

The Semantic Extension of Hakka LAU*

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With regard to the meaning relatedness of the multiple grammatical and semantic functions associated with LAU, this study has the following proposals. First, it is claimed that LAU undergoes a two-step grammaticalization process, decategorizing from a verb to a preposition and subsequently into a conjunction. Along with the structural decategorization process, LAU extends its predicate meaning denoting *to mix* to its comitative preposition meaning denoting *together-with*, and then into conjunction meaning *and*. Second, it is argued that through the mechanism of metonymic strengthening and underspecification of participant roles in an event frame, each of the various senses can be induced given appropriate context. Specifically, the goal sense is strengthened through the implied inference of the comitative sense when the predicate is a verb of communication. The source sense, which denotes the opposite direction of the goal, comes out of an event frame that involves predicates of taking away. Then both the goal sense and the source sense can feed the emergence of the benefactive sense. Finally, two alternative paths are proposed to account for the emergence of the patient sense—either from the source sense or from the benefactive sense. Henceforth, the meaning extension of these different semantic functions associated with Hakka LAU is accounted for plausibly.

Key words: Hakka LAU constructions, grammaticalization, metaphorical extension, metonymic strengthening, underspecification of participant roles, event frames

1. Introduction

The Hakka LAU construction illustrates a case of constructional polysemy (following Goldberg 1995) whereby the LAU phrase is associated with five different senses—the comitative, the source, the goal, the benefactive, and the patient sense—as shown by the following examples, respectively.

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- (1) 阿英搵阿姨共下去街頂。
 Ayin LAU ayi kiungha hi giedang.¹
 Ayin LAU aunt together go downtown
 ‘Ayin, together with her aunt, went downtown.’
- (2) 阿英搵佢借錢。
 Ayin LAU gi jia qien.
 Ayin LAU him borrow money
 ‘Ayin borrowed money from him.’
- (3) 阿英搵阿明講故事。
 Ayin LAU Amin gong gusi.
 Ayin LAU Amin tell story
 ‘Ayin told a story to Amin.’
- (4) 阿英搵厥孖仔買一坵田。
 Ayin LAU gia lai-e mai yit kiu tien.
 Ayin LAU her son buy one CL land
 ‘Ayin bought a piece of land for her son.’
- (5) 阿明搵杯仔打爛哩。
 Amin LAU bi-e da-lan le.
 Amin LAU cup hit-break PART
 ‘Amin broke the cup.’

With regard to the phenomenon, Lai (2003), taking a constructional approach proposed by Goldberg (1995) and Jackendoff (1997) among others, has argued that each of the semantic functions has to do not only with the predicate but also with the event participants, the complements, and the aspectual features. Through the integration of all the meanings of the components of the construction, each of the semantic functions is manifested.

As plausible as the constructional analysis sounds, there is still one missing piece in the puzzle: namely the question as to how all these different senses are interrelated. Essentially, if the assumption that one syntactic form does not get randomly associated

¹ According to Luo (1998), around three million Hakka people are identified in Taiwan, occupying one-fifteenth of the total population in Taiwan. Now mainly spoken in Taiwan and some southern areas of Mainland China, Hakka includes several dialects: Sixian (Northern or Southern), Hailu, Dongshi, Raoping and Shaoan. Dialectal variations are expected. The data in this study are based on Northern Sixian Hakka. *Hanyu Pinyin* system is rendered for the romanization of the data. The following abbreviations are used for their corresponding grammatical functions: CL, classifiers; DO, subordinator; NEG, negation; ASP, aspectual markers; NOM, nominalizers; PART, particles.

with so many different semantic functions is valid (cf. Sweetser 1986, 1990), then the question demands further investigation. Furthermore, when more data are examined, LAU, in addition to the multi-functional LAU constructions, can also function as a verb and a conjunction. Example (6) illustrates a case where LAU is a verb in the sentence. Examples from (7) to (9) show the conjunctive function of LAU. LAU can conjoin two subject noun phrases as in (7), two object noun phrases as in (8), or other categories, such as two verbal phrases, as in (9).

- (6) 這兩間學堂佬等有兩千學生。
 Ya liong gien hoktong LAU-den yu liong-qien hoksang.
 the two CL school mix-equal has two thousand student
 'The two schools total two thousand students.'
- (7) 阿英佬阿明會面。
 Ayin LAU Amin fimian.
 Ayin LAU Amin meet
 'Ayin and Amin met.'
- (8) 到這兜朋友个鼓勵佬支持下，...
 Do yadeu pengyu ge guli LAU zici ha,...
 at these friends NOM encouragement LAU support under
 'under the encouragement and support of these friends,...'
- (9) 土地愛長期保護佬規畫。
 Tudi oi congki bofu LAU guifa.
 land need long-term protect LAU plan
 'The land needs long-term protection and planning.'

With regard to the complexity exhibited by LAU, this study aims to explicate how the various grammatical as well as semantic functions are interrelated with one other. Specifically, I shall propose a scenario of both structural and semantic development, whereby LAU is argued to have undergone a two-step grammaticalization process, in which it is decategorized from a verb into a preposition and then subsequently into a conjunction. I shall demonstrate that with the comitative sense as central in the LAU construction, all the other senses are derived through the mechanism of metonymy and underspecification of the participant roles due to a speaker's various perspectives in an event frame (cf. Langacker 1987, 1991, Taylor 1995, Talmy 2000a).

This paper is organized as follows. In addition to the introduction, section 2 will present the theoretical foundations for the analysis. Section 3 proposes the account. Then section 4 concludes the paper.

2. Theoretical foundations

Given the assumption that linguistic expressions are heavily dependent on the world and cultural knowledge and that the usage of them are also heavily dependent on speakers' perspectivization of the semantic components, meanings are regarded as being associated directly with surface forms, based on a speaker's construal of various situations (cf. Langacker 1987, 1991, Lakoff 1987, Fillmore et al. 1988, Goldberg 1995, 1996, Taylor 1995).

With such a heavy dependence on the language user's cultural and world knowledge, the interpretations of linguistic forms are impossible without taking the cognitive domains, namely the frames, into consideration. In what follows, the basic assumptions of frame semantics, especially event frames, will be presented with illustrative examples. Furthermore, cognitive-based mechanisms that speakers employ to manipulate surface expressions for various meanings are presented for an account of their interrelationship.

