

From ‘Direction’ to ‘Positive Evaluation’: On the Grammaticalization, Subjectification and Intersubjectification of *faan1* ‘return’ in Cantonese*

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This paper investigates the grammaticalization of the directional particle *faan1* in Cantonese. Drawing on examples from a diachronic database reflecting the use of *faan1* in Cantonese from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, this study traces the diachronic development of *faan1*. Originally a verb of movement meaning ‘to return to the original location’, *faan1* has gradually developed into a grammatical particle giving resumptive meanings, as well as subjective evaluative meanings. Despite the fact that these meanings of *faan1* have been commented upon extensively in the past, it is found that it has undergone further grammaticalization to become a tone-softener, playing an intersubjective role. It is suggested that the subjectification and intersubjectification of *faan1* are motivated by the conversational needs for a speaker to express his subjective feelings as well as to care for his addressee’s face needs. The particle *faan1* turned out to be a very suitable candidate to achieve these communicative goals, thus leading to its pragmatic enrichment.

Key words: Cantonese, grammaticalization, subjectification, evaluative particle, *faan1*

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1. Introduction

Research focusing on grammaticalization,¹ frequently described as the way lexical, ‘content’ categories (e.g. verbs, nouns, adjectives, etc.) change into grammatical, ‘functional’ categories (e.g. clitics, particles, auxiliaries, connectives, etc.), has been increasing cross-linguistically in the past two decades. Although the term ‘grammaticalization’ seems to have originated at the beginning of the twentieth century,² it was only from the 1970s onwards that studies on grammaticalization have intensified. Since then, various processes leading from words to affixes, and from concrete to more abstract meanings have been widely discussed (Givón 1971, 1979, Bybee & Pagliuca 1985, Heine et al. 1991, Traugott & Heine 1991, Lehmann 1995, Hopper & Traugott 2003, among others). Hopper & Traugott (2003:25-38) have provided a comprehensive review of relevant key works produced since the mid-twentieth century.

Cantonese provides us with a wide range of phenomena involving grammaticalization. It has a rich system of grammatical particles occupying clause-medial position (i.e. verbal particles) and clause-final position (i.e. sentence final particles).³ Many of them are attested to have evolved via different grammaticalization pathways to indicate modality, evidentiality, as well as the speaker’s subjective attitude. Examples of pathways include the grammaticalization of sentence-final evidential *wo5* from the quotative verb *waa6* ‘say’ (Matthews 1998, Leung 2006, Yeung 2006, among others), the grammaticalization of the sentence-final scalar particle *tim1* from the additive verb *tim1* ‘add’ (Lee & Pan 2010), the grammaticalization of the clause-medial assertive particle *ngaang6* from the adjective *ngaang6* ‘hard’ (Tang 2003), and the grammaticalization of the negative evaluative particle *maai4* from the directional verb *maai4* ‘approach’ (Chor 2010). This paper will look into yet another pathway leading to an evaluative marker in Cantonese

¹ Sometimes the term ‘grammaticization’ is used instead of ‘grammaticalization’, especially in works published before the 1980s. The term ‘grammaticalization’ will be used consistently in this paper.

² The term ‘grammaticalization’ was apparently first used by the French Indo-Europeanist Antoine Meillet at the beginning of the twentieth century. He defined grammaticalization as ‘the passage of an autonomous word into the role of grammatical element ... the attributions of a grammatical character to a previously autonomous word’ (Meillet 1912[1958:131]). This 1912 paper not only marked the beginning of systematic research into grammaticalization, but also provided insights and directions for future research.

³ Particles are understood as versatile and grammatical bound forms which serve a grammatical function. The term ‘versatile’ is used in opposition to ‘restricted’. As suggested by Chao (1968: 155), the concept of versatility can be better understood in terms of the notion of productivity and the degree of freedom. A verbal particle is said to be versatile if it can be freely attached to several different kinds of verb.

— the grammaticalization of *faan1* ‘return’. This paper will explore how *faan1* has evolved from a directional morpheme into a positive evaluative marker, and then to a ‘tone-softener’.

In Cantonese, *faan1* can occupy both the verb position and the post-verbal position, as illustrated in examples (1) and (2) respectively.⁴

- (1) 我聽日返香港。⁵
Ngo5 ting1jat6 faan1 Hoeng1gong2.
 I tomorrow *faan1* Hong Kong
 ‘I’m going back to Hong Kong tomorrow.’
- (2) 我聽日飛返香港。
Ngo5 ting1jat6 fei1 faan1 Hoeng1gong2.
 I tomorrow fly *faan1* Hong Kong
 ‘I’m flying back to Hong Kong tomorrow.’

As a full-fledged directional verb, *faan1* indicates a movement towards a goal which is also the source from which the mover started, as in (1). When it underwent grammaticalization and became a directional particle occupying a post-verbal position, it could give a similar meaning of ‘returning to the original place’, as in (2). While *faan1* can be used to express the directional meaning of ‘returning’ when used post-verbally, it can also be employed to give meanings which do not seem to be linked to ‘return’ at first glance. Consider (3) and (4) below.

- (3) 我想飲返杯咖啡。
Ngo5 soeng2 jam2 faan1 bui1 gaa3fe1.
 I wish drink *faan1* CL coffee
 ‘I’d like to enjoy a cup of coffee.’
- (4) 本書咁平等我都買返本先。
Bun2 syul gam3 peng4 dang2 ngo5 dou1 maai5 faan1 bun2 sin1.
 CL book so cheap wait I also buy *faan1* CL PRT
 ‘The book is so cheap that I’d also like to buy one.’

⁴ On some occasions *faan1* has been found to occur in a pre-verbal position. This use of *faan1* will be explored in §5.1 of this paper.

