at Yang Gu.’
- (35) 公 如 晉 至 河 乃 復 (*Chunqiu Zuozhuan: Zhao.20*)  
 gōng rú jìn zhì hé nǎi fù  
 duke go Jin arrive river and return  
 ‘The duke was going to Jin, but when he had got to the River, he returned.’

<sup>13</sup> The example is taken from Djamouri (2001:158).

<sup>14</sup> The example is taken from Djamouri (2001:159).

Many more pairs of similar examples can be found across different texts to show that the verb *zhi* 至 can occur in both syntactic frames. It is therefore clear that the morpheme *yu* following *zhi* 至 can be omitted rather early based on the above pair of examples in *Zuo zhuan*, but the relation between the verb and the direct object construction is highly marked. It is probably only near the end of the Warring States period that we observe a relatively much freer alternation between direct object and indirect object construction for this verb of motion. This once again justifies our claim about the direction of change.

In the above discussion, it is clear that constructions that are initially instances of the indirect object construction gradually evolve and become instances of the direct object construction. It is interesting to explore what motivates this linguistic change. The most obvious explanation to this observation is that, since grammatical constructions are posited to be symbolic in nature and exhibit prototype effect in the cognitive tradition (Langacker 1987, 1991a, 1991b), it is highly plausible that a change in the construal has taken place along the way which causes the shift from indirect object construction to direct object construction. According to this hypothesis, a downstream participant in a two-participant event that is not objectively affected by the transmission of energy has now been construed to be affected. In this case, the concept of “affectedness” must also be assumed to undergo an extension in order to include such cases. This is possible since the notion of “affectedness” is rather fluid. The impact of an event can be negligible to some, but may appear serious to others. For instance, someone moves into a room where another person is working. The person in the room may find this person a nuisance and thus construed the room as being affected by this entry. It must also be highlighted that there is an asymmetry during the construal of affectedness. A vase that has been broken (i.e. affected) cannot be possibly construed as unaffected; but a vase that has not been broken, can also be construed as being affected by some noise or the humidity in the room. This is the conceptual basis for the linguistic change above.

Furthermore, cross-linguistically, it has been shown that situations which do not conform to the prototype usually display variation in their encoding. As suggested by Croft (2001), a very enlightening example is offered in the study by Dahl (1987) which proposes a polysemy analysis for both Russian and Finnish cases. This is illustrated graphically in Fig. 9, which is reproduced from Croft (2001):

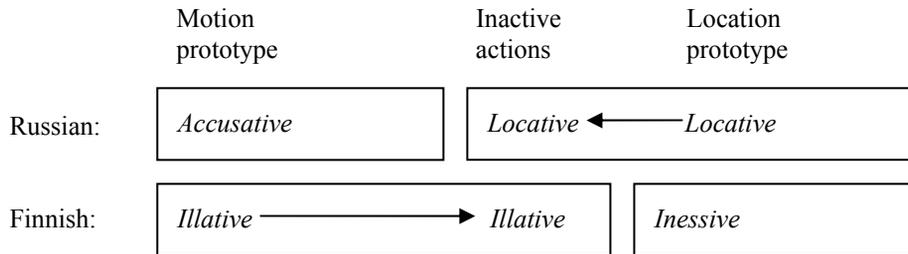


Figure 9

Croft (2001:117) offers a very concise analysis which serves our purpose well:

The polysemy analysis posits two PROTOTYPES, for motion and location, and a nonprototypical intermediate type, called INACTIVE ACTIONS.... The motion prototype is defined as involving at least two points in both time and space. The Russian Accusative and Finnish Illative both encode the motion prototype. The location prototype involves only one point in both time and space. The Russian Locative and Finnish Inessive both encode the location prototype. The intermediate nonprototypical category of inactive actions involves one point in space but at least two in time. In Russian, the case for the location prototype is EXTENDED to inactive actions, based on its similarity with respect to spatial properties. In Finnish, the case for the motion prototype is extended to inactive actions, based on its similarity with respect to temporal properties.