2.1 Frame semantics and event frames

Frames—with many other various terms such as scripts, schemata, scenes, scenarios, idealized cognitive models, and so on—presumably refer to the complex cognitive domains any linguistic form has to be characterized against (Taylor 1995). Despite the variations in terminology, what these notions boil down to is that the interpretation of a linguistic entry must anchor to cultural beliefs and practices. A frame refers to “the knowledge network linking the multiple domains associated with a given linguistic form”, as well defined in Taylor (1995:87). Crucially, meanings are defined with respect to certain particular background frames. In other words, frames are of paramount importance since they not only dominate language users' construal of language but also structure their language use. For example, as pointed out in Fillmore (1977) and cited in Goldberg (1995:25), although both used to denote solid ground, *land* is employed to oppose the *sea*, but *ground* is used to oppose *air*. In addition to nouns, verbs are claimed to be involved with frame-semantic meanings. Making reference to world and cultural knowledge, verbs are used to refer to conceptual structures. For instance, Fillmore & Atkins (1992, 2000) demonstrate how frames can explicitly describe and motivate the various senses associated with *risk* and *crawl*.

This concept of frame when applied to an event closely corresponds to Talmy's (2000a) characterization of an event frame. While acknowledging the emphasis of certain highlighted conceptual elements in a frame as Fillmore does, Talmy further emphasizes the exclusion of other conceptually peripheral elements out of an event

frame. “A set of conceptual elements and interrelationships that ... are evoked together or co-evoked each other can be said to lie within ... an event frame” (Talmy 2000a:259). Therefore, elements that are deemed as central lie within an event frame whereas those that are considered peripheral lie outside the event frame. Typical examples of central elements of event frames include those involved with the process of an object’s path, or the process of a causal chain. In contrast, the time when an event occurred, or the location where an event occurred is typically excluded from an event frame.

Talmy (2000a:260ff) further proposes factors that lead to the division of different types of event frames. For instance, in an event frame of motion, an object’s path can be delimited into several different ways, one of which contains a beginning point, a path, and an end point. Another example is an event frame of an agentive causation. In a process of a causal chain, the process can be roughly divided into an agentive initiator, and a final goal of the act. Still another event frame is the cyclic event frame, in which the whole process is separated by two time points that contain two similar intervals of occurrences. He further maintains that the principles that govern the boundary of an event frame reflect prototype effects as described by Lakoff (1987). Hence, the boundary is not a sharp line but a gradient area, whose range of scope varies according to specific context. Furthermore, the sense of relevance of certain elements in an event frame mainly has to do with the language users’ construal of a particular type of context. In other words, the determination of the inclusion or the exclusion of elements in an event frame relies on speakers’ perspectives, which is the issue we now turn to in the next section.

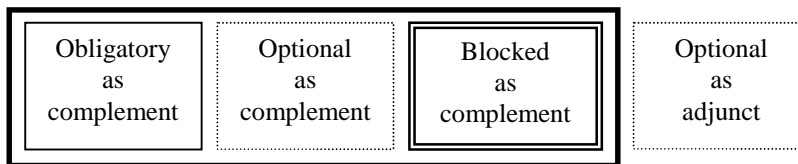
2.2 Perspectivization

Since the semantic structures of linguistic forms are rather complex and since the meanings of all linguistic forms can only be depicted with respect to a speaker’s background knowledge, certain components of the frame-based knowledge will often be perspectivized by the speaker for different uses of a linguistic entry (cf. Taylor 1995). Hence, *birth mother* highlights the birth domain, whereas the genetic domain of *mother* highlights the female who contributes genetic material.

A similar line of argument can also be found in Langacker (1987), who describes perspectives of a scene as the speaker’s viewpoints and focuses of an event. For instance, the same preposition *around* as in *The children ran around the house* can locate either external viewpoint or internal viewpoint of the same place *the house* due to different perspectives of the speaker. Additionally, the strategy of profiling-shadowing is used to construct an event. An illustration given by Langacker (1991) is the event scheme of *break*, which presumably can involve an agent, an instrument, and a patient.

Sometimes three of the elements can be profiled as in *John broke the window with a hammer*. Sometimes the instrument and the patient are profiled with the agent being shadowed as in *The hammer broke the window*. Alternatively, only the patient is profiled with the other two elements being shadowed as in *The window broke*.

With regard to an event frame, some participants are considered belonging to the represented frame whereas others are conceptualized as peripheral. Windowing of attention, or conceptual splicing, is coined by Talmy (2000a) to portray the cognitive process whereby a speaker places his attention over one or more participants in an event frame. Participants that are highlighted are windowed, whereas those that are backgrounded by exclusion are gapped. Such a distinction between windowed participants and gapped participants of a conceptual event frame correlates with the complement structures in syntax. Participants in an event frame can be realized into either complements or adjuncts. Some semantic arguments, called obligatory complements, must be realized, whereas others, called optional complements, may not. And there are blocked complements that cannot be expressed syntactically. Alternatively, optional adjuncts can be realized to designate those participants that are not required by a lexical item but that are profiled in an event frame. Take the verb *spend* as an example. Involving the commercial scene in Fillmore's sense, the event frame includes four arguments—a seller, a buyer, goods, and money. The sentence *John spent \$100 (on the book) [*from the clerk] for Mary* exhibits the following realizations. The buyer is realized as the subject; the money, the object. The goods can be optionally realized as an oblique as indicated by the parentheses, whereas a beneficiary adjunct is realized as an oblique. And the phrase shown in the brackets, indicating the seller, is a blocked complement. The following figure adopted from Talmy (2000a:263) can explicitly characterize the distinction.



Event frame

In addition to the option to profile or shadow certain participant roles in an event frame, the speaker can also employ other mechanisms to extend the meanings of the linguistic forms. Two major mechanisms—metaphor and metonymy—will be introduced below.

2.3 Metaphorical extension and metonymic strengthening

Establishing an important research domain along the line of cognitive semantics, metaphors are taken as ubiquitous phenomena in ordinary language, with much of our understanding of everyday experience being structured in terms of them. Because metaphors are so deeply grounded in common human experience, they have such a strong impact on a wide range of linguistic behaviors. In fact, metaphorical extension is deemed as one of the important mechanisms to account for meaning relatedness in many semantic processes. Sweetser (1986, 1990) for instance, considers metaphor to be a major cause for semantic change, proposing a cross-linguistic metaphor *mind-as-body* to account for the historical development of polysemy in Indo-European languages. Not only is metaphorical extension claimed to be an important mechanism to explicate the meaning relatedness of polysemy in English, but it has also been employed to explain similar cross-linguistic phenomena as those found in Taiwanese Southern Min, among other languages (e.g., Lien 2000).