⁵ *JyutPing* (literally ‘Cantonese romanization’, proposed by the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong (LSHK) in 1997), is adopted throughout the paper. (See Fan et al. 1997 for the details of this romanization scheme.) The abbreviations used in the examples throughout this paper are as follows: BE (copula); CL (classifier); LP (linking particle *ge3*); PERF (perfective particle *zo2*); POSS (possessive); PRT (particle).

The *faan1* here has little sense of ‘return’; it does not mean ‘to *return* to the drinking of coffee’ in (3), nor ‘to *return* to the action of buying books’ in (4). Rather, *faan1* is used to encode the speaker’s appraisal of the situation, indicating the speaker’s personal assessment of what he thinks is good or pleasurable. This subjective *faan1* can be considered as having an expressive function, externalizing the affective and emotional feeling of the speaker. In fact, this use of *faan1* has aroused the interest of many scholars in the past, and has been identified in most previous studies on Cantonese grammar (Zhan 1958, Cheung 1972, Gao 1980, Yuan 1989, Matthews & Yip 1994, among others), as well as most Cantonese dictionaries (Wu 1997, Cheng 1997, Cheung & Ni 1999, among others). However, despite the fact that this sense of *faan1* has been identified and referred to as an ‘idiomatic’ use unrelated to ‘return’, a full account of how it has come about has been lacking. Moreover, what seemed to have received even less attention is its intersubjective use — *faan1* used as a tone-softener to create a sense of ‘mood’ alongside the sense of request and suggestion, with the hearer’s comfort taken into account. In (5) below, for instance, by using *faan1*, the speaker allayed the hearer’s anxiety, putting him or her at ease.

(5) 㗎呢度寫返你個名。

Hai2 nei1dou6 se2 faan1 nei5 go3 meng2.
 in here write *faan1* you CL name
 ‘Please write your name here.’

In (5), *faan1* is mainly used as a tone-softener to create a good and amiable feeling towards the hearer, with no concrete semantic meaning. Without *faan1*, the utterance would have been more blunt and rude. One might consider (5) as a teacher’s kind request for the student to write his name on the assignment sheet, or a salesperson’s invitation to the customer to sign his name on the receipt. In either case, the addressee is not being asked to *return* to the act of writing, nor is the speaker expressing any kind of positive/pleasurable feeling towards himself. Rather, *faan1* is more appropriately considered as a hearer-oriented tone softening device, used to mitigate the speaker’s tone so as to show a sign of his concern for the hearer.

In this paper I have two specific goals in mind. First, I would like to offer an account of the evolutionary pathway of the Cantonese particle *faan1*, particularly the development of its non-directional uses. *Faan1* serves a very good example to illustrate the phenomena of subjectivity and intersubjectivity in Cantonese. Despite the fact that its speaker-oriented uses have been noted and have aroused considerable interest among Chinese grammarians in the past, little has been devoted to ‘how’ and ‘why’ this subjective sense has come about. I suspect that this is probably due to the inaccessibility

of early Cantonese materials (or simply the failure to acknowledge them) so that most previous studies investigating into the semantic development of *faan1* were largely done from a synchronic perspective, examining only its synchronic variations. By taking into account the different uses of *faan1* in a diachronic corpus, I would like to show how subjective and intersubjective uses of *faan1* are actually linked to its source meaning — to return to the original place.

Second, elaborating on the work by Traugott & Dasher (2002) and Traugott (2003a), I would like to show how this evolution of *faan1* is relevant to the unidirectionality of semantic change in the larger context of grammaticalization. In particular, I shall show that the development of *faan1* is found to be consistent with Traugott's suggestion of a typical semantic pathway in grammaticalization: nonsubjective > subjective > intersubjective. The trend for meanings to develop towards a higher degree of subjectivity (i.e. a higher degree of encoding of the speaker's point of view) is already widely attested in the literature. It is considered a strong tendency in semantic change and is supported by Traugott's series of works (Traugott 1982, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2003b), as well as other studies on subjectification and grammaticalization cross-linguistically (see, for example, König 1991, Smith 1993, Carey 1995, Company 1995, Brinton 1996, Suzuki 1998). However, the development from subjective meanings further to intersubjective meanings is comparatively less studied in the literature.

I shall illustrate that upon its semantic development, *faan1* not only has shifted from involving an external context (direction) to the speaker's internal evaluation (whether something is good/pleasurable), but also further to the inter-speaker's relationship (an attempt to be polite and/or supportive in consideration of the speaker-hearer relationship). This study echoes Traugott's proposed tendency of semantic change. I shall also explore the motivations for such a development in Cantonese, hoping that the present study will serve as a foundation for similar studies of other languages.

The remaining part of this paper is organized in the following way. Section 2 describes the data that are used in the present study. Section 3 discusses the phenomena of subjectification and intersubjectification, and how they are understood in relation to grammaticalization. Section 4 forms the core of this paper — the precise analysis of the developmental path of *faan1*. Section 5 discusses the functions of *faan1* when used in syntactic positions other than the post-verbal position. Section 6 presents a summary and conclusions.

2. Data

Data has been obtained from four major sources, including early Cantonese pedagogical texts, Cantonese films, Cantonese dictionaries, and a contemporary Cantonese

corpus. They are combined to form a diachronic database reflecting the use of *faan1* in Cantonese from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. This database is important because it reveals the real instances of the use of *faan1*, which might otherwise be neglected.

Adopting a qualitative research approach, the database has been examined from a diachronic perspective, occasionally supplemented by the author's observations as a native speaker. With this range of data, it has been possible to survey a considerable number of incidences and occurrences of *faan1* and to offer a more representative analysis of it.

Given below are the details of each category of data.