The clear message here is that non-prototypical situations can receive different construals, and this is precisely what we are suggesting for the marking of recipient and its extensions. Different conceptualization is possible as such situations (e.g. giving, seeing, experiencing) does not conform to the prototypical transitive situation and prototypical intransitive situation. Taking the cue from here and incorporating what we have presented in the above sections, we make the following proposal for the dative marker *yu*:

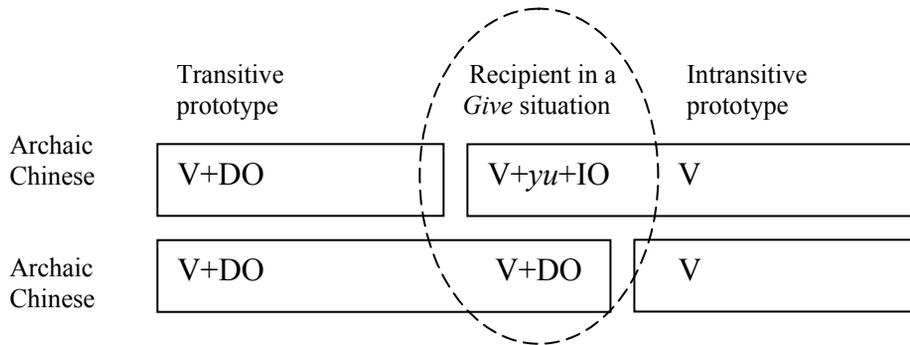


Figure 10<sup>15</sup>

Based on the above discussion, this paper proposes that a new clausal type should be introduced into Archaic Chinese. The grammatical organization in Archaic Chinese is therefore as follows:

Table 5

Event type	Affectedness of downstream participant	Syntactic structure	Clausal type
1-participant event	–	S+Verb	Intransitive clause
2-participant event	–	S+Verb+ <i>yu</i> +Obj	?
	+	S+Verb+Obj	Transitive clause

A question mark has been placed in Table 5. We suggest that “S+Verb+*yu*+Obj” still belongs to the transitive clausal type, since it also codes a two-participant event, just like the traditionally understood transitive clause. The essential difference between them lies in the affectedness of the downstream participant, thus it is suggested that the transitive clause be further divided into two sub-categories: transitive clause-DO and transitive clause-IO, as shown in Table 6:

<sup>15</sup> In the literature of Chinese historical syntax, some scholars have analyzed the construction “V+*yu*+NP” as intransitive. This is because they have treated the prepositional phrase as an adjunct and not a complement of the verb.

**Table 6**

Event type	Affectedness of downstream participant	Syntactic structure	Clausal type
1-participant event	–	S+Verb	Intransitive clause
2-participant event	–	S+Verb+ <i>yu</i> +Obj	Transitive clause-IO
	+	S+Verb+Obj	Transitive clause-DO

In brief, this transitive clause-IO differs from transitive clause-DO by coding two-participant events in which the downstream participant is not affected in any way by the transmission of energy from the source agent. The focus in the preceding discussion has centered on affectedness of the downstream participant and now we shall incorporate this facet into a coherent thesis which proposes that the transitive clause-IO codes transitive events that are low on the transitivity scale.

#### 4. Transitivity hypothesis and indirect object construction

As highlighted by Taylor (2002:561), “Cognitive Grammar does not recognize a distinct level of syntactic organization. The combination of words into larger configurations is handled, not by a special syntactic component of the grammar, but in terms of constructions.” As grammatical constructions are taken to be the primitive units in grammatical organization and are symbolic in nature, this section will further explore the symbolic nature of the indirect object construction.

“Transitivity” is an important notion first advanced in Hopper & Thompson (1980), but the study of Chinese historical syntax has yet to benefit from this insight. Rice (1987: 35), in her PhD dissertation on the cognitive model of transitivity, provides a concise summary of Hopper & Thompson (1980):

Hopper and Thompson conclude that transitivity is not a singular property readily attributable to some event or verb-type, but instead is dependent on a variety of factors. They suggest ten binary parameters (which have high and low values) of transitivity that refer to clausal rather than simply verbal properties.

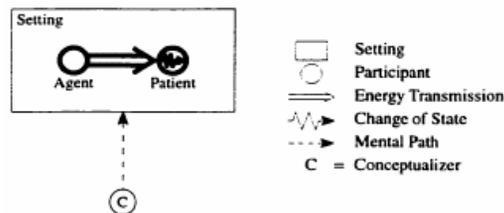
As a first step, it has been proposed that there are different component parts of the notion of Transitivity, and the ways in which they are typically encoded by languages can vary according to different values of each individual component. Ten parameters of

Transitivity are listed below, and each of which suggests a scale according to which clauses can be ranked.