Metaphorical extension is also claimed to be responsible for semantic changes such as generalization or weakening of semantic contents (e.g., Bybee & Pagliuca 1985). After examining a broad range of data cross-linguistically, Heine et al. (1991), applying metaphors to relations between conceptual domains that are metaphorically structured, maintain that metaphorical extension offers a plausible account for phenomena of grammaticalization. Along with the structural decategorization process, whereby lexical items and constructions assume in certain linguistic contexts grammatical functions, grammaticalization typically involves metaphorical extension whereby the denotations extend from conceptually concrete domains to less concrete domains (cf. Hopper & Traugott 1993, Heine et al. 1991).

Meaning extensions that are metaphorical in nature involve a transfer in discrete steps from a concrete domain to an abstract domain. However, meaning extensions can involve a process that is gradual and continuous. And that is how metonymy is coming into the picture. Metonymy, one of the most fundamental processes of meaning extension, refers to the process whereby connections between entities that coöccur within a given conceptual structure are established (Taylor 1995, Hopper & Traugott 1993, Traugott & König 1991). Traditionally, metonymy involves a process of referring function. For instance, in the example *Does he own any Picassos?* a referring function allows the name of a producer to refer to the product, whereas in *We need some new faces around here*, a salient part is used to refer to the whole. However, the entities do not have to be spatially contiguous; nor is metonymy limited to referring function. Influenced by frame semantics proposed by Fillmore (1982), and Lehrer & Kittay (1992), frame metonymies—coined by Traugott & Dasher (2002)—are suggested to explicate situations

where elements of the frame are parts of the whole. For instance, in a restaurant frame, customers and the ordered food are parts of the whole restaurant scene. Therefore, a case like *The omelette wants his coffee* involves not only an association of the food to the person who ordered it, but also an association of the person to the whole restaurant frame (cf. Nunberg 1995).

Furthermore, metonymy is also claimed to be responsible for the meaning relatedness synchronically and the semantic change diachronically (Heine et al. 1991, Traugott & Dasher 2002). Called “context-induced reinterpretation” by Heine et al. (1991), a metonymic process involves three stages as summarized by Heine et al. (1991:71f):

(10) Stage I:

In addition to its focal or core sense A, a given linguistic form F acquires an additional sense B when occurring in a specific context C. This can result in semantic ambiguity since either of the senses A or B may be implied in context C. Which of the two senses is implied usually is, but need not be, dependent on the relevant communication situation. It is equally possible that the speaker means A and the hearer interprets him or her as implying B or that the hearer understands B whereas the speaker intends to convey A.

Stage II:

The existence of sense B now makes it possible for the relevant form to be used in new contexts that are compatible with B but rule out sense A.

Stage III:

B is conventionalized; it may be said to form a secondary focus characterized by properties containing elements not present in A—with the effect that F now has two “polysemes,” A and B, which may develop eventually into “homophones.”

In brief, both metaphor and metonymy are important strategies for solving the problem of how various meanings are associated with one particular single form. Hopper & Traugott (1993:87) state explicitly the different purposes of the two:

Metaphorical change involves specifying one, usually complex, thing in terms of another not present in the context. Metonymic change, on the other hand, involves specifying one meaning in terms of another that is present, even if only covertly, in the context. ... While metaphor is correlated primarily with solving the problem of representation, metonymy... [is] correlated with solving the problem of expressing speaker attitudes.

3. Meaning extension

With the theoretical groundwork laid in section 2, this section takes up three tasks. Section 3.1 discusses the first step of a grammaticalization process whereby LAU is decategorized from a verb into a preposition, along with its semantic development. Section 3.2 further characterizes the semantic relatedness involved with LAU in the LAU construction. Section 3.3 takes up the delineation of the second step of the grammaticalization process in which LAU is further decategorized into a conjunction.

3.1 From *mix* to *together-with*

Before going into the discussion of the metonymic processes involved in the meaning extension of LAU, let us start with the verbal function used by LAU. LAU still keeps its verbal function denoting ‘to mix, blend, put together’. Examine the examples modified from Zhang (1995:117) (cf. also MacIver 1926).

- (11) 食鹽搵粥。
 Sit yam LAU zuk.
 eat salt mix porridge
 ‘To eat the porridge that has been mixed with salt.’
- (12) 這兩間學堂搵等有兩千學生。
 Ya liong gien hoktong LAU-den yu liong-qien hoksang.²
 the two CL school mix-equal has two thousand student
 ‘The two schools total two thousand students.’
- (13) 釀豆干个料愛搵合。
 Ngion teu-gon ge liau oi LAU-gap.
 stew hard-bean-curd NOM sauce need mix-mix
 ‘The sauce for hard bean curd needs to be completely mixed.’
- (14) 煮菜毋好七搵八合。
 Zu-coi m-hao qit-L AU-bat-gap.³
 cook-meal NEG-good seven-mix-eight-mix
 ‘Don’t jumble everything up when cooking a meal.’

² As can be noticed, another verb *yu* occurs right after the compound *lau-den* in example (12). One can treat *lau-den yu* as a compound. Alternatively, one can treat *yu* as some kind of a raising verb with the proposition *The two schools total two thousand students* as its argument. I owe the discussion of the verbal features of LAU to One-soon Her.

³ In contemporary Northern Sixian Hakka, LAU is pronounced as [lo] as in *sit-fan-lo-mi* ‘to mix soup with rice to eat’. Monophthongization is involved turning the diphthong [au] into a monophthong [o]. I thank Yuchau E. Hsiao, who helps explicate this phonological phenomenon.

LAU in all these four examples function as a verb. In example (11), LAU denoting ‘to mix (salt with porridge)’ is a single verb functioning as the predicate of the subordinate clause modifying the noun *zuk* ‘porridge’. In example (12), *lau-den* is a V-V compound predicate denoting ‘to total the number of all the individuals’. Example (13) illustrates another V-V compound of LAU. LAU and *gap*, basically carrying similar meaning—‘to mix things together’—form a V-V compound in which both of their arguments are fused. Example (14) provides a case whereby LAU undergoes further morphological processing with *qit* ‘seven’ and *bat* ‘eight’—two expletive forms—infixed, forming a lexical item *qit-lau-bat-gap* denoting ‘to jumble things up’ with a derogative connotation. Hence it is usually used in a negative construction, warning people not to do so.