2.1 Early Cantonese pedagogical texts

Historical materials form a crucial link with the synchronic structure of a lexical item or construction. They provide important evidence about the pathways of grammaticalization and semantic change which can only be delineated through precise analyses of earlier contexts of usage. Written records representing Cantonese are not very extensive and have only a very shallow history, which in the best case goes back no further than two hundred years. However, despite the fact that pre-modern written records composed by native speakers of Cantonese are virtually non-existent, there is fortunately a wealth of pedagogical materials compiled by western missionaries who came to Guangzhou and neighbouring areas in the nineteenth century for religious and other purposes.⁶ Most of these materials are translations of the bible, short stories and religious works. Dictionaries, textbooks, grammar books and vocabulary lists of Cantonese were also compiled at that time. These texts when placed together constitute a valuable source of colloquial data in early Cantonese.

Altogether seven sets of materials compiled between 1828 and 1927 have been selected, arranged chronologically according to date of publication in the table below.

⁶ The author is aware that the reliability of these early Cantonese pedagogical texts might be challenged as they were not compiled by native speakers of Cantonese; the fact that the compilers do not have a 'native ear' might be an important concern. Also, the compiler's native language structure (i.e. English) might have an influence on them when they compile the texts. Thus, the texts that we have chosen are those which have been introduced and judged by historical linguists as reliable (Yue 2004, Cheung 2007). Also, the author's native-speaker command of contemporary Hong Kong Cantonese might also help in judging whether there are inconsistencies in the texts, or if the texts contain any serious grammatical mistakes.

1	Morrison, R. 1828. <i>A Vocabulary of the Canton Dialect</i> . Macau: East India Company's Press. 647 pages.
2	Bridgman, E. C. 1841. <i>Chinese Chrestomathy in the Canton Dialect</i> . Macau: East India Company's Press. 693 pages. ⁷
3	Bonney, S. W. 1853. <i>Phrases in the Canton Colloquial Dialect</i> . Canton (name of publisher not available). 98 pages.
4	Ball, D. J. 1883. <i>Cantonese Made Easy</i> . Hong Kong: China Mail Office. 86 pages.
5	Ball, D. J. 1894. <i>Readings in Cantonese Colloquial</i> . Hong Kong: Kelly & Walsh Limited. 171 pages.
6	Ball, D. J. 1912. <i>How to Speak Cantonese: Fifty Conversations in Cantonese Colloquial</i> (Fourth Edition). Hong Kong: Kelly & Walsh Limited. 229 pages.
7	Wisner, O. F. 1927. <i>Beginning Cantonese</i> , Part I. (place and name of publisher not available). 280 pages.

2.2 Cantonese film

A total of fifteen Cantonese films, with a total screening time of 1,410 minutes, were selected to form a small database of colloquial spoken data. Two were first screened in the late 1940s, five in the 1950s, five in the 1970s, and three in the 1990s. This period was a prime time for film production and a great variety of films appeared. Film data are significant in the sense that they provide many good examples demonstrating natural, colloquial usage of Cantonese in different contexts.⁸

The table below shows the details of the films. The abbreviations given in parentheses will be used throughout the paper.

1	新白金龍 New White Golden Dragon [Dragon] (1947)
2	夜吊白芙蓉 The Night Mourning of Pak Fu-yung [Pak] (1949)
3	五福臨門 Five Blessings in a Row [Blessings] (1950)
4	我為情 That's for My Love [Love] (1953)
5	蝴蝶夫人 Madam Butterfly [Butterfly] (1954)
6	甜姐兒 Darling Girl [Darling] (1957)
7	兩傻捉鬼記 Two Fools Capture a Ghost [Ghost] (1959)

⁷ This is the first textbook published on Cantonese (You 2002:23).

⁸ Although film data to a certain extent has been 'scripted', it is still classed as both natural and colloquial as it includes the use of Cantonese particles which is not normally scripted. When given the scripts in written Chinese, actors make their own judgment on what particles should be used when rendering the speech in Cantonese.

8	唐山大兄 The Big Boss [Boss] (1971)
9	精武門 Fist of Fury [Fury] (1972)
10	鬼馬雙星 Games Gamblers Play [Gamblers] (1974)
11	半斤八兩 The Private Eyes [Private] (1976)
12	賣身契 The Contract [Contract] (1978)
13	逃學威龍 I Fight Back to School I [FightI] (1991)
14	逃學威龍 II Fight Back to School II [FightII] (1992)
15	食神 The God of Cookery [Cookery] (1996)

2.3 The HKUCC corpus

A contemporary Cantonese corpus, the Hong Kong University Cantonese Corpus (HKUCC, recorded in the late 1990s), is also used in the present study.⁹ It contains recordings of spontaneous speech (51 texts) and radio broadcasts (42 texts) that involve two to four people. These speech data were recorded between March 1997 and August 1998. They are genuine, colloquial, unscripted, spontaneous speech instances heard in everyday conversations and they reflect the linguistic properties of Hong Kong Cantonese. About 29 hours of tape recordings, transcribed as approximately 230,000 Chinese characters, were collected in the corpus. The corpus was searched for the particle *faanI*, which was then compared and analyzed with data from earlier periods of time to examine its evolution.

2.4 Cantonese dictionaries

A total of five recently published Cantonese dictionaries have been chosen for the purpose of this study, listed below in chronological order.¹⁰ Dictionaries are undoubtedly another important source of data as they reflect how lexicographers understand and categorize the various senses exhibited by *faanI*, providing instances of its more ‘standard’ or ‘core’ uses as a lexical item. These dictionaries also provide important information about its possible etymology.

⁹ The HKUCC was built under the research project ‘Constructing a Database of Spoken Cantonese with English Translation and On-line Dictionary’, led by K. K. Luke and O. T. Nancarrow. This project is funded by the Hong Kong Research Grant Council (HKU 397/96H).

¹⁰ The author is aware that sometimes it might take a few years of preparation before a dictionary is published; it is suspected that the data do not deviate very much from the contemporary use of Cantonese.

