Hakka LAU Constructions: A Constructional Approach[*]

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This study assumes constructional approach (as proposed by Goldberg (1995), Jackendoff (1997), et al.), to examine the multiple functions of Hakka LAU constructions. It is argued that each of these functions can be plausibly accounted for if the construction itself is taken as a meaning-bearing unit. Specifically, it is maintained that the meaning of the construction comes not exclusively from the specifications of the main predicate, but from the integration of all the components of the construction holistically. Evidence for this line of argument can be provided from underspecified lexical items, constructional idioms, and cases with overlapping meanings.

Key words: constructional approach, underspecified lexical items, constructional polysemy, Hakka LAU constructions

1. Introduction

Goldberg (1995) and Jackendoff (1997), among others, taking a constructional approach, maintain that constructions can be viewed as meaning-bearing units— "syntactic configurations whose structure contributes semantic content above and beyond that contained in the constituent lexical items" (Jackendoff 1997:553). Examining various constructions (or constructional idioms), they argue that the way the verb is integrated into the interpretation of the sentence comes from the construction instead of the verb itself and that all semantically peculiar characteristics come from the meaning associated with the construction as well. For instance, it is claimed that *for*-dative and some cases of *to*-dative are constructional idioms of English (Goldberg 1995). The time-away construction, the resultative construction, the ditransitive construction, and the aspectual-way construction are argued to be meaning-bearing constructions that license both the predicates and the objects (Goldberg 1995, Jackendoff 1997). Evidence for this line of

argument can be found in the *sui generis* constructions where syntactic configurations that carry distinct meanings do not follow from independent syntactic principles. (Cf. also Fillmore et al. 1988, Kay and Fillmore 1999).[1] Cross-linguistic analyses under this approach can also be found. Lien (2001), investigating multiple functions of *choe³*, has claimed that the range of meanings associated with the morpheme can be better accounted for in terms of the interaction of the components of the construction. Besides the ordinary VN construction, the *sui generis* constructions are also quite pervasive, providing a piece of strong evidence for a constructional analysis. Furthermore, Liu and Huang (2001), examining the constructional patterns of the Mandarin verbs *gan*, *qiang*, and *wan*, have found that verbal semantics can be better represented if constructionally coerced information is taken into consideration.

For purposes of this study, a rather simplistic summary of the constructional approach will have to suffice, so that the focus can be on the multiple functions associated with the LAU constructions in Hakka. Similar to Mandarin BA and Taiwanese Southern Min KA, Hakka LAU marks multiple semantic roles functioning as a patient marker, a benefactive marker, a goal marker, a source marker, and a comitative marker. The following examples illustrate each of the functions.[2]

Comitative

    (1) 阿英拄阿明結婚。

        Ayin   LAU   Amin   gietfun.

        Ayin   LAU   Amin   marry

        'Ayin and Amin married.'

    (2) 阿英拄姨婆共下去街頂。

        Ayin   LAU   yipo   kiungha   hi   giedang.

        Ayin   LAU   great aunt   together   go   downtown

        'Ayin and her great aunt went downtown together.'

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[1] An example of a *sui generis* construction would be, *One more beer and/or I'm leaving* (taken from Jackendoff 1997:553, (96a)), with an unusual conjunction construction and a conditional sort of reading.

[2] The data presented in this paper are mainly based on the dialect of Northern Sixian Hakka. The Hakka spelling here is adapted from the *Pinyin* system. The following abbreviations are used —CL: classifier, ASP: aspect marker, NEG: negative markers, PART: sentence-final particle; -A-LE: reduplication; NOM: nominalizer. The corresponding Chinese characters for each of the examples are also provided. I am grateful to Ting-chi Tang, who reminded me of the importance of explicating the Hakka data for the audience.

(3)　…到這兜朋友个鼓勵捞支持下，…

    ...Do liadeu pengyu ge guli LAU zici ha,...

    DO these friends NOM encouragement LAU support under

    '…under the encouragement and support of these friends,…'

(4)　土地愛長期保護捞規劃。

    Tudi oi congki bofu LAU guifa.

    land need long-term protect LAU plan

    'The land needs a long term protection and planning.'

Source

(5)　阿明捞阿英買一坵田。

    Amin LAU Ayin mai yit kiu tien.

    Amin LAU Ayin buy one CL land

    'Amin bought a piece of land from Ayin.'

Goal

(6)　偓愛大聲捞別人講客話。

    Ngai oi taisang LAU petngin gong hakfa.

    I want loud LAU others speak Hakka

    'I'll speak Hakka to others proudly.'

Benefactive

(7)　阿英盡會捞人作媒人。

    Ayin cinvoi LAU ngin zomoingin.

    Ayin good-at LAU people match-make

    'Ayin is good at match making (for people).'

Patient

(8)　佢捞錢用淨淨。

    Gi LAU qien yung qiangqiang.

    he LAU money spend emptily

    'He spent all the money.'

The data show tremendous complexity both in structure and function. First of all, the comitative function of LAU is predominant, and it also is the most complex function; see items (1) through (4). Each of these examples shows one feature in common, namely, that more than one participant is inherently involved in the construction. In

example (1), LAU conjoins two participants who must jointly take part in the event described by the predicate—getting married. The LAU phrase in (2) marks a kind of secondary participant, indicating that Ayin's great aunt went downtown together with her. In addition to the subjects, LAU can also connect two object noun phrases as illustrated in (3). Example (4) shows a case where LAU connects constituents other than noun phrases. Besides the comitative function, example (5) illustrates a case where LAU marks a source from which the agent is buying the land. Example (6), on the other hand, with a verb of telling, shows LAU marking the goal of a verb. When the predicate can bring some kind of benefaction to a beneficiary, the construction can attest LAU's benefactive function, as shown in (7). Example (8), in which LAU marks a patient, illustrates something similar to the disposal construction marked by BA in Mandarin. The construction often contains a resultative complement describing the result brought about to the affected LAU phrase by the action denoted by the predicate.