The sense denoted by the verbal function of LAU provides a very encouraging source for the analysis of the multiple functions in question. Notice that in the LAU constructions under investigation, LAU functions as a preposition denoting various senses. A reasonable explication of such a syntactic shift is to postulate that LAU has undergone a process of grammaticalization, decategorizing from a verb to a preposition. The distinction between the verb function of LAU and the preposition function of LAU can be illustrated by adopting two universal tests proposed by McCawley (1992)—topicalization and the deletion of understood relative pronouns. Specifically, verbs allow their objects to be extracted or deleted, whereas prepositions do not allow extraction or deletion of their objects. Contrast the following sets of examples, in which LAU is a verb in (15a) and in which LAU is a preposition in (16a).

(15) a. 搵摺這東西愛幾多錢？

LAU-qiu ya dungxi oi gi-do qien?
mix-collect the stuff need how-much money
‘How much does it cost to put all the stuff together?’

b. 這東西 [搵摺Ø] 愛幾多錢？

Ya dungxi [LAU-qiu Ø] oi gi-do qien?
the stuff mix-collect need how-much money
‘The stuff, how much does it cost when put together?’

c. [搵摺Ø] 個這東西愛幾多錢？

[LAU-qiu Ø] ge ya dungxi oi gi-do qien?
mix-collect NOM the stuff need how-much money
‘How much does the stuff that is put together cost?’

(16) a. 阿英搵阿姑共下去街頂。

Ayin LAU agu kiungha hi giedang.
Ayin LAU aunt together go downtown
‘Ayin, together with her aunt, went downtown.’

- b. *阿姑，阿英 [搵Ø] 共下去街頂。
 *Agu, Ayin [LAU Ø] kiungha hi giedang.
 aunt Ayin LAU together go downtown
- c. *阿英 [搵Ø] 共下去街頂个阿姑。
 *Ayin [LAU Ø] kiungha hi giedang ge agu.
 Ayin LAU together go downtown NOM aunt

The two tests clearly distinguish the verb LAU from the preposition LAU. Essentially, the object of the compound verb *lau-qiu* ‘to put things together’ can be extracted as in (15b) or can be deleted as in (15c). On the contrary, extraction or deletion of the object of the preposition LAU renders examples (16b) and (16c) completely unacceptable. The two tests demonstrate that LAU is a verb in example (15a), but it functions as a preposition in (16a).

The development from a verb to a preposition is a quite widespread phenomenon cross-linguistically especially in Chinese languages (cf. Heine et al. 1991, Hopper & Traugott 1993, Li 1975, Chang 1977, Zhang & Fang 1996, Lai 2001, Lai 2002, among others). For instance, Li & Thompson (1976) and Peyraube (1989) have argued, with diachronic evidence, that preverbal prepositions such as *bei* (an agent marker) or *ba* (a patient marker) in contemporary Mandarin emerge at the cost of the collapse of serial verb constructions. Also, Lai (2001, 2002) argues that in Hakka the morpheme BUN, denoting ‘to give’ in its verbal function, as well as the morpheme DO, meaning ‘to arrive’ in its verbal function, are decategorized into adpositions from verbs. The proposed scenario for the syntactic decategorization of LAU provides another illustration for this pervasive grammaticalization phenomenon.

Now a typical grammaticalization process involves not only syntactic decategorization but also semantic development. In this case, LAU, along with its syntactic decategorization from a verb into a preposition, undergoes a semantic development—from a verb denoting ‘to mix’ into a preposition denoting ‘together-with’. Such a meaning extension is conceptually natural. Essentially, *to mix A and B* presumably involves an activity in which the two elements A and B are blended together. The only difference between the two meanings is that while in the verbal meaning, no priority is put on the elements, in the prepositional meaning, one of the elements captures a more prominent semantic and discourse status due to its syntactic position of the whole construction. After the grammaticalization process, LAU then develops its other senses from the comitative sense. The next section will explicate the semantic development.

3.2 The metonymic processes

The meaning development discussed has naturally led to the comitative sense of LAU—namely to denote ‘together-with’. The question now is how LAU develops its other senses from the comitative sense. I shall try to argue that the other senses arise through metonymic processes that specify the underlying covert meanings implied in the context. Besides, certain participant roles in an event frame can be underspecified, which in turn helps the metonymic process. In what follows, the emergence of each of the senses will be shown.

3.2.1 From comitative to goal

First let us consider the inducement of the goal sense from the comitative sense. Consider the following examples.

- (17) 阿明搵阿姑共下去街頂。

Amin LAU agu kiungha hi giedang.

Amin LAU aunt together go downtown

‘Amin, together with his aunt, went downtown.’

- (18) 阿明搵阿英共下唱歌仔。

Amin LAU Ayin kiungha cong go-e.

Amin LAU Ayin together sing song

‘Amin, together with Ayin, is singing.’

In example (17) in which a distributive reading is detected, LAU marks a comitative noun phrase, who is accompanying the first noun phrase before LAU to go downtown together. In example (18), also with a distributive reading, LAU again marks its phrase as a comitative role, indicating that *Ayin* is singing together with the subject *Amin*. Now since both of the predicates denote activities that can be done either by one individual or by more individuals, LAU in such cases explicitly marks a comitative role that participates in the activity together with the subject. However, consider the following examples.

- (19) 堵著客人，愛搵佢講客話。

Du-do hakngin, oi LAU gi gong hakfa.

run-into Hakka need LAU he speak Hakka

‘If you run into a Hakka, you have to speak Hakka with / to him.’

(20) 愛搵子女講客話，係無，客話會攞了了。

Oi LAU zing gong hakfa,
 need LAU children speak Hakka
 hemo, hakfa voi fit liau-liau.
 otherwise Hakka will throw not-much-left
 ‘You need to speak Hakka with/to your children; otherwise, Hakka will be
 completely forgotten.’

When the predicate of the sentence is some kind of a verb of communication as in these two examples, ambiguous readings can arise. Consider a scenario in which sentence (19) will be used. In addition to some Hakka villages where Hakka is the dominant language, places all over Taiwan have Hakka people spreading in different occupations. Now since Hakka is not the dominant language outside Hakka towns, normally Hakka people will speak Mandarin or Taiwanese Southern Min instead of Hakka, unless they know that people they are speaking with can speak Hakka as well. Because of the dominance of the other two languages, and because of the lack of opportunities to use Hakka, some Hakka people might feel that their Hakka language skills are becoming rusty. Hence example (19), uttered by Hakka advocates for instance, is used to remind Hakka people that they should speak Hakka with each other whenever they run into each other. In such a case, LAU marks a comitative function.