1	Rao, Bingcai, Jueya Ouyang, and Wuji Zhou. 1996. 廣州話方言詞典 [<i>A Dictionary of the Guangzhou Dialect</i>]. Guangzhou: Guangdong People's Publishing House.
2	Wu, Kaibin. 1997. 香港話詞典 [<i>A Dictionary of the Hong Kong Speech</i>]. Guangzhou: Huacheng Press.
3	Cheng, Ting Au. 1997. 香港粵語詞典 [<i>A Dictionary of Hong Kong Cantonese</i>]. Nanjing: Jiangsu Education Press.
4	Bai, Wanru. 1998. 廣州方言詞典 [<i>A Dictionary of the Guangzhou Dialect</i>]. Nanjing: Jiangsu Education Press.
5	Cheung, Lai-Yin, and Leihuai Ni. 1999. 港式廣州話詞典 [<i>A Dictionary of Hong Kong Style Cantonese</i>]. Hong Kong: Wan Li Book Company.

2.5 Native speaker observations

Aside from the aforementioned data sources, from time to time, the analysis is supplemented with examples which the author has consistently noted down in daily interactions in Cantonese; other native speakers' opinions are also sought for confirmation whenever feasible. The author grew up speaking Cantonese in Hong Kong, and has had unbroken contact with the language. If a certain usage is consistently noted but is not attested in earlier times, it may be hypothesized that it may not have been in earlier use.

3. Subjectification and intersubjectification

Although subjectivity is deeply embedded in language (Bréal 1964), it did not become a significant topic of research within the community of linguists until the 1970s, when Benveniste raised the fundamental question of whether a language devoid of the expression of subjectivity could still be called 'a language' (1971:225). Since then, subjectivity has become a central notion in discourse-pragmatic studies and grammaticalization studies.

As has often been pointed out (e.g. Benveniste 1971, Lyons 1982, Langacker 1985, 1990, Traugott 1995), natural languages should fulfill the fundamental need of speakers to convey and assess their feelings, moods, and attitudes. One cannot possibly say or write anything without expressing some aspect of one's personal beliefs or point of view. Similarly, Stubbs has pointed out, 'whenever speakers (or writers) say anything, they encode their point of view towards it: whether they think it is a reasonable thing to say, or might be found to be obvious, irrelevant, impolite, or whatever' (1986:1). This is exactly what subjectivity is about — 'the expression of self and the representation of a speaker's perspective or point of view in discourse — what has been called a speaker's imprint' (Finegan 1995:1).

When compared to subjectivity, however, the phenomenon of intersubjectivity is under-explored. Benveniste (1971) characterized intersubjectivity as the speaker's awareness of the other participant in the speaker-addressee dyad as speaking subject. Though also ubiquitous in languages, intersubjectivity is less readily noticeable in a language. The degree of the speaker's awareness of the addressee might be different in different languages. For instance, while it is not necessary for speakers of English to grammatically encode the social stance and identity of the addressee, it might be *required* by the grammar of some languages, especially those with honorific systems, where explicit attention must be paid to intersubjectivity. Japanese is a language which requires its users to select appropriate honorific forms depending on the relationship between the speaker and the addressee. Honorifics in Japanese are referred to as *keigo*, literally 'respectful language'. They are used to serve a number of purposes, such as making oneself humble, being formal, being polite.

An important point to make at this stage is that the concepts of subjectivity and intersubjectivity must not be confused with the corresponding terms subjectification and intersubjectification. While subjectivity and intersubjectivity are ubiquitous *phenomena* in natural languages, subjectification and intersubjectification are more appropriately considered *processes* in language change. Subjectification and intersubjectification can both be treated from a fundamentally heuristic perspective which speakers can make use of to encode, or externalize, their beliefs and attitudes towards themselves, or their caring about the needs of their addressee.

As one of the pioneer explorers of subjectivity, Traugott, in her works on semantic and pragmatic change, has repeatedly shown how closely connected subjectification is with grammaticalization. In her analyses, 'subjectification in grammaticalization', broadly speaking, is understood as a historical process whereby meanings become increasingly based in the speaker's subjective belief state, or attitude, toward what is said (Traugott 1989, 1995, 1997, 1999, *inter alia*). In these works, Traugott has attempted to establish general characteristics of grammaticalization, by finding out the actual types of semantic-pragmatic shifts that occur in the process of grammaticalization. Traugott (1982), one of her earlier influential works, has put forward the proposal of a unidirectional path of semantic change, characterized as 'propositional > (textual >) expressive' (*ibid*: 257). Traugott sees this shift as involving an increase in the expression of subjectivity, or speaker's point of view. She considers this shift regular enough to allow predictions to be made about 'paths of change, or constraints on the directionality of semantic change' (Traugott 1989:33), and suggests that subjectification should be viewed as an intrinsically unidirectional phenomenon: a trend towards a higher degree of encoding of the speaker's point of view, not *vice versa*. As said earlier, the nonsubjective > subjective tendency is considered a strong one in semantic change and is supported by Traugott's

subsequent works (Traugott 1995, 1997, 1999, 2003b), and other studies on subjectification and grammaticalization (see, for example, König 1991, Smith 1993, Carey 1995, Company 1995, Brinton 1996, Suzuki 1998).

While Traugott has dealt solely with *subjectification* in her earlier series of works, by treating it as a semantic unidirectional process, she proposed the need to incorporate the notion of *intersubjectification* in her more recent works (2003b, 2010). Traugott's notion of intersubjectification parallels her notion of subjectification. While subjectification is more speaker-centred, intersubjectification is more addressee-oriented; it is 'the explicit expression of the speaker/writer's attention to the 'self' of addressee/reader in both an epistemic sense (paying attention to their presumed attitudes to the content of what is said), and in a more social sense (paying attention to their 'face' or 'image needs' associated with social stance and identity)' (Traugott 2003b:128). In other words, moving from subjectification to intersubjectification involves a shift from paying attention to the 'self' of the speaker to caring about the 'self' of the addressee. Traugott suggests that the semantic shift from subjective > intersubjective is essentially unidirectional, too. Intersubjectification should be understood in the sense of 'the development of meanings that encode speaker/writers' attention to the cognitive stances and social identities of addressees, *arises out of and depends crucially on subjectification*' (Traugott 2003b:124; emphasis added). Consider the evolution of *let us* as an example illustrating the unidirectional pathway nonsubjective > subjective > intersubjective.