Because of the diversity of their functions, LAU constructions can best be viewed (following Goldberg 1995) as a case of constructional polysemy. In other words, the semantics involved in LAU constructions can be represented as a set of systematically related senses. The various senses carried by a LAU construction come not from the verb alone but from the interaction among its components, both structurally and semantically. Each construction shows structural as well as semantic complexity due to the interaction between the predicate, the participants, and the complement. More specifically, factors that affect the well-formedness of a LAU sentence are closely related to the inherent semantic features of the predicates, the aspectual features, and the semantic constraints of the event participants. Given the complexity of LAU constructions, this study, by examining a range of complex syntactic and semantic properties, attempts a plausible account of the manifestation of these multiple functions.

This study is organized as follows. As can readily be seen, this introduction has included some basic assumptions of the construction-based approach and a description of the data. With groundwork laid for an explicit investigation into the construction in question, the next section will propose an account for the various functions, followed by a conclusion in Section 3.

2. The various functions of LAU constructions

In this section, each of the five senses associated with LAU will be shown to result from a combination of the semantics of the construction components. Section 2.1 discusses the comitative function, including both a collective reading and a distributive reading. Section 2.2 covers the goal, source, and benefactive senses altogether, since semantically they are close to each other. And Section 2.3 takes up the patient sense.

2.1 The comitative function

The comitative function of LAU actually includes two different functions: a comitative preposition or a coördinative conjunction, both involving more than one participant. The distinction between the two functions is closely related to the features of the predicates as well as of the participants, the discourse roles played by the participants, and the degree of grammaticalization of LAU. Each of these issues will be taken up in order.

First of all, the following criteria for the distinction between the preposition LAU and the conjunction LAU will be applied to the data in question.[3]

(9) a. If two elements connected by LAU are permutable, then we are dealing with a conjunction.

b. If LAU can be preceded by any modifying adverbial expression, then it is a preposition.

c. If LAU is a preposition connecting two noun phrases, the first one shows higher topicality than the second; but there is no such discourse role difference if LAU is a conjunction.

Let us see how the criteria can help distinguish the two functions exhibited by the data. Examine the following examples:

(10) 阿明盡老實，又盡肯做，佢總係恬恬，盡無愛拶人計較。

Amin qin losit, yu qin henzo,   gi zunghe diamdiam,
Amin very decent also very hard-working he always quiet

∅ qin moi LAU ngin giegau.
　　very NEG LAU people argue with

'Amin is such a decent, hard-working person, who is always quiet and who never argues with others.'

(11) a. 阿英(*恬恬仔)拶阿明結婚。

*Ayin (*diam-diam-e) LAU Amin gietfun.*[4]
Ayin quietly LAU Amin marry

'Ayin and Amin married.'

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[3] These criteria are more or less after Liu and Peyraube (1994).

[4] The sentence with the manner adverb *diam-diam-e* 'quietly' is fine if the sentence is talking about the subject who was quietly getting married. Then the function of LAU turns out to be a prepositional instead of a conjunctive one. The observation is exactly compatible with what is discussed here.

b. 阿明(*恬恬仔)捞阿英結婚。

*Amin (*diam-diam-e) LAU Ayin gietfun.*
Amin quietly LAU Ayin marry
'Amin and Ayin married.'

LAU in example (10) is clearly a preposition; the whole discourse topic is about *Amin*. The second sentence contains a pronoun *gi*, which refers back to the topic, and the third sentence contains a zero pronoun, which also has to be co-referential to its antecedent topic. The noun phrase marked by LAU is only a comitative phrase indicating people that *Amin* will not argue with. The first noun phrase, *Amin*, which is the topic of the whole discourse is not only more topical but also more prominent. Besides, there is no way to permutate the prepositional LAU phrase with the zero pronoun along the information flow of the discourse. Furthermore, LAU in this example is modified by an adverbial expression and a negative marker. On the other hand, examples in (11) illustrate cases where LAU functions as a conjunction. The two noun phrases connected by LAU can be permutated without changing the meaning. And, it is grammatically impossible to put any adverbial modifier such as a manner adverb *diam-diam-e* 'quietly' in front of LAU in both of these two cases.

The above criteria have helped distinguish the preposition LAU and the conjunction LAU very clearly. In addition thereto, a couple of characteristics of this LAU function in general can still be detected. Let us start with the predicate. Presumably, verbs that relate to group activities—activities that inherently involve more than one participant —will bring out the comitative function of LAU in the LAU construction. Verbs of social interaction such as *gietfun* 'marry', and *fimien* 'meet', verbs of verbal interaction such as *camciong* 'discuss', and *au* 'argue', or verbs of fighting such as *yenga* 'fight' among others that select for a collective subject usually will bring out the conjunctive function of LAU. When the verb does not inherently imply that more than one participant is involved, an adverb such as *kiungha* 'together' is often added to indicate that the first subject is doing the activity together with an entity denoted by the LAU phrase. In other words, a distributive reading is often detected in such a context. The two following examples can clearly illustrate the distinction.

(12) 阿英捞阿明結婚。

Ayin LAU Amin gietfun.
Ayin LAU Amin marry
'Ayin and Amin married.'

(13) 阿英捞姨婆共下去街頂。

Ayin   LAU   yipo   kiungha   hi   giedang.
Ayin   LAU   great aunt   together   go   downtown
'Ayin and her great aunt went downtown together.'