	HIGH TRANSITIVITY	LOW TRANSITIVITY
A. PARTICIPANTS	2 or more participants, A&O	1 participant
B. KINESIS	action	non-action
C. ASPECT	telic	atelic
D. PUNCTUALITY	punctual	non-punctual
E. VOLITIONALITY	volitional	non-volitional
F. AFFIRMATION	affirmative	negative
G. MODE	realis	irrealis
H. AGENCY	A high in potency	A low in potency
I. AFFECTEDNESS OF O	O totally affected	O not affected
J. INDIVIDUATION OF O	O highly individuated	O non-individuated

**Figure 11**<sup>16</sup>

There are a total of ten parameters of Transitivity and affectedness is just one of the parameters. From a CG perspective, these ten parameters can be identified as facets of the canonical event model, and it is this model that ties the ten parameters together and provides a coherent basis for the prototypical notion of transitivity. Langacker (1991a: 302) follows up this idea and concludes that “the organization of a finite transitive clause reflects the canonical event model in numerous respects, and that aspects of this model support the characterization of certain grammatical constructs.” A sketch of the canonical event model is reproduced below from Kumashiro (2000):



There is no space to go into the intricate details; in brief, “the canonical event model represents the normal observation of a prototypical action” (Langacker 1991a:286). Incorporating what has been discussed about transitive clause and the grammatical relation of direct object in §2, the conclusion is: a transitive clause in Archaic Chinese

<sup>16</sup> Fig. 11 is reproduced from Hopper & Thompson (1980:252).

with the constructional schema [NPSubject VTransitive NPDirect Object] is used to code a canonical event (AG  $\Rightarrow$  PAT). For instance,

- (36) 趙 鞅 殺 士 皐 夷 (*Zuozhuan: Ai.3*)  
 zhào yāng shā shì gāo yí  
 Zhao Yang kill Shi Gao Yi  
 ‘Zhao Yang killed Shi Gao Yi.’

Example (36) is a prototypical transitive clause as it involves the transfer of energy from an AGENT (the subject) to a PATIENT (the object). Transitivity is a gradient notion, and it is apparent that events have different transitivity value. The canonical event is a highly transitive event while an event of sleeping is low on the transitivity scale. In English, events that deviate from the canonical event prototype and are low in transitivity scale are still coded with transitive clause based on construal, but the markedness relation between these events and their linguistic coding is shown by the infelicity of their corresponding passives (cf. Langacker 1991b, Croft 1990a, 2001). In Archaic Chinese, the situation is totally different and this is precisely where most students who have modeled their analysis of Archaic Chinese grammar after other theoretical frameworks fail to take notice. The complicated scenario is sketched in Fig. 12:<sup>17</sup>

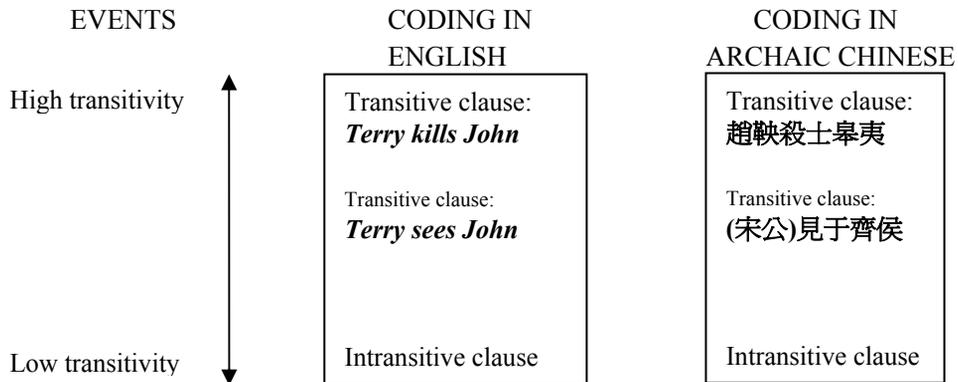


Figure 12

The sensory event of seeing deviates from the canonical event since there is no physical transfer of energy between the participants. This is coded by the transitive clause in English, but linguistic coding in Archaic Chinese makes a distinction between these two

<sup>17</sup> Do refer to examples (17) and (36) for the English translation of the examples in this figure.

types of events by coding as transitive clause-IO. The prototypical direct object construction codes the canonical event structure, while the prototypical indirect object construction codes an event that deviates from the canonical event structure. Since the downstream participant is deeply affected by the transmission of energy in a canonical event, it is hereby suggested that those events in which the human participant lying downstream from the agent source is not affected by the transmission of energy would be coded by the indirect object construction. This explains in a straightforward manner why the role of THING in an event of giving is never projected onto indirect object and any attempt to do so will immediately result in ungrammaticality. The failure to observe that the transitive clause in Archaic Chinese can be further divided into a direct object construction and an indirect object construction leads to an underestimation of the role of the dative construction “VGive+*yu*+IO” and the close association between this dative construction and the experiencer construction “VPsych+*yu*+IO”.