However, given the scenario just described, one can infer that sentence (19) carries an implicature that the entity marked by the LAU phrase is actually the target that the subject is speaking Hakka to, especially if the person that is run into can not speak Hakka fluently. Such an inference is conceptually natural since in a conversation activity that involves two participants, one of the two parties can be the more dominant one that controls the floor of the dialogue and that decides which language is used for the conversation.

Such an inference is even stronger in the scenario of sentence (20). Although the distinction between the preposition *to* and the preposition *with* in the English readings is not so great, the distinction between the two readings in Hakka is strengthened in the context. For those of the younger generation of Hakka that do not live in Hakka towns, Hakka is usually not the language that they pick up as their native language. If their parents do not speak Hakka with them at home, they will not have any opportunities to learn to speak Hakka at all since Hakka is not the language used in their surrounding environment—including at their schools or with their peers. In such a context, even though the parents are trying to use Hakka to communicate with their children, the parents most likely talk to their children in Hakka without their children using Hakka to respond to them even if their children can comprehend what they say. Hence, example

(20) is uttered by Hakka advocates to strongly urge the parents that they should speak Hakka to their children for the sake of the preservation of the Hakka language. LAU in (20) hence implicates that the denoted entity signifies a goal.

In both scenarios, the LAU phrase, although indicating a comitative function, strongly implies that it is also the goal that the subject is speaking Hakka to. Hence the goal reading associated with LAU is strengthened under such a context (cf. Traugott & König 1991, Hopper & Traugott 1993). More specifically, through a metonymic process pointing to the otherwise covert implicature that is associated with the comitative function of LAU, the goal function has now become one of the senses that are associated with LAU. Therefore, example (19) and example (20) carry ambiguity. Once the goal sense, through such a process of context-induced reinterpretation (following Heine et al. 1991), is identified as a separate sense of the LAU construction, predicates that are semantically compatible with the meaning of the construction can occur in the construction. And all the other semantic constraints that are associated with the LAU construction denoting a goal function follow accordingly. The following example illustrates a typical case where LAU marks a goal.

(21) 阿明看戲轉來愛搵厥姑講戲文。

Amin kon hi zonlai oi LAU gia gu gong hiwen.
 Amin see opera return has-to LAU his aunt tell content
 ‘Amin had to explain the content of the opera to his aunt after watching it.’

In such an example, only the goal function is associated with the LAU phrase. Since the aunt did not go watching the opera with *Amin*, she could not talk with *Amin* about the opera; she could only listen to what *Amin* had to say about the opera to her; hence the comitative reading is not possible. In other words, the goal sense, gaining its independent semantic status, has already become one of the polysemous senses associated with the LAU construction.

3.2.2 The emergence of source

After the discussion of the goal sense, let us move on to discussion of the emergence of the source sense, which denotes the opposite direction of the goal. It turns out that the source sense associated with LAU is quite straightforward. The source sense comes from an event frame that involves predicates of taking away. Examine the following examples.

- (22) 阿英搵阿明買田分厥殮仔。

Ayin LAU Amin mai tien bun gia lai-e.
 Ayin LAU Amin buy land for his son
 ‘Ayin bought a piece of land from Amin for her son.’

- (23) 阿英搵阿明借錢分佢。

Ayin LAU Amin jia qien bun gi.
 Ayin LAU Amin borrow money for him
 ‘Ayin borrowed the money from Amin for him.’

The two examples with the taking-away event frames provide a linguistic context for the emergence of the source sense. The land-buying event frame involves four potential participants—the buyer (goal), the seller (source), the goods (patient) and the beneficiary who benefits from the act of transaction. As indicated in example (22), the four potential participant roles in a land-buying event are all syntactically realized—the goal being the subject, the patient being the direct object, the source marked by LAU preverbally, and the benefactive marked by BUN postverbally. In a similar manner, the four potential participants in a money-borrowing event frame in example (23) are all syntactically realized—the goal being the subject, the patient being the direct object, the source marked by LAU preverbally, and the benefactive marked by BUN postverbally. Such different linguistic contexts induce opposite interpretations of the LAU construction—either denoting a source or denoting a goal. Examine the following examples again.

- (24) 阿英搵阿明講故事。

Ayin LAU Amin gong gusi.
 Ayin LAU Amin tell story
 ‘Ayin told a story to Amin.’

- (25) 阿英搵阿明買田。

Ayin LAU Amin mai tien.
 Ayin LAU Amin buy land
 ‘Ayin bought a piece of land from Amin.’

LAU marks a goal in example (24) with a predicate of denoting the transfer of information, whereas LAU marks a source in example (25) with a predicate of taking-away. The following analysis, adopted from Jackendoff’s (1990) two-tier analysis of thematic roles, can clearly delineate the distinction.⁴

⁴ Jackendoff (1990) proposes a theory of tiers of thematic roles to capture the fact that one nominal might fulfill more than one role. A thematic tier is suggested to describe spatial relations whereas an action tier is suggested to characterize actor-patient relations. Presumably,

(26) a. 阿英搗阿明講故事。

Ayin LAU Amin gong gusi.

Ayin LAU Amin tell story

agent

(action tier)

source

goal

(thematic tier)

‘Ayin told a story to Amin.’

b. 阿英搗阿明買田。

Ayin LAU Amin mai tien.

Ayin LAU Amin buy land

agent

(action tier)

goal

source

(thematic tier)

‘Ayin bought a piece of land from Amin.’

In a story-telling event frame, the subject denotes not only the agent who tells the story but also the source by whom the story is told. LAU in this case is used to mark the goal to whom the story is told. On the other hand, in a land-buying event frame, the subject denotes not only the agent who sells the land but also the goal to whom the land is sold. LAU in this case is used to mark the source from whom the land is bought. The two-tier analysis of the thematic roles clearly elucidates the semantic extension of the goal sense as well as the source sense associated with LAU. Furthermore, the independent semantic status of the source sense can be further illustrated with the following *sui generis* construction (cf. also Lin 1990:78). Although the construction carries a fixed idiomatic meaning, LAU here explicitly marks a source.

(27) 汝搗和尚借梳仔。

Ng LAU vo-song jia si-e.

you LAU monk borrow comb

‘You are looking for trouble from me.’

3.2.3 From goal/source to benefactive

Once the goal function and the source function have become independent senses associated with the LAU construction, its development into a benefactive function illustrates a double-track semantic extension. Essentially, the benefactive sense can be induced from either the goal sense or the source sense. I shall try to argue that in addition to the operation of the metonymic mechanism, underspecification of the

the thematic tier may include theme, goal, source, and location. The action tier may include actor, agent, experiencer, patient, beneficiary, and instrument.

participant roles involved in an event frame adds its force to bring out the polysemous effect. First, let us see how the benefactive sense can be induced from the goal sense. Consider the following examples.