(6) Let us go, (will you?)

(7) Let's go, (shall we?)

As Traugott often claims, grammaticalization always involves the strengthening of the expression of speaker involvement. She observes that there is a shift of perspective from objective to subjective in (6)–(7), taking the speaker's perspective more into account (Traugott 1995:36). In (6), the subject of *let* is *you* while the subject of *go* is *us* (not including *you*). However in (7), the subject of *let* and *go* has been extended to include both the speaker and the hearer. In other words, the speaker has included himself as part of the subject giving permission and thus (7) is considered more subjective. Also, the speech act has changed from a request directed to the hearer to a suggestion involving both the speaker and the hearer. Traugott claims that only the structure *let us go* appeared in Old English, with no attested examples of the precursor of modern *let's go*. The phrase *let's go* only started to appear in Middle English. The development of *let us* to *let's* is thus consistent with the tendency toward increasing subjectivity. Traugott further demonstrates the semantic shift subjective > intersubjective by elaborating on this *let us* example (Traugott 2003b:130).

- (8) Let's take our pills now, Roger.
(to a child or a person in a retirement home)

While the use of *let's* in (7) is considered subjective; it has an intersubjective sense in (8), in which the speaker is aware of the hearer's image/face needs. According to Traugott, the development of *let us* as in (6)-(8) has been from 'allow us' (imperative) to 'I propose' (hortative) and further to 'mitigator/marker of "care-giver register"'. *Let's* in (8) is used to show that the speaker is joining in/playing a role in the activity of pill-taking. The speaker is giving a sign of assurance to the hearer that he is not alone; he has a companion. Note that (8) is still a hortative sentence; but, in addition it functions to express the speaker's concern to the hearer.

Apart from this example, Traugott & Dasher (2002) have also suggested another example illustrating the semantic pathway nonsubjective > subjective > intersubjective — the development of *actually*.

According to Traugott & Dasher's account, *actually* was used in English as an adverb of manner (MA) in the fifteenth century, meaning 'effectively', as in (9) below (2002:169).

- (9) To cure it *actuale* whilez it is introduct but ys not conformed.
"To cure it effectively while it is in initial stage but is not yet confirmed."
(?1425 Chauliac (1), IIIb [MED; Powell 1992:85])

They suggest that by the mid-eighteenth century, *actually* has gained an epistemic adversative meaning, which embodies surprise and incredibleness. This is considered an instance of subjectification because the speaker makes use of *actually* to make explicit his or her commitment to the truth of the utterance, as exemplified in (10) (ibid: 170).

- (10) Mr. Perry had been to Mrs. Goddard's to attend a sick child, and ... found to his great surprise that Mr. Elton was *actually* on his road to London, and not meaning to return till the morrow.
(1816 Austen, Emma, vol. I, chapter 8, p.68)

A shift to intersubjectification can be seen as *actually* serving as a hedge or softener in spoken language. Aijmer (1986), for instance, characterized the more recent use of *actually* as a hedge to 'create contact with the listener' or 'rapport,' e.g. 'I am telling you this in confidence' (quoted in Traugott & Dasher 2002:173), as in (11).

- (11) No, I don't think I was. No, I was determined to get married *actually*.
(Aijmer 1986:126)

Traugott & Dasher have given a more striking example of the hedged use of *actually* provided by D. Robert Ladd in Scottish English, quoted in (12).

- (12) On one occasion in a post office he [Ladd] had put a package on the scale to be weighed oriented in a direction which made the mailing address hard for the clerk to see. The clerk said: "Where's it *actually* going?" If *actually* here were *actually*₂ [*actually* as an epistemic adversative], it would be the sender of the packet who might be questioning (somewhat rudely) the ability of the post office to deliver mail correctly. Spoken by the post office clerk, however, Ladd interpreted it as "clearly an apology" for not being able to see the packaging label. (Traugott & Dasher 2002:173)

The use of *actually* here has shifted from subjective to intersubjective in the sense that it functions as a 'DM hedge' to 'soften or mitigate what is said with the purpose of acknowledging the addressee's actual or possible objections' (Traugott & Dasher 2002: 174).

In fact, besides examples from English, cases of subjectification are also well-documented cross-linguistically. Many subsequent works on subjectification have been inspired by Traugott's framework. Different languages have been explored, including non-Indo-European languages such as Japanese (Matsumoto 1988, Iwasaki 1993, Onodera 1995, Suzuki 1998) and Korean (Song 1996). For instance, Onodera (1995) suggests that the Japanese adversative conjunctions *demo* and *dakedo* also follow Traugott's proposed unidirectional tendency, changing from ideational > textual > expressive, both moving from less to more personal. Song (1996) has also provided evidence in support of Traugott's proposal by suggesting that the manner function (or expressive function) has developed from the purposive function (or propositional/textual function), on the basis of a detailed comparison between the *-ke* derived manner adverb and the *-ke* marked subordinate clause of purpose in Korean.

Although studies on subjectification have flourished in the past two decades in Western Linguistics as well as in a few non-Indo-European languages, research from this perspective only emerged in Chinese with Shen's (2001) work, and has started to increase since 2005 (Zhang 2005, Li 2005, Zeng 2005). Research in Cantonese from this perspective is even sparser. The present study will be an initial step in contributing to subjectification studies in Cantonese, as well as to the semantic change pathway nonsubjective > subjective > intersubjective in terms of its typological significance. Our data will be tested against the Traugottian proposals regarding subjectification and intersubjectification, and be analyzed in what ways that subjectification and intersubjectification are actually realized in the grammaticalization of the Cantonese particle *faanI*.