As an interim conclusion, it is interesting to highlight what the above proposal entails: two-participant events that are high on the transitivity scale are coded by the direct object transitive clause, while events that are low on the transitivity scale are coded by the indirect object transitive clause. This proposal can be formulated as:

**High in transitivity = V+Obj**

**Low in transitivity = V+*yu*+Obj**

Without much persuasion, the structural difference between these two syntactic structures is visibly motivated by iconicity. It is widely believed among functional linguists that language structure to a large extent has an iconic motivation. The idea of iconicity was first introduced by Peirce (1932), which is later expounded and developed by Haiman (1980, 1983). Haiman (1980) proposes the notion of diagrammatical iconicity, which is defined as “a systematic arrangement of signs, none of which necessarily resembles its referent, but whose relationships to each other mirror the relationships of their referents.” Haiman (1983) further shows that “one linguistic (or formal) dimension does correspond to a non-linguistic (or conceptual) dimension” by the postulation of the Distance Motivation and Separateness Motivation, which are defined respectively as “the linguistic distance between expressions corresponds to the conceptual distance between them” and “the linguistic separateness of an expression corresponds to the conceptual independence of the object or event which it represents.” As Tai (1993) and M. Zhang (1995) have pointed out, there is abundant evidence in different languages that lends support to the validity of these two motivations. It has further been shown that linguistic structures in Chinese can be successfully explained through the postulation of iconic motivations (Tai 1993, M. Zhang 1995, 1998). While M. Zhang (1998) has argued for a correspondence between linguistic distance and conceptual distance to account for the distribution of the attributive

marker *de* 的 in a modifier-head nominal construction in Mandarin Chinese, we follow the same line of thought to argue for a correspondence between linguistic distance and conceptual affectedness to account for the distribution of the *yu* in a transitive clause in Archaic Chinese. This proposal exemplifies the conceptual metaphor “CLOSENESS IS STRENGTH OF THAT EFFECT”. Lakoff & Johnson (1980:130) have an illuminating discussion of the instantiations of this conceptual metaphor in Modern English:

The same metaphor can be seen at work in examples like:

Sam killed Harry.

Sam caused Harry to die.

If the cause is a single event, as in the first sentence, the causation is more direct. The second sentence indicates indirect or remote causation—two separate events, Harry’s death and what Sam did to cause it. If one wants to indicate causation that is even more indirect, one can say:

Sam brought it about that Harry died.

The *effect that the syntax has* in these sentences is to indicate *how direct the causal link* is between what Sam did and what happened to Harry. The principle at work is this:

The CLOSER the form indicating CAUSATION is to the form indicating the EFFECT, the STRONGER the causal link is.

The analysis offered by Lakoff & Johnson (1980) is probably an appropriate account for the distribution of *yu* in the following pair of examples from Archaic Chinese:

- (37) 今 一 會 而 虐 二 國 之 君，  
 jīn yī huì ér nuè èr guó zhī jūn  
 now one meet and harm two country GEN ruler  
 又 用 諸 淫 昏 之 鬼 (Zuozhuan: Xi.19)  
 yòu yòng zhū yín hūn zhī guǐ  
 also use 3:SG-DAT unlicensed irregular GEN spirit  
 ‘But now our lord, at his first assembling of the princes, has harmed the rulers of two States, and has further used one of them in sacrifice to an unlicensed and irregular spirit.’
- (38) 初， 公 孫 無 知 虐 于 雍 廩 (Zuozhuan: Zhuang.8)  
 chū gōng sūn wú zhī nuè yú yōng lǐn  
 Previously Gong Sun Wu Zhi harm DAT Yong Lin  
 ‘Before his elevation, Gong Sun Wu Zhi had harmed Yong Lin.’