The predicate *gietfun* 'marry' in example (12) takes two participants; that is, it requires a collective subject, which is composed of two noun phrases connected by the conjunction LAU, and the sentence hence brings out a collective reading. However, the predicate *hi giedang* 'go downtown' does not have to select a collective subject; the sentence hence carries a distributive reading; the first noun phrase, together with the phrase marked by the preposition LAU, went downtown together.

In addition to the two different readings, the preposition LAU and the conjunction LAU differ from one anther in terms of the two participants connected by them. First of all, as already discussed before, the first noun phrase is more prominent in terms of its discourse role than the second noun phrase marked by LAU if LAU is a preposition, whereas the two noun phrases connected by LAU do not have such a difference with regard to their topical prominence when LAU is a conjunction. Secondly, the preposition LAU connects mainly two animate participants; the conjunction LAU can conjoin two, three or even more participants. Furthermore, it can also connect inanimate participants. The following example shows a conjunction LAU connecting three inanimate participants.

(14) 河洛，客家捞原住民話放入教材。

Hoklo,   hakga   LAU   yenzumin   fa   biongngip   gaucoi.
Hoklo   Hakka   LAU   aboriginal   language   included   materials
'Taiwanese Southern Min, Hakka and aboriginal languages should be included in the (teaching) materials.'

Another difference between the preposition LAU and the conjunction LAU follows from a distinction in their discourse function, already mentioned. Like other functions discussed, when the preposition LAU marks a comitative noun phrase, the LAU phrase has to occur right after the first noun phrase—specifically, it has to be put strictly in the second position of the sentence. However, not only can a conjunction LAU connect subject noun phrases, but it can also conjoin object noun phrases, and syntactic categories other than noun phrases. Example (15) gives an instance where LAU conjoins two object noun phrases and example (16) shows a case in which two verb phrases are connected by LAU.

(15) 到這兜朋友个鼓勵摎支持下，…

Do   liadeu   pengyu   ge   guli   LAU   zici   ha,…
under these   friends   NOM   encouragement LAU   support   under
'… under the encouragement and support of these friends, …'

(16) 土地愛長期保護摎規畫。

Tudi   oi   congki   bofu   LAU   guifa.
land   need   long-term   protect   LAU   plan
'The land needs long-term protection and planning.'

2.2 The goal/source/benefactive functions

Among the different functions exhibited by LAU constructions, the goal, the source, and the benefactive functions are closely related to each other since they occur in constructions that are somewhat similar to the double object construction in other languages. Therefore, the three functions are going to be discussed together in this section. Specifically, the inherent features of the predicates, the semantic constraints of the participants of an event frame (following Talmy 2000a, b)—including both the external argument and the internal arguments—and the interaction among them will be examined to see how each of the three functions is manifested.

To begin with, a short description of a double object construction is called for. Carrying two internal arguments, a typical double object verb allows more than one way of expressing its arguments. Dative alternation in English, for instance, is characterized by an alternation between the double object frame <NP1 V NP3 NP2> and the prepositional frame <NP1 V NP2 to NP3>. Verbs that allow dative alternation are verbs of change of possession such as give verbs or verbs of future having, among others; cf. Levin 1993, Pinker 1989, Goldberg 1995. Extensive research has been done on the double object construction, focusing on constraints on the alternation, particularly on the characterization of the set of verbs that show such an alternation.[5] In addition to the preposition *to*, which is identified as the goal preposition, there is another option that involves the benefactive preposition *for*. Verbs that allow the benefactive alternation are characterized as verbs of obtaining or verbs of creation, among others. It is argued that the benefactive function can be subsumed as cases of metaphorical possession. Hence, a thematic core is maintained to incorporate both the semantics of possession and a possible extension of it to benefaction (Levin 1993, Pinker 1989, Goldberg 1995).

Although this brief description give but a rough idea of double object constructions

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[5] Some verbs in English, although with the same subcategorization frame, do not allow dative alternation. See Levin (1993) for more details. Also detailed discussions of the characterization can be found in Levin (1993), Pinker (1989), and Goldberg (1995), among others.

in English, it lays a foundation for the exploration of the corresponding constructions in Hakka. Typical Hakka double object verbs which involve change of possession allow dative alternation with slightly different structures. The following examples can illustrate the different mappings of the thematic roles:

(17) a. 佢分一本書分厓。

        Gi   *bun*   *yit*   *bun*   *su*   *bun*   *ngai.*

        he   give   one   CL   book   BUN   me

        'He gave a book to me.'

    b. 佢分厓一本書。

        Gi   *bun*   *ngai*   *yit*   *bun*   *su.*

        he   give   me   one   CL   book

        'He gave me a book.'

    c. 佢分一本書厓。

        Gi   *bun*   *yit*   *bun*   *su*   *ngai.*

        he   give   one   CL   book   me

        'He gave a book to me.'

The examples show two features: first the recipient that occurs postverbally is marked by the morpheme BUN;[6] second, Hakka allows a peculiar structure in (17c) where the direct object can occur before the indirect object without any preposition in between.

Now Hakka employs a different morpheme—namely LAU—to mark the goal that does not necessarily involve change of possession. Unlike the BUN phrase, the LAU phrase has to occur preverbally.[7] Furthermore, in addition to the goal function, LAU can also mark source and benefactive functions. In order to get the designated function, all the information of the whole construction has to be taken into consideration. In what follows, each of these functions will be discussed in turn.

Let us begin with the goal function. As will be seen in the examples, when a LAU construction contains the so-called illocutionary verbs of communication (following Pinker 1989), which involve a particular kind of content specified by the verb that has

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[6] The morpheme BUN in Hakka carrying multiple functions displays complexity both syntactically and semantically. See Lai (2001) for discussion of the semantic relatedness of its various functions.