4. The grammaticalization of *faan1* in Cantonese

This section investigates the actual steps that *faan1* has taken to develop into a subjective marker and an intersubjective marker. We first discuss in §4.1 the various directional meanings, both concrete and abstract, that *faan1* expresses as a directional particle. Then, we examine the evolutionary path of *faan1* to become a subjective marker and an intersubjective marker in §4.2 and §4.3 respectively. Lastly, we explore the motivations for this semantic change in §4.4.

4.1 *Faan1* — its directional meanings

Faan1 as a directional verb means ‘to return to the original location’.¹¹ It indicates a movement towards a goal which is also the source of the movement. When it grammaticalized into a particle, it could give a similar directional meaning, illustrated in (13) and (14) from early Cantonese data.

- (13) 唔拈得番¹²
m4 nim1 dak1 faan1
 not bring able *faan1*
 ‘cannot bring it back (to the original place)’ (Bonney 1853)
- (14) 你應該寄番去歸
Nei5 jing1goi1 gei3 faan1 heoi3 gwail.
 you ought send *faan1* go home
 ‘You ought to send it home.’ (Ball 1883)

The directional meaning expressed by *faan1* can be visualized by considering the diagram below, which highlights the most important aspect of its directional meaning — a movement towards a goal which is *also the source* from which the theme subject started.



Based on this meaning of ‘returning to the original location’, *faan1* can express a rich array of extended meanings relevant to ‘return’. Many of them can be expressed by

¹¹ The verb 返 *faan1* in Cantonese is comparable to the verb 回 *hui* in Mandarin, meaning ‘to go back/return to (the original place)’.

¹² In some early Cantonese texts, it is found that the particle 返 *faan1* is sometimes written with the two graphs 番 *faan1* or 翻 *faan1*. However, etymologically speaking, the sinogram should be 返.

the prefix 're-' in English, as in 'redo', 'resume', or 'reciprocate', exemplified in the following examples.

- (15) 等我遞番的麵粉布頓過你呵。(reciprocation)
Dang2 ngo5 dai6 faan1 dil min6fan2 bou3ding1 gwo3 nei5 ho2.
 wait I send *faan1* CL flour pudding to you PRT
 'Allow me to send you a little of this flour pudding (in return).'
- (Bridgman 1841)
- (16) 打番個牛油盅。(redoing)
Daa2 faan1 go3 ngau4jau4 zung1.
 make *faan1* CL butter cup
 '(To start all over again and) make a new butter cup.'
- (Bridgman 1841)
- (17) 點番著個琉璃。(resumption)
Dim2 faan1 zeok6 go3 lau4lei4.
 light *faan1* on CL water-lamp
 'Relight the water-lamp.'
- (Bridgman 1841)
- (18) 個間屋起得番唔起得?(resumption)
Go2 gaan1 uk1 hei2 dak1 faan1 m4 hei2 dak1?
 that CL house build able *faan1* not build able
 'Can the house be rebuilt or not?'
- (Bonney 1853)

Although all the 're-' meanings illustrated in these examples can be understood in terms of the more basic directional meaning of *faan1*, the meaning expressed by *faan1* has become more abstract and is less likely to involve a physical motion of 'return'. While *faan1* is attached to the motion verb *dai6* 'send' in (15) to denote a physical movement of 'return', it is attached to non-motion verbs in (16)-(18) to illustrate an abstract, conceptual return. By going back to the original step/starting point, the 'redoing' in (16) implies making another cup. Examples (17) and (18) can also be understood as having an 'A-B-A' sequence: the lamp in (17) has gone through the sequence of stages 'lit – unlit – re-lit', and the house in (18) has been restored to its original, undamaged, functional status.

These and similar examples of *faan1* have been commented upon extensively in the past and are still commonly found in contemporary Cantonese. Since this use of *faan1* is closely related to the concept of resumption, it is even termed as a 'resumptive

marker' in some studies (Kwok 1971, Cheung 1972, Gao 1980, Yuan 1989, Chang 1996). Examples (19)-(21) are illustrations of some more 're-' uses of *faan1* in contemporary data.

- (19) 佢用返呢個方法嚟解釋。(redoing)
Keoi5 jung6 faan1 nei1 go3 fong1faat3 lai4 gaai2sik1.
 s/he use *faan1* this CL method come explain
 'He uses this method again to explain (the reason).' (HKUCC)
- (20) 照返原價賣啦！(resumption)
Ziu3 faan1 jyun4 gaa3 maa16 laa1!
 follow *faan1* original price sell PRT
 'Sell it at the original price!' (HKUCC)
- (21) 佢哋結婚，玩返我哋轉頭。(reciprocation)
Keoi5 dei6 git3fan1, waan2 faan1 ngo5 dei6 zyun3tau4.
 s/he PL marry play *faan1* I PL return
 'It is they who were getting married, but on the contrary they played jokes on us!' (HKUCC)

Peng (1999) suggested that besides indicating the resumption to the original or previous state, *faan1* can be used to mark a *conceptual* resumption, as illustrated in the two examples below from her work:

- (22) 我嘅銀包得返三文。
Ngo5 ge3 ngan4baau1 dak1 faan1 saam1 man1.
 I LP wallet have *faan1* three dollar
 'I only have three dollars in my wallet.' (Peng 1999:67)
- (23) 到年尾，廣告費剩返大把。
Dou3 nin4 mei5, gwong2gou3 fai3 sing6 faan1 daai6baa2.
 arrive year end advertisement cost remain *faan1* many
 'Reaching the year end, a lot of the advertising costs are still unused.' (Peng 1999:67)

Peng suggested that the use of *faan1* here is rather abstract. The exact meaning varies and would very much depend on the context in each case. This use has also been included in Fong (2007), which is a more recent study on *faan1*. Fong shares a similar view with Peng that this usage of *faan1* is special and difficult to pin down, and she even categorized it as a 'non-explainable' use of *faan1* (ibid: 290). However, if we look

close enough to this use of *faanl*, it is not difficult to see that this use is also closely related to the concept of ‘return’.