(28) 阿英佬佢寫信仔。

Ayin LAU gi xia xin-e.

Ayin LAU him write letter

‘Ayin wrote a letter to him.’ / ‘Ayin wrote a letter (to someone) for him.’

(29) 阿英佬阿明搵煮飯。

Ayin LAU Amin ten zu fan.

Ayin LAU Amin help cook meal

‘Ayin helped cook a meal for Amin.’ / ‘Ayin helped Amin cook a meal (for someone).’

Example (28) involves an event frame which can inherently include three participants—a writer, a letter, and a receiver of the letter. Presumably a letter-writing scenario, as indicated by the first reading of (28), involves a writer writing a letter to a receiver who will get the letter if it is mailed to him. Hence the subject is the agent that writes the letter, whereas the LAU phrase marks the goal that will receive the letter.

However, imagine a situation whereby a person is illiterate, unable to read and write. In such a scenario, the agent who writes the letter does not correspond to the sender of the letter. Instead, the agent is writing the letter for someone else, who wants to send the letter to the receiver. Hence the subject is the agent that writes the letter, whereas the LAU phrase indicates the benefactive participant who is benefiting from the letter-writing activity. And the receiver of the letter is underspecified in the context. The second reading of (28) demonstrates such a scenario.

Let us turn to example (29). First consider the first reading. The predicate *zu* ‘cook’ of this case is a verb of creation denoting that an agent intends to cause a potential recipient to receive the patient (cf. Pinker 1989, Goldberg 1995). Successful transfer being an implication, the verb *zu* ‘cook’ conveys the meaning that *Ayin* cooked the meal with the intention of giving the meal to *Amin* to eat. In such a scenario, the subject is the agent that cooks the meal, whereas the LAU phrase denotes both the goal and the benefactive for whom the meal is cooked. Notice that English uses two different prepositions—to or *for*—to mark the goal and the benefactive, with the former indicating the notion of gaining possession and the latter indicating benefaction. However, Pinker (1989:117) points out not only that the cognitive content of the notions of the two may be similar, but also that in other languages constructions parallel to the double-object construction in English can refer to the goal, the benefactive, or both.

Hakka exemplifies a language where both a goal and a benefactive are referred to by the LAU phrase as indicated in the first reading of example (29).

In addition to the first scenario, example (29) carries another reading whereby the LAU phrase unequivocally denotes an external argument that signifies a third party who gains the benefit from the act of cooking a meal without his coming to receive the cooked meal. In other words, in example (29), *Ayin* cooked the meal for someone else, but she was doing this act to help *Amin* out. In such a scenario, the subject is the agent who helps cook the meal, the goal of the cooked meal is underspecified, and the LAU phrase indicates a benefactive participant whom the act of cooking the meal is benefiting.

Conceptually speaking, both of the cases could involve four potential participants that constitute an event frame (cf. Langacker 1987, Talmy 2000a). The event frame of a letter-writing activity involves a writer, a sender, a letter, and a receiver, whereas that of a meal-cooking activity involves a cook, a meal, the participant to whom the meal is served, and the benefactive party who benefits from the activity of meal cooking. Both of the predicates *xia* ‘write’ and *zu* ‘cook’ can be integrated into the ditransitive construction in Hakka, which presumably allows two non-predicative noun phrases to occur directly after the verb. Following Goldberg (1995), one can represent the thematic structure of a ditransitive construction in Hakka as <agent, goal, patient>. Now sometimes, given appropriate context, the goal in both event frames can be deprofiled. Alternatively, an adjunct can be optionally added to denote the beneficiary who benefits from the activity. Therefore, ambiguity arises due to these two alternative syntactic realizations of the participant roles.

In the first reading of example (28) or example (29), all the argument roles—the agent, the patient and the goal—are profiled, but the potential benefactive participant role is optionally underspecified. In the second reading, on the other hand, the goal argument is deprofiled and at the same time an optional benefactive adjunct is added. In other words, the profiling of the agent, the patient, and the benefactive roles brings out the second reading. Now since in Hakka, both the goal and the benefactive participant roles can be marked by LAU, ambiguity will emerge when only three out of the four potential participant roles are profiled. After the context-induced benefactive sense, through metonymic strengthening, emerges as a separate sense, it gains its semantic independence—bringing forth the polysemous effect of LAU.

Alternatively, the benefactive sense can be induced from the source sense in some context where certain participant roles are underspecified. Consider the following examples.

(30) 阿英搵阿明買田。

Ayin LAU Amin mai tien.

Ayin LAU Amin buy land

‘Ayin bought a piece of land from Amin (for someone).’

‘Ayin bought a piece of land (from someone) for Amin.’

(31) 阿英搵阿明借錢。

Ayin LAU Amin jia qien.

Ayin LAU Amin borrow money

‘Ayin borrowed money from Amin (for someone else).’

‘Ayin borrowed money (from someone else) for Amin.’

As mentioned before, in a land-buying event frame, four participants can be involved—the buyer, the seller, the land, and the beneficiary of the act of land buying. Now suppose that the benefactive role that can be marked by BUN is deprofiled as exemplified by (30); then ambiguity arises with the LAU phrase denoting either the source or the benefactive. In the first reading, all the other participant roles are profiled with the benefactive role deprofiled; hence the LAU phrase signifies a source. In the second reading, on the other hand, the source role is underspecified, and at the same time the benefactive role is profiled; hence the LAU phrase signifies a benefactive. Likewise, in a money-borrowing event frame exemplified by (31), the deprofiling of the benefactive role brings out the first reading, whereas the underspecification of the source role brings out the second reading.

In short, similar to the track from the goal sense, the development from the source sense to the benefactive sense involves underspecification of participant roles and metonymic strengthening. A context such as that in example (30) and example (31), where underspecification of participant roles occurs, gives rise to the ambiguity associated with the LAU phrase. Then through a metonymic process, the benefactive sense emerges as a separate sense associated with it.

Once the benefactive function associated with the LAU phrase has been conventionalized, it becomes one of the separate senses associated with it, gaining its semantic independent status. Most often, the benefactive LAU phrase can coöccur with verbs that merely denote acts done for the benefit of a third party. The following example illustrates a case where the LAU phrase explicitly delineates a benefactive function.