[7] Obviously there is a division of labor between BUN and LAU in Hakka. Issues related to how exactly they divide labor semantically and what restrictions are required in terms of word order will be dealt with in a separate study. But to make the presentation clearer, I will use recipient to refer to an animate goal that possesses the patient after the successful transfer indicated by the predicate; cf. Goldberg 1995.

to be communicated, the LAU phrase then specifies a comprehending listener who can obtain the information from the speaker. Predicates such as *gong* 'tell', or *gongfa* 'talk to', *gieseu* 'introduce', *gautai* 'explain', *yieukiu* 'ask for' or *fenfu* 'ask … to' are among these verbs. Consider the following:

(18) a. 想到老人家，樣般捞佢交代。
　　　 ...*Siongdo   longinga   ngionban   LAU   gi   gautai.*
　　　　think of   old man   how   　　LAU   him   explain
　　　 'Whenever I think of the old man, I'm worried about how to explain (this matter) to him.'
　　 b. 阿明看戲轉來愛捞厥姑講戲文。
　　　 Amin kon hi   zonlai oi   LAU gia   gu   gong   hiwen.
　　　 Amin see opera   return   has-to LAU his   aunt   tell   opera
　　　 'Amin had to explain the content of the opera to his aunt after watching it.'

Both verbs in the two examples imply a successful comprehension by the goal audience of the agent subject. In (18a) things will be explained to the old man by the speaker and the content of the opera will be told to the aunt by Amin in example (18b).

　　Notice that if the verb does not convey successful communication between the subject and the direct object, LAU cannot be used to mark the direct object. Take a manner-of-speaking verb *hoik* 'yell' for example. Since it signifies the manner of speaking without necessarily implying the involvement of the audience, the direct object cannot be marked by LAU. Instead, another preposition DUEI 'toward' can be used to mark the object that is yelled at. The following examples can clearly illustrate the difference:

(19) a. *佢捞厥薳仔大聲吼。
　　　 **Gi   LAU   gia   lai-e   taisang   hoik.*
　　　 he   LAU   his   son   loud   　yell
cf.　 b. 佢對厥薳仔大聲吼。
　　　 Gi   DUEI   gia   lai-e   taisang   hoik.
　　　 he   toward   his   son   loud   　yell
　　　 'He yelled loudly at his son.'

　　In addition to a requirement of verb type, the semantic constraints of the subject and the LAU phrase have to be observed in order for the LAU phrase to indicate a goal. First of all, each of the verbs so far characterizes a generalization—namely, the verb selects a volitional subject (Goldberg 1995). This constraint is quite natural since verbs of illocutionary communication presumably involve the illocutionary force exerted by

the speaker to communicate an intended message with the addressee. As Goldberg (1995: 143) states, the concept of volitionality has to be extended to denote not only the action but also the intention. For instance, in example (18b), the subject *Amin* had to intend to explain the content of the opera to his aunt. Therefore, it cannot be the case that *Amin* explained the opera to someone else and his aunt happened to overhear.

If the volitionality constraint of the subject is not observed, a semantically ill-formed sentence is expected, as illustrated in the following example. The example can of course be semantically plausible given a metaphorically extended context where trees are personified.

(20) *樹仔拷佢講話。
　　 Su-e　LAU　gi　　gongfa.
　　　 tree　 LAU　 him　 talk
　　 '*The tree is talking to him.'

Following from the inherent feature of an illocutionary verb of communication, the direct object of this construction, just like the subject, has to be an animate being. Furthermore, the object has to specify a goal that is willing to take the transfer denoted by the action. Therefore, the following example cannot be felicitous.

(21) *阿明拷厥姑講故事，毋過佢無聽。
　　 Amin LAU　gia　gu　gong　gusi,　mgo gi　mo　　tang.
　　　 Amin LAU　 his　 aunt　talk　 story　but　she NEG　listen
　　 '*Amin told his aunt a story, but she wasn't listening.'

Next, let us move to the source function. The fact that the types of relations that the verb's meaning may bear to the semantics of the whole construction can be clearly shown by the source function exhibited by the LAU construction. Interestingly, with apparently similar surface structure, the source function of a LAU construction differs from its goal function in that the predicate in the former specifies meanings that denote taking something away. Because of the meaning of the predicate, the goal is mapped to the subject whereas the source is indicated by an oblique phrase marked by LAU. Verbs that are classified as taking-away verbs such as *jiaqien* 'borrow money', *jiami* 'borrow rice', *mai* 'buy', *tiqien* 'ask money from', or *zutien* 'rent field from' belong to this category. The following example can illustrate:

(22) 厥爸拪阿英買一坵田。

Gia   ba   LAU   Ayin   mai   yit   kiu   tien.[8]
his   dad   LAU   Ayin   buy   one   CL   field
'His father bought a field from Ayin.'

As to the semantic constraints for the subject and the object, two points can be maintained. First of all, just like the subject of the goal function, the subject of the LAU construction denoting a source function has to be volitional since the subject presumably performs the action of taking something away. However, unlike the LAU phrase of the goal function, the LAU phrase of the source function does not necessarily have to willingly accept the action performed by the subject. The following example, in which the second sentence indicates an unsuccessfully performed action, is acceptable.

(23) 佢拪厥爸借錢，一角銀就借毋到。

Gi LAU gia ba jiaqien,   yit gokngui zu   jia   m   do.
he LAU his dad borrow money one penny   then borrow NEG DO
'He tried to borrow money from his dad, but he couldn't get a penny.'