The *faanl* in both (22) and (23) has some kind of scalar interpretation. By uttering (22), the speaker implies that he had more money before, but is having less at the present stage. Similarly, by uttering (23), the speaker implies that the amount of money for advertising purposes was more before, although the remaining amount is still plenty. Notice here that the change must be from a larger amount to a smaller amount. In other words, it is in the direction towards *zero*, which can be considered as some kind of source or origin. As has also been observed in Fong (2007), we cannot use *faanl* if the present amount is in fact more than that of before. If the speaker had one dollar but now has three dollars in his wallet, he cannot utter (22). Fong did not offer an explanation and suggested that this area might need further investigation. We suspect that this phenomenon can also be explained if we consider again the source meaning of *faanl* — going back to the original location/state.

As we can observe from the above and similar examples, this use of *faanl* is rather restricted — it is mostly used with nouns pre-modified by numerals, and the number of items that *faanl* quantifies under its scope must be smaller than what it was before. In other words, the number of items that *faanl* quantifies is on the way to *returning* to zero. In this regard, this use of *faanl* does not seem to be very different from the resumptive *faanl* discussed earlier. This *faanl* is also employed to describe a movement towards some kind of original state, although this original state is comparatively more abstract — back to zero.

To conclude this section, the examples here all seem to suggest that the essence of *faanl*’s meaning lies in its emphasis that the goal of the movement is *also* its source. In different contexts, *faanl* is interpreted slightly differently, such as ‘back to the origin’, ‘back to the beginning’, or, ‘back to basics’. As will be shown later in this paper, it is the implication of ‘source’ which motivates *faanl*’s subjectification and inter-subjectification.

4.2 Subjectification of *faanl* — expression of the speaker’s positive evaluation

Originally a directional particle, *faanl* is observed to have undergone a semantic shift from giving directional meanings to meanings involving an increase in subjectification and abstraction. This use of *faanl* is illustrated in the following two examples taken from our database.

- (24) 沖返個涼。
Cung1 faan1 go3 loeng4.
 wash *faan1* CL shower
 ‘(Let me) enjoy a shower.’ (Gamblers 1974)
- (25) 飲返杯冰凍啤酒。
Jam2 faan1 bui1 bing1dung3 belzau2.
 drink *faan1* CL chill beer
 ‘(Let’s) have some nice chilled beer.’ (Contract 1978)

Faan1 in (24) and (25) is essentially subjective. In unmarked situations where an explicit subject is not available, the implicit subject is *always* the speaker, as in (24), or it at least includes the speaker, as in (25). A similar observation can be made for English. If one says ‘It’d be good to have a shower’, the implication is ‘good’ for the speaker. To defeat this implicature, one has to specify ‘It’d be good *for you* to have a shower’.

In the discussion below, we shall see how *faan1* has become associated with this subjective sense, and in what ways it is possibly related to its core meaning, namely ‘return (to the source)’. However, before going into the analysis, understanding how *faan1* is evaluated in previous studies is essential.

4.2.1 The subjective *faan1* — a brief review

Zhan (1958) first identified in his article that this subjective use of *faan1* is an idiom unrelated to ‘return’. Gao (1980) and Yuan (1989) have also taken Zhan’s position, suggesting that this *faan1* has no semantic content and is used solely as a kind of ‘grammatical particle’. Consider (26)-(28) taken from these sources.

- (26) 我今晚要睇返出戲。
Ngo5 gam1 maan5 jiu3 tai2 faan1 ceot1 hei3.
 I this night need see *faan1* CL movie
 ‘I’d like to enjoy watching a movie tonight.’ (Zhan 1958:121)
- (27) 我想講返兩句。
Ngo5 soeng2 gong2 faan1 loeng5 geoi3.
 I wish say *faan1* two sentence
 ‘I wish to say a few words.’ (Gao 1980:56)

- (28) 寫返啲嘢。

Se2 **faan1** di1 je5.
write *faan1* CL thing
'(I wish) to write something.'

(Yuan 1989:216)

These authors in general agree that the 'empty' *faan1* has grammaticalized from the full lexical verb *faan1*, but an explanation for how this has come about is not offered. A few other studies have attempted to find out what the semantic and grammatical status of *faan1* is, as well as any contextual constraints on its use. For instance, Cheung (1972) and Peng (1999) suggest that this seemingly non-directional *faan1* is still related to 'return', but a *conceptual* 'return' to a deserved state, illustrated in (29) and (30). Again, though not explicitly stated, the subject is the speaker, or at least includes the speaker.

- (29) 個女仔咁靚，

Go3 neoi5zai2 gam3 leng3,
CL girl so pretty

係人都要望返幾眼。

hai6 jan4 dou1 jiu3 mong6 **faan1** gei2 ngaan5.
BE person also need look *faan1* several eye

'The girl is so pretty that everyone cannot help looking at her over and over again.'

(Cheung 1972:124)

- (30) 嘆返吓空調。

Taan3 **faan1** haa5 hung1tiu4.

enjoy *faan1* while air-conditioning

'(I wish) to enjoy the air-conditioning for awhile.'

(Peng 1999:67)

Other studies have noticed that the use of *faan1* is actually related to the implication of 'for the good of oneself' (Matthews & Yip 1994, Wu 1997) and 'an ideal condition' (Tang 2001), exemplified in (31)-(33) below.

- (31) 我幾想買返一個。

Ngo5 gei2 soeng2 maai5 **faan1** jat1 go3.
I quite wish buy *faan1* one CL

'I rather fancy buying myself one.'