This pair of examples has also been highlighted by Sugita (1998) in which he argues for an imperfective usage of the preposition *yu*. According to his analysis, the *yu* in example (38) is used to express a conative aspect, and in more specific terms, it states that the result implied by the verb has not realized. According to him, the downstream participant denoted by the nominal phrase *er guo zhi jun* 二國之君 ‘rulers of two countries’ in example (37) has been killed, while that in example (38) has not. This is clearly shown in example (39) which records an historical event that occurred a year after the event in example (38). The fact that *yong lin* 雍廩 was alive even though he had been *nue* 虐 in example (38) is unquestionable since he had committed an act of killing somebody in example (39).

- (39) 傳 九 年， 春， 雍 廩 殺 無 知 (Zuozhuan: Zhuang.9)  
 zhuàn jiǔ nián chūn, yōng lín shā wú zhī  
 commentary nine year spring, Yong Lin kill Wu Zhi  
 ‘In the spring of ninth year, Yong Lin killed Wu Zhi.’

Sugita (1998) has put much focus on the difference in telicity between examples (37) and (38), and according to his proposal, the morpheme *yu* has an imperfective usage. This hypothesis is highly compatible with our proposal. More in-depth discussion about the presence of *yu* between a verb and its direct object will be conducted below. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that this paper does not embrace the hypothesis laid out in Sugita (1998) completely in view of the fact that the imperfective usage of *yu* cannot obviously account for all the cases of “V+*yu*+IO”, as pointed out by Chen (2000). Hence, Sugita’s hypothesis has to be incorporated into a larger framework of transitivity to achieve a greater explanatory power. It is therefore proposed that the event denoted by example (38) is coded by an indirect object construction “V+*yu*+IO”, and not “V+DO” simply because this particular event deviates from the canonical event structure (i.e. a volitional AGENT acts on and affects the downstream PATIENT). Thus, apart from telicity, another parameter of transitivity, i.e. the affectedness of the downstream participant object, ought to be highlighted.

The analysis about the essential semantic difference between direct object transitive clause and indirect object transitive clause in Archaic Chinese is also be comparable to the alternation of accusative case and dative case on syntactic object in languages equipped with morphological inflections. The following observation by Langacker (1991a) about complements of verbs coded in both ACC case and DAT case proves to be particularly illuminating:

Some verbs allow both options, i.e. the non-subject complement appears as either dative or accusative. Through its own semantic contribution, case inflection then provides the basis for determining how the verb itself should be interpreted. In (15), for example, the contrast between *mir* ‘me: DAT’ and *mich* ‘me: ACC’ signals whether *klopfen* refers to light physical contact, in which the transmission of energy is negligible, or whether the contact is forceful and the action complete in the sense of having a real effect on the downstream participant.

- (15) *Er klopfte {mir/ mich} auf die Schulter.*  
 ‘He {patted/hit} me on the shoulder.’

To state it another way, ACC reflects the object’s construal as a patient, whereas DAT highlights its role as possessor of the body part specified in the locative complement (and also as experiencer, to the extent that the touching is conceived as having communicative intent).

In conclusion, the proposal advanced above is summarized by the following formulæ:

1. High transitivity event = V+Obj  
 (Obj is comparable to ACC-marked direct object)
2. Low transitivity event = V+yu+Obj  
 (Obj is comparable to DAT-marked indirect object)

By adopting the above hypothesis, we can now offer a unified account grounded in CG for the various constructions which instantiates the “V+yu+IO” construction in Archaic Chinese.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper has clarified the status of direct and indirect objects from the cognitive linguistics perspective, and with this clarification, has offered a preliminary account of the intricacies of grammatical organization in Archaic Chinese.

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## 從認知語言學看上古漢語的 直接賓語和間接賓語

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本文從認知語言學的角度探討上古漢語的直接賓語和間接賓語，進而提出上古漢語的及物句式 (transitive clause) 可以進一步分成兩種：及物的直賓結構 (transitive-DO clause) 和及物的間賓結構 (transitive-IO clause)。本文也進一步指出這種區別除了有句法分布上的證據外，也有認知上的動因。最後，本文也嘗試在上述討論的基礎上，對上古漢語中“動詞+賓語”和“動詞+于/於+賓語”兩種句法結構的轉換交替關係提出一個初步的解釋。

關鍵詞：直接賓語，間接賓語，及物性，上古漢語，認知語法