Now when the predicate of the LAU construction conveys that the subject has done something affecting the direct object, such that the indirect object can become the beneficiary to possess the direct object, the semantic structure then specifies a benefactive relation with the indirect object marked by LAU. One group includes verbs of creation, expressing the concept that the subject causes the direct object to come into existence for the benefit of the indirect object and then causes the indirect object to have the direct object. The following example with the verb *zufan* 'cook' can illustrate this concept:

(24) 阿英拪佢撿煮飯。

Ayin   LAU   gi   ten   zufan.
Ayin   LAU   him   help   cook
'Ayin helped him to cook.'

Another group includes verbs of obtaining, which indicate that the subject does not originally own the direct object, then comes to own it for the benefit of the indirect object, so that the subject can give it over to the indirect object (cf. Pinker 1989). This

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[8] This sentence is actually ambiguous in that the LAU phrase can denote either a source or a benefactive, given an appropriate context. The ambiguity associated with the LAU construction will be discussed later.

LAU phrase therefore signifies a beneficiary. Verbs such as *mai* 'buy', *yiang* 'win', and *teu* 'steal', among others belong to this subclass. Cf. the following example.

(25) 厥爸拀阿英買一坵田。

Gia	*ba*	*LAU*	*Ayin*	*mai*	*yit*	*kiu*	*tien.*[9]
his	dad	LAU	Ayin	buy	one	CL	land

'His father bought a piece of land for Ayin.'

In addition to indicating a benefactive argument, LAU phrases co-occur extensively with verbs that simply convey acts done for the benefit of a third party, not necessarily expressing that the party has to own the affected direct object. In example (26), the speaker expresses that he will do his best, and the default case indicates that he is talking to the addressee, who is the beneficiary of the action done by the speaker. Example (27) shows that the LAU phrase denotes people for whom *Ayin* is good at matchmaking.

(26) 𠊎盡量拀汝做到。

Ngai	*qinliang*	*LAU*	*ng*	*zodo.*
I	try-my-best	LAU	you	do-finish

'I'll do my best (for you).'

(27) 阿英盡會拀人作媒人。

Ayin	*qinvoi*	*LAU*	*ngin*	*zomoingin.*
Ayin	good-at	LAU	people	match-make

'Ayin is good at match making (for people).'

Sometimes the benefactive scenario can be extended to such a context where the action performed by the subject can in fact bring some negative effect to the LAU phrase. In such a situation, LAU turns out to mark not a benefaction but a malefaction relation between the participants involved. Consider the following example.

(28) 汝無盡□拀𠊎亂講話。

Ng	*mo*	*qincai*	*LAU*	*ngai*	*longongfa.*
you	NEG	reckless	LAU	me	talk nonsense

'Don't say any nonsense to embarrass me.'

In example (28), the speaker is warning the hearer not to speak any nonsense such that he will have to suffer the consequences of embarrassment. The LAU phrase in such a

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[9] Careful readers would notice that this example is exactly the same as example (22) only with a different reading. See section 2.4 for the discussion of ambiguous cases.

situation has turned from specifying a beneficiary into specifying someone that is affected by the action performed.

The example in (28) naturally leads us to the discussion of the patient function of the LAU construction. But before we come to the next section, a short note on the semantic constraints of the subject and the LAU phrase of the benefactive function is necessary. As predicted, the subject of the benefactive LAU construction has to follow the volitionality constraint, since he has to perform some kind of act for the benefit of the LAU phrase. It follows naturally as well that the LAU phrase has to denote an animate being, although not necessarily a willing one. For instance, in example (27), although the subject *Ayin* enjoys being a matchmaker for people, they might not be willing to accept the arrangement done by her. Moreover, when the meaning extends to a malefactive scenario as in (28), the LAU phrase definitely will not denote a willing entity.

To recapitulate, the three functions discussed in this section are tabulated below.

Semantic functions \\ Syntactic components	Predicate	Subject	LAU phrase
Goal	verbs of illocutionary communication	volitional agent	willing animate being
Source	verbs of taking things away	volitional agent	animate being, not necessarily willing
Benefactive	verbs of creation verbs of obtaining verbs conveying acts done for the benefit of the third party	volitional agent	animate being, not necessarily willing

In brief, discussion of the three functions indicates not only that they are closely interconnected with each other, but that the manifestation of each of the functions is largely due to the interaction of the predicate as well as the event participants of the event frame.

2.3 The patient function

As discussed in the previous section, when the predicate of a LAU construction denotes an action that will bring malefaction to the LAU phrase, then the LAU phrase turns out to be some kind of an affected patient undertaking the result of the action.[10]

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[10] With regard to the patient function, diverse variations can be observed both cross-dialectally

Let us start with a prototypical example given below.

(29) 阿明捔杯仔打爛了。
    Amin   LAU   bi-e   da-lan   le.
    Amin   LAU   cup   hit-break   PART
    'Amin has broken the cup.'

Example (29) has an action verb that causes the change of state of the LAU phrase, and the result of the change is indicated in the resultative complement. Now since the construction usually involves a causer who performs some kind of an action that brings some change of state to the LAU phrase, almost all action verbs can co-occur with the patient LAU phrase as long as the whole sentence specifies a delimited event, in Tenny's (1992) sense. More specifically, the aspectual feature encoded by the whole construction has to have an end point in time, which presumably indicates the resultative state of the patient.[11] The patient, carrying the property of affectedness (also following Tenny 1992), undergoes some kind of change caused by the action. Hence, the typical example given in (29), which has a resultative complement, clearly indicates the end point of the action denoted by the predicate.

With this generalization in hand, all the syntactic and semantic restrictions on the patient LAU construction seem to follow naturally. Specifically, as long as a predicate can denote an action that will measure out an event, it is compatible with the patient function of LAU. Let us consider more examples with different aspectual classes, including states, activities, accomplishments, and achievements (cf. Vendler 1967, Smith 1997).