(32) 阿明搵阿英洗車仔。

Amin LAU Ayin se ca-e.

Amin LAU Ayin wash car

‘Amin washed Ayin’s car for him.’

In such a case, since the verb *se* ‘wash’ clearly indicates two argument participants—the washer and the car. The LAU phrase in such a case hence unquestionably indicates an external adjunct denoting a participant who gains benefit from the act of car washing.

3.2.4 The emergence of patient

In addition to the four senses discussed, LAU can also be associated with the patient sense, denoting an affected entity undertaking the result of an action. The question now is how the patient sense can get associated with the LAU phrase. I shall propose that there are two alternative paths that the patient sense can be induced—one from the source sense and the other from the benefactive sense.

First, let us consider how the source sense can bring out the patient sense. If we reexamine a taking-away event frame that involves an agent who takes away something from the source, it is quite straightforward to see how the patient can get associated with the LAU phrase, which in such a context denotes the source. In taking-away event frames such as money borrowing, the source that lends the money to the goal is affected by the action of money borrowing. The lending of money implies that the source is also the patient who undergoes the result of the action. Following Jackendoff’s (1990) two-tier analysis of thematic roles, one can characterize a money-borrowing event frame as follows.

(33) 阿英搵阿明借錢。

Ayin LAU Amin jia qien.

Ayin LAU Amin borrow money

agent patient

(action tier)

goal source

(thematic tier)

‘Ayin borrowed money from Amin.’

Since the LAU phrase is the source from whom the money is borrowed, he is also the entity that is affected by the money-borrowing event. Giving away his money, he undergoes the result of the money-borrowing action.

Through the metonymic process, such an implied inference of the patient sense from the source sense can be strengthened, gaining its semantic independence. The following example illustrates that the patient sense can be independently associated with the LAU phrase, denoting an entity that undergoes the result of an action.

(34) 阿明搵杯仔打爛哩。

Amin LAU bi-e da-lan le.
 Amin LAU cup hit-break PART
 ‘Amin broke the cup.’

Unequivocally denoting the patient sense, the LAU phrase here signifies a cup that has undergone a change of state caused by the action of breaking. Once obtaining semantic independence, the patient sense of the LAU phrase can coöccur with almost all action verbs that involve a causer who performs an action so as to bring a change of state to the patient entity (Lai 2003).

The other alternative path for the emergence of the patient sense is to be induced from the benefactive sense. The development from the benefactive function to the patient function sounds peculiar at first glance, but given the metonymic strengthening in appropriate context, the semantic development from the benefactive sense to the patient sense can be explained naturally. To begin with, consider the following example.

(35) 看著陳先生，愛搵佬講好話。

Kondo Chen xinsang, oi LAU ngai ten gong ho fa.
 see Chen mister have-to LAU me help say good words
 ‘Please say something nice about me to Mr. Chen when you see him.’

In such a case, the LAU phrase clearly functions as a benefactive of the act of saying something nice. However, consider the following scenario. Suppose that Mr. Chen is a person who holds a socially prestigious position and who plays a very influential role in making important decisions. Suppose that the hearer is a person who does not know how to behave himself appropriately in front of a person who has a prestigious status. Then instead of uttering sentence (35), the speaker may say something as in (36) below.

(36) 看著陳先生，毋好佬亂講話。

Kondo Chen xinsang, m-ho LAU ngai longongfa.
 see Chen mister NEG-good LAU me talk nonsense
 ‘Don’t talk nonsense (so as to embarrass me) if you see Mr. Chen.’

In such a circumstance, instead of signifying benefaction, LAU marks a malefactive function that suffers from the adverse consequence of the act that is done. The malefactive sense of such a circumstance provides a perfect context for the emergence of the patient sense.

The following examples clearly illustrate cases in which the malefactive function

and the patient function merge in the context.

(37) 飯，阿英搵食淨淨。

Fan, Ayin LAU ngai sit qiang-qiang.

rice Ayin LAU me eat empty

‘The rice was eaten up by Ayin so that there was nothing left for me.’

(38) 阿英搵目珠噉到紅紅。

Ayin LAU mukzu gieu do fung-fung.

Ayin LAU eyes cry DO red-red

‘Ayin cried so hard that her eyes turned red.’

In example (37), the direct object *fan* ‘rice’ is topicalized; and the LAU phrase, being an adjunct, indicates someone that will undergo the malefaction due to the act of all the rice being eaten up. Although not one of the arguments, the LAU phrase, one of the participants in such an event frame, plays some kind of a patient role that will take the consequence of the act that is done by the agent. The example clearly delineates a case in which the patient sense associated with the LAU phrase merges with the malefactive sense given appropriate context. Moreover, in example (38), the predicate is an intransitive verb *gieu* ‘cry’. Hence the phrase *mukzu* ‘eyes’ cannot be the direct object of the predicate. In fact, it is the subject of the resultative complement *fung-fung* ‘red’, but it is preposed to the preverbal position that is required by the LAU construction. In such a scenario, *mukzu* ‘eyes’ signifies a malefactive entity, undergoing the change of state due to the act of crying. The seriousness of the result of crying is described by the resultative complement. In this example, the LAU phrase, although being an external adjunct, denotes a patient-like entity that takes the consequence of the act of crying done by the agent.

To sum up, two possible paths are proposed to account for the emergence of the patient sense associated with the LAU phrase—either from the source sense or from the benefactive sense. Both involve the mechanism of metonymy, a context-induced reinterpretation process. Both accounts are quite plausible, yet no commitment is undertaken as to which is better. However, such a double-track analysis does have an implication for a possible syntactic analysis of the construction.

Notice that the patient sense, whether coming from the source sense or the benefactive (malefactive) sense, carries some of the properties for the Patient Proto-Role argued in Dowty (1991:572). The patient role identified in example (34), namely *bi-e* ‘the cup’, undergoes a change of state, is causally affected by the action of breaking, and is stationary relative to another participant. Likewise, the patient role *mukzu* ‘eyes’ in example (38) undergoes a change of state, and is causally affected by the action of

crying. However, an issue that comes out of the discussion has to do with the syntactic status of the LAU phrase when it denotes the patient sense. In most cases, the LAU phrase is the internal argument of the predicate as in example (34). However, the LAU phrase can signify an adjunct in some cases as in example (37) and example (38). What exactly the syntactic status of the LAU phrase is begs for an explanation if one has to tackle the LAU construction from a syntactic angle. Although this study is not going to probe into the syntactic issue any further, the semantic account proposed here may provide a clue for possible analyses of the syntax. Crucially, the patient role that is an internal argument comes from the source sense in a taking-away event frame. On the contrary, the patient role that is an external adjunct comes from the malefactive sense that is the third party who suffers from the adverse consequence of the action denoted by the predicate. In order to offer a plausible account of the peculiarity of the syntax, one ultimately has to take the semantics of the construction into consideration.