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and cross-linguistically. In Northern Sixian Hakka, spoken mostly in Miaoli, this patient function is quite prevalent. For instance, among the 109 tokens of the LAU phrase detected from the two volumes of *Miaolixian Keyu Gushiji (Hakka Stories in Miaoli)*, there are fifty tokens denoting the patient function, which occupies close to forty-six percent; cf. Jang (1987), who analyzes LAU as an object marker. The prevalence of the patient function exhibited by the LAU phrase is very different from the corresponding KA morpheme in Taiwanese Southern Min, whose patient function is quite rare. See Lien (2001) for further discussion. Typological comparison of these corresponding constructions will be left to future research.

[11] Now the corresponding construction to the patient function of the LAU construction in Mandarin is the BA construction, which has attracted extensive studies in the literature. The proposal here is similar to the delimitedness requirement proposed by Cheng (1988), and more or less to the boundedness requirement proposed by Liu (1997) about the BA construction. Since a full exploration of the comparison and contrast of the two constructions would take the present work too far afield, it will have to be left for a separate study. See Liu (1997) with a detailed summary of four different approaches to the BA construction. See also Teng (1982), and Cheng and Tsao (1995) for discussion of the corresponding KA construction in Taiwanese Southern Min.

First, a state verb that is intrinsically unbounded in time unless otherwise specified cannot occur with the LAU construction. Cf. the following:

(30) *阿姑拷阿明當惜。
    *Agu   LAU   Amin   dong   siak.
     aunt   LAU   Amin   very   love

Accomplishment verbs and achievement verbs typically co-occur with the patient LAU phrase since they are inherently telic verbal expressions, which indicate terminal points. In such a context, the final particle LE, which signifies a change of state, is often present.[12] The following example in (31) illustrates an accomplishment verb, whereas an achievement verb is shown in (29) above. Both examples have resultative complements indicating the changed state of the LAU phrase caused by the action of the predicate.

(31) 阿明拷信仔寫好咧。
    Amin   LAU   xin-e   xia-ho   le.
    Amin   LAU   letter   write-finish   PART
    'Amin finished writing the letter.'

Contrary to accomplishments, activities are atelic unbounded expressions whose denotations have no set terminal points.[13] However, a LAU sentence can be constructed if some adverbials or other relevant adjuncts are added to indicate an end point for the event; as illustrated in the following examples:

(32) 佢拷書放到桌頂。
    Gi   LAU   su   biong-do   zokdang.
    he   LAU   book   put-DO   table-top
    'He put the book on the table.'
(33) 拷地泥掃掃啊咧。
    LAU   dinai   so-so-a-le.
    LAU   floor   sweep-A-LE
    'Please sweep the floor.'

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[12] This particle LE is similar to *le* in Mandarin Chinese.

[13] This well-known semantic distinction between accomplishments and activities is supported by a battery of tests provided in the literature. See, for instance, Smith (1997) for detailed discussions.

(34) 𠊎拶飯煮十分鐘。

Ngai   LAU   fan   zu   sipfunzung.

I   LAU   rice   cook   ten minutes

'I cooked the rice for ten minutes.'

(35) 佢拶雞仔趨入來。

Gi   LAU   gie-e   giuk-ngip-loi.

He   LAU   chicken   chase-inside-come

'He chased the chickens inside (the house).'

(36) 佢拶蘋果食忒兩粒。

Gi   LAU   lingo   sit-tet   liong-liap.

He   LAU   apple   eat-gone   two-CL

'He ate two of the apples.'

Example (32) is a case where a location is used to signify the terminal point of the action of putting something somewhere if a movement to a new location is understood metaphorically as a change of state. Example (33) has a reduplicative verbal expression, which indicates exhaustiveness, and hence sets a terminal point for the action (cf. Teng 1982). In the same manner, the temporal expression *sipfunzung* 'ten minutes' in (34) provides an end point for the action. Likewise, the directional adverbial expression in (35) has the effect of setting an end point. Example (36) contains a retained object construction in which both the LAU and the main predicate have their own objects, and the delimited meaning comes from the whole predicate *sit-tet liong-liap* 'eat two of them', indicating the end point when two apples are eaten.

Now the examples given here are not meant to give an exhaustive list of the patient function. Suffice it to say the patient function of a LAU construction denotes a delimited event. Crucially, the patient function behaves more or less like a causative construction in which the first noun phrase performs an action to cause the LAU phrase to undergo some kind of change of state that can be stated in different sorts of syntactic expressions as long as the semantic requirement is fulfilled.

The analysis of the LAU patient function is in accordance with Goldberg's (1995) analysis of the resultative construction. She suggests three constraints on the resultative construction. First, Goldberg (1995:188) states that "resultatives can only be applied to arguments which potentially undergo a change of state as a result of the action denoted by the verb." The statement resonates with the requirement of the LAU phrase that signifies an affected patient undergoing change of state caused by the agent.

Moreover, Goldberg proposes an animate instigator constraint for the English resultative construction, stating that only animate instigator arguments, although not necessarily volitional agents, are acceptable as subjects in resultative constructions. Hence,

She coughed herself sick is perfect, whereas *The feather tickled her silly* is unacceptable. Similarly, as demonstrated in the examples above, the Hakka LAU patient function requires an animate instigator as the subject. However, unlike the analysis suggested by Goldberg, a volitional agent is highly preferable as the subject of the Hakka LAU construction.

Another constraint has to do with the aspectual feature associated with the resultative construction. Goldberg maintains that "the change of state must occur simultaneously with the endpoint of the action denoted by the verb" (p.194). More specifically, there should be no delay between the action denoted by the verb and the subsequent change of state. Hence, the sentence *Sam cut himself free* must mean that Sam cut the bonds that prevented him from being free, and thereby immediately gained his freedom. Likewise, such a constraint is observed in the Hakka LAU patient function. Therefore, example (35) should mean that all the chickens were inside the house at the moment the action of chasing was done.

2.4 Implications

So far, each of the distinctive functions of the LAU construction has been investigated. It is claimed that LAU constructions elucidate the fact that Hakka is a highly construction-dependent language; the meaning of a sentence depends largely on its components. In particular, it is argued that the function that a LAU phrase exhibits is closely related to the interaction between the components of a LAU construction—including its predicate, the participants of the event, and its aspectual features. Several pieces of evidence can be provided to support this line of argument.

The first piece of evidence comes from the underspecified meaning of a lexical item. Cf. the following:

(37) 佢拕厥爸借錢。
Gi   LAU   gia   ba   jia   qien.
he   LAU   his   dad   borrow   money
'He borrowed money from his father.'

(38) 佢借錢分厥爸。
Gi   jia   qien   BUN   gia   ba.
he   lend   money   BUN   his   dad
'He lent money to his father.'

Unlike English, which employs two different lexical items to indicate borrowing (money) and lending (money), Hakka expresses two opposing concepts with the same lexical item, namely *jia* (borrow/lend). Two different constructions with different word order

are used to resolve possible ambiguity: the LAU construction with the preverbal LAU marking the source or the BUN construction with the postverbal BUN marking the recipient.[14] In order to understand the correct meaning of the sentence, one has to consider all the relevant information of the whole construction—including not only the predicate but also the word order, the case markers, and the relationship between the arguments.[15]

On the other side of the coin, some highly idiomatic LAU constructions, just like *sui generis* constructions, carry meanings of their own. Consider the following examples, taken from Lin (1990, (115), (119), & (78)), with my English translations.

(39) 捱死人兩隔壁。
LAU   xi   ngin   liong-gap-biak.
LAU   dead   person   next to one another
'I almost got myself killed.'

(40) 偃捱佢屙屎隔嶺崗。
Ngai   LAU   gi   o-si   gak   liang-gong.
I   LAU   him   defecate   next to   hill
'I have nothing to do with him.'

(41) 汝捱和尚借梳仔。
Ng   LAU   vo-sang   jia   si-e.
you   LAU   monk   borrow   comb
'You are looking for trouble (from me).'

From the English translations, one can tell that the constructions as a whole bear meanings of their own, independent of the lexical items in the sentence.

In addition to the two highly idiomatic cases, some LAU examples show both syntactic and semantic peculiarities of their own. Consider the following example:

(42) 佢捱目珠噭到腫腫。
Gi   LAU   mukzu   gieu   do   zungzung.
she   LAU   eyes   cry   DO   swollen
'She cried for so long that her eyes got swollen.'

The predicate in sentence (42) is an intransitive verb, and hence does not subcategorize any thematic roles. Therefore *mukzu* 'eyes' cannot be the object of *gieu* 'cry'. Indeed, *mukzu* 'eyes' is actually the subject of the resultative complement as in the expression

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[14] The distinction between LAU and BUN here in terms of their word order constraint and their semantic similarities and differences will be left for future research. See also footnote 7.

[15] Lien (2001) has the same line of argument for cases in Taiwanese Southern Min.

mukzu zungzung 'eyes got swollen'. But to indicate that the expression is affected by the action of crying, Hakka uses LAU to mark such a patient-like expression, although syntactically it functions as the subject of the complement. Such an example clearly illustrates that only through a holistic integration of the internal structure of the elements can the meaning of the construction be explicitly described.

Furthermore, as has been mentioned in the previous context, some LAU constructions demonstrate cases of overlapping meanings in which the same syntactic configurations allow more than one reading (cf. Goldberg 1995). Example (22) is such a case, repeated below in (43). Examples (44) and (45) are two additional cases that illustrate the phenomenon.

(43) 厥爸拶阿英買一坵田。
  Gia   ba   LAU   Ayin   mai   yit   kiu   tien.
  his   dad   LAU   Ayin   buy   one   CL   field
  'His father bought a piece of land from Ayin. / His father bought a piece of land for Ayin.'

(44) 阿明拶佢寫一封信仔。
  Amin   LAU   gi   xia   yit   fung   xin-e.
  Amin   LAU   him   write   one   CL   letter
  'Amin wrote a letter (to someone else) for him. / Amin wrote a letter to him.'

(45) 阿明拶厥孲仔講客話。
  Amin   LAU   gia   lai-e   gong   hakfa.
  Amin   LAU   his   son   speak   Hakka
  'Amin speaks Hakka with his son. / Amin speaks Hakka to his son.'

As indicated by the English translations for (43), two possible readings can be detected in which the LAU phrase functions either as a source from whom his father bought the land or as a benefactive for whom his father bought the land. The meanings associated with the construction come from different integration of the internal structures, including the predicate and the four potential participants in a land-buying event frame—the buyer, the land, the source from whom the land is bought, and the benefactive who benefits from the act of land-buying. Since LAU can mark both the source and the benefactive roles and since either of them can be underspecified syntactically, ambiguity arises. In the same manner, in (44), the LAU phrase can function as a benefactive or a goal because of the meaning of the predicate of communication and the under-specification of either of the two participants involved. A similar observation can be found in example (45), where LAU can mark its phrase as a goal or as a comitative role. Now since this example contains a predicate of communication, which presumably involves an interaction between

the speaker and the addressee, the addressee specified by the LAU phrase can function either as the goal that the message is transferred to or as the comitative role to whom the speaker is transferring the message. All these cases indicate that ambiguity arises because certain participants are left unexpressed due to their lack of special prominence or salience. Common knowledge of the speaker and the addressee can help recover the unexpressed roles, or other relevant pragmatic information is often called for to disambiguate the readings. Take (43) for instance. Alternatively, an oblique BUN phrase specifying the recipient in the postverbal position can help disambiguate the readings. The following example illustrates that when all four potential participants of the land-buying event are realized syntactically, no ambiguity will occur.