3.3 From comitative preposition to comitative conjunction

Section 3.2 has shown the metonymic process in which the emergence of each sense associated with the LAU phrase occurs. The issue to be taken up in this section concerns the conjunctive function of the comitative LAU. In addition to the preposition function, the comitative sense of LAU has another syntactic status, functioning as a conjunction. The major distinction between the two functions lies in the fact that the preposition LAU has to occur right after the subject, whereas the conjunction LAU can conjoin other syntactic constituents. Examine the following examples.

- (39) 阿英搵阿明會面。

Ayin LAU Amin fimian.

Ayin LAU Amin meet

‘Ayin and Amin met.’

- (40) 到這兜朋友个鼓勵搵支持下，...

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

at these friends NOM encouragement LAU support under

‘under the encouragement and support of these friends,...’

- (41) 土地愛長期保護搵規畫。

Tudi oi congki bofu LAU guifa.

land need long-term protect LAU plan

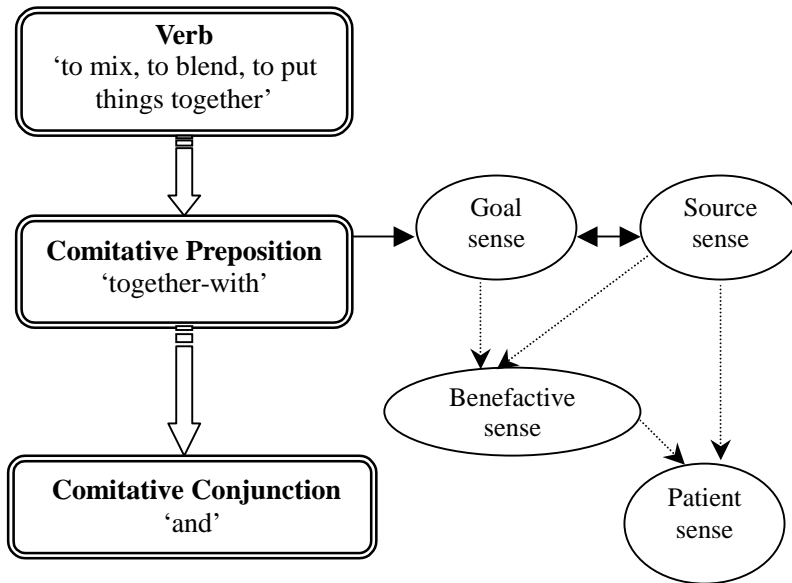
‘The land needs long-term protection and planning.’

These cases show comitative conjunction of LAU connecting two animate noun phrases functioning as the subject in (39), connecting two inanimate noun phrases functioning as the object of a preposition in (40), and connecting two verbal phrases in (41). Since the meaning relatedness between the comitative preposition LAU and the comitative conjunction LAU is quite straightforward—the former denoting ‘together-with’ whereas the latter denoting ‘and’—a grammaticalization process can then be postulated for the development whereby the preposition function is further decategorized into the conjunction function.

Such a development accords with what has been claimed by Heine et al. (1991:156): If two grammatical categories differ from one another only by the fact that one typically implies some human participant, whereas the other implies an inanimate participant, then the latter is more grammaticalized. The conjunction LAU, which can conjoin inanimate participants, are therefore more grammaticalized than the preposition LAU, which can only mark an animate participant. In fact, cross-linguistic researches on similar phenomena come up with parallel generalizations. Liu & Peyraube (1994), citing diachronic data, propose that several conjunctions in contemporary Mandarin (including *ji*, *yu*, *gong*, *he*, *tong*, *gen*) have involved two steps of grammaticalization—one transforming a verb into a preposition, and subsequently the other developing the preposition into a conjunction. In a similar vein, Cheng & Tsao (1995), and Chappell (2000), documenting data from earlier texts and sub-dialects in Taiwanese Southern Min, maintain that the conjunction function of *ka* evolves from its comitative preposition function. In section 3.1, LAU was claimed to have been decategorized from a verb denoting ‘to mix’ into a preposition denoting ‘together-with’. Its further transforming from a preposition denoting ‘together-with’ into a conjunction denoting ‘and’ through a grammaticalization process is hence a very natural step. After the emergence of its conjunction function as a noun phrase link, it then spreads to other syntactic constituents such as predicates or clauses (cf. Mithun 1988).

4. Conclusion

An analysis with regard to the meaning relatedness of the multiple grammatical, as well as semantic functions associated with LAU is proposed. The following figure explicitly represents the structural and semantic developments as proposed.



Structural and semantic development of LAU

To begin with, it is argued that LAU has undergone a two-step grammaticalization process, decategorizing from a verb into a preposition and subsequently into a conjunction. Along the structural decategorization, LAU develops its meaning, through metaphorical extension, from ‘to mix’ to ‘together-with’, and then to ‘and’. While functioning as a comitative preposition, LAU further develops the other senses through the mechanism of metonymic strengthening and underspecification of participant roles in event frames. Specifically, the goal sense is strengthened through the implied inference of the comitative sense when the predicate is a verb of communication. The source sense, which denotes the opposite direction of the goal sense, comes out of an event frame that involves predicates of taking away. Both the goal and the source senses can feed the emergence of the benefactive sense. Finally, two alternative paths are suggested to account for the emergence of the patient sense—either from the source sense or from the benefactive sense. Hence, the semantic extension of the various senses associated with LAU is plausibly explicated. While the proposal of this study suggests plausible scenarios based on the synchronic phenomena exhibited by the data, diachronic evidence, if ever attested, will definitely strengthen the argumentation.

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客語「搵」字句的語意延伸

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本文針對客語「搵」字句多種句法結構及語意內涵提出以下的分析：首先，「搵」經過兩階段語法化的過程，先由動詞發展為介詞，再進一步發展成連接詞，其語意也從「摻合、攪拌」擴展到「伴隨義」，再擴展為「連接義」。同時藉助隱喻強化的功能及事件架構中參與角色的隱現與否，「搵」從伴隨義擴展出其他五種的語意。

關鍵詞：客語「搵」字句，語法化，隱喻延伸，轉喻強化，事件架構，參與角色的隱現與否