(46) 厥爸拷阿英買一坵田分厥孻仔。
Gia   ba   LAU   Ayin   mai   yit   kiu   tien   BUN   gia   lai-e.
his   dad   LAU   Ayin   buy   one   CL   field   BUN   his   son
'His father bought a piece of land from Ayin for his son.'

In short, the underspecified lexical items, the highly constructionally idiomatic expressions, and the ambiguous examples provide evidence for the argument along the line proposed by a constructional approach. Essentially, it is maintained that semantic content comes above and beyond that contained in the constituents and that it is the integration of all the components of the syntactic configurations that contributes to the meaning of the whole construction.

3. Concluding remarks

To explore the syntactic and semantic complexity exhibited by the multiple functions of the LAU constructions in Hakka, this study, taking a constructional approach proposed by Goldberg (1995) and Jackendoff (1997) among others, has argued that each of the various functions has to do not only with the predicate but also with the event participants, the complements and the aspectual features. Each of the functions has been claimed to be closely related with the inherent semantic features of the predicate, the semantic constraints of the participants and the complement. It is through the interaction with the above components that each of the functions is substantialized. Evidence for this line of arguments has been provided from constructional idioms and cases with overlapping senses, among others.

Postulating that a construction is a meaning-bearing unit and henceforth that particular semantic structures come from the meaning associated with the construction has several theoretical implications. First of all, such an analysis, which attributes semantic

peculiarities to the constructions themselves, instead of to different verb senses, blurs the boundary between lexicon and syntax. Supporting evidence of highly constructionally idiomatic expressions and ambiguous cases also blurs the boundary between semantics and pragmatics; cf. Langacker 1987. Furthermore, by recognizing the existence of constructions that do carry meanings, the principle of compositionality is preserved in a weakened form. Compositionality, which requires that the meaning of an expression is a function of the meanings of its immediate constituents, has met with difficulty when it comes to expressions such as idioms whose meanings cannot be obtained compositionally. Instead of claiming that the syntax and semantics of a construction come exclusively from the specifications of the main predicate, and that the meaning of a construction comes from combining the constituents hierarchically, a constructional approach holds that the meaning of a construction is the result of integrating the meanings of its components into the meaning of the construction. Although not composed in a syntactically hierarchical way, the meaning of a construction, taken from a mono-stratal perspective, is composed holistically; cf. Goldberg 1995.

Several issues remain to be resolved with regard to the phenomena in question. First of all, as has been mentioned, LAU constructions demonstrate a case of constructional polysemy in which the same form is paired with different senses. In particular, following the line of argument of Sweetser (1986, 1988, 1990), Heine et al. (1991), and Hopper and Traugott (1993), among others, one can ask whether there is a central sense that can connect all the various senses. Although a brief discussion has been done in terms of how the overlapping meanings can be derived, the issue in terms of how the relations between the different senses can be explained in a natural way has to be left for to further study.

Furthermore, as has been hinted at under comitative function, one very peculiar feature of the LAU phrase has to do with its discourse function. The LAU phrase has to occur strictly in the second position of the construction, right after the first noun phrase. This restriction of word order brings forth two significant issues that deserve further investigation. On the one hand, the special semantic characteristics and discourse function associated with this particular position of the construction need to be delved into. On the other hand, like Mandarin, Hakka puts some general word order requirements of some ablative phrases, including the LAU phrase. And whether occurring preverbally or postverbally, they can make differences in terms of their meanings and discourse functions. In Mandarin, Li and Thompson (1974) and Tai (1985), for instance, have discussed the semantic consequences of word order in certain Mandarin Chinese structures. Furthermore, Tsao (1990) and Cheng and Tsao (1995) propose a secondary topic account to explain this second position requirement of the BA phrase in the BA construction in Mandarin as well as the KA phrase in the KA construction in Taiwanese

Southern Min. Henceforth, it is definitely worthwhile to examine the restriction of word order required by the LAU phrase in Hakka so that a typological comparison can be set forth.

The last issue has to do with dialectal variations within the Hakka language. As has been mentioned a couple of times in the footnotes, LAU shares labor with BUN both syntactically and semantically. Another morpheme that joins this camp is TUNG, which is exclusively used by Dongshi Hailu Hakka and Southern Sixian Hakka for the corresponding LAU constructions. Some native speakers of Northern Sixian Hakka allow free variations between LAU and TUNG in most of the functions. Further investigation into the variations cross-dialectally should be taken up to help explicate the complexity of Hakka grammar in particular. And this task will have to be left for future study as well.[16]

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[16] Dialectal variations can often be found among various sub-dialects of Hakka, which include Northern Sixian Hakka, Southern Sixian Hakka, and Dongshi Hailu Hakka, among others. The data presented in this paper are mainly based on the dialect of Northern Sixian Hakka.

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客語「摎」字句：從結構語法的觀點

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　　本文以 Goldberg (1995)、Jackendoff (1977) 及其他學者提出的「結構語法」的觀點為基礎，分析客語「摎」字句呈現的多義現象。本文提出「摎」字句是個多義結構，其多重的語意是由結構中所含的詞組成分的語意整合後的結果。本文並以語意隱含詞彙、結構片語及語意重疊等現象為佐證。

關鍵詞：結構語法，多義結構，語意隱含詞彙，客語「摎」字句