(Matthews & Yip 1994:214)

- (32) 有啲凍，著返件衫先。
Jau5 di1 dung3, zoek3 faan1 gin6 saam1 sin1.
 have some cold wear *faan1* CL clothes first
 ‘It’s a bit cold; let me put on some clothes first.’ (Wu 1997:63)
- (33) 最好就係飲返杯咖啡。
Zeoi3 hou2 zau6 hai6 jam2 faan1 bui1 gaa3fel.
 most good then BE drink *faan1* CL coffee
 ‘The best thing to do is to have a (nice) cup of coffee.’ (Tang 2001:52)

Tang (2001) has made a further observation about *faan1* that it can be used to reinforce the ‘enjoyment’ of the action denoted by the verb. He proposes that *faan1* has something to do with an ideal situation or one’s expectation. He further suggests that *faan1* possesses the semantic components [+enjoyable] and [+positive] so that sentences with *faan1* can only be interpreted as associated with positive connotations. He illustrates his point by the example below.

- (33') *最慘就係飲返杯咖啡。
Zeoi3 caam2 zau6 hai6 jam2 faan1 bui1 gaa3fel.
 most poor then BE drink *faan1* CL coffee
 ‘The worst thing to do is to have a cup of coffee.’ (Tang 2001:52)

Even though example (33) is perfectly good; (33') is definitely not acceptable. It is semantically anomalous because the semantics of *faan1* [+enjoyable] clashes with the semantics of *caam2* ‘dreadful’ [–enjoyable]. This positive/desirable sense of *faan1* is even more apparent if we consider (34) and (35) below, where it is used with activities which are not usually considered as pleasant or enjoyable.

- (34) 掃幅地、抹隻窗，花咗兩個鐘！
Sou3 fuk1 dei6, mut3 zek3 coengl, faa1 zo2 loeng5 go3 zungl!
 sweep CL floor clean CL window spend PERF two CL hour
 ‘Swept the floor; cleaned the window — it took (me) two hours!’
- (35) 掃返幅地、抹返隻窗，
Sou3 faan1 fuk1 dei6, mut3 faan1 zek3 coengl,
 sweep *faan1* CL floor clean *faan1* CL window
 花咗兩個鐘！
faa1 zo2 loeng5 go3 zungl.
 spend PERF two CL hour
 ‘Swept the floor; cleaned the window — it (pleasantly) took (me) two hours!’

Without *faan1*, activities like sweeping the floor or cleaning the window are not necessarily enjoyable and may be onerous. However, the use of *faan1*, as in (35), would imply that the experience of these otherwise onerous activities was somehow pleasurable. One can add remarks like ‘but I enjoyed it!’ or ‘it was very pleasurable!’ to (35), but not (34). One might only expect comments like ‘it was very tiring!’ or ‘how backbreaking!’ for (34).

Besides reinforcing the ‘enjoyment’ of the action denoted by the verb, Tang further points out that *faan1* requires an indefinite NP object if it is to mean ‘enjoyment’. Consider the pair of examples below.

- (36) 我想飲返杯咖啡。
Ngo5 soeng2 jam2 faan1 bui1 gaa3fel.
 I wish drink *faan1* CL coffee
 ‘I’d like to enjoy a cup of coffee.’
- (36’) 我想飲返個杯咖啡。
Ngo5 soeng2 jam2 faan1 go2 bui1 gaa3fel.
 I wish drink *faan1* that CL coffee
 ‘I’d like to go back to drinking that cup of coffee.’

According to Tang’s observation, (36’) can only encode the resumption of an action because of the definite nature of the complement; the reading involving the enjoyment of the activity is not available. It could hardly mean {*I’d like to enjoy that cup of coffee.*}. Tang did not go further to justify his observation about this ‘indefinite object constraint’, but a plausible reason might be that an indefinite complement profiles the ‘activity’ while a definite complement profiles the ‘object’. In other words, (36) highlights the ‘process of coffee drinking’ while (36’) focuses more on a specific ‘object’/‘patient’ of the action (i.e. a specific cup of coffee). A definite object normally presupposes a started action so that when it is used with *faan1*, a resumptive meaning would result. On the other hand, an indefinite object allows the activity to be interpreted as generic, thus allowing the speaker to comment on whether he or she thinks the activity is enjoyable. This licenses *faan1* to be interpreted as a marker expressing the enjoyment of a generic activity.

Now we have reviewed how this more ‘empty’ *faan1* is treated in previous studies, which have provided us with clues to its different facets. Most of these studies have identified the ‘ideal’ or ‘good’ implication of *faan1*. Nevertheless, few have examined the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ which leads to this implication. In this respect, our database can provide us with examples to work out the possible link between ‘return’ and ‘enjoyment’ — two seemingly unrelated meanings.

4.2.2 The subjective *faan1* — its evolutionary pathway

Similar to what has been found in Contemporary Cantonese, the particle *faan1* can also be used to express the various ‘re-’ meanings back in the mid-1880s, as our database has suggested. Our historical data has further shown that there is one sense of *faan1* which might help bridge the sense of ‘return’ with the sense of ‘enjoyment’ — its modal use marking ‘should/ought to’. *Faan1* in (37) and (38) below do not seem to mean ‘return’, but is rather like a modal auxiliary. This use of *faan1* started to appear in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century.

- (37) 佢想學番唐人一樣。
Keoi5 soeng2 hok6 faan1 tong4jan4 jat1joeng6.
 s/he want learn *faan1* Chinese same
 ‘They want to be like Chinese.’ (Ball 1883)
- (38) 國國都應學翻
Gwok3 gwok3 dou1 jing1 hok6 faan1
 country country also ought learn *faan1*
 別國嘅好處。
bit6 gwok3 ge3 hou2 cyu3.
 other country LP good thing
 ‘Each country should copy the good things.’ (Ball 1912)

In (37) and (38), *faan1* does not denote a concrete return, nor any resumption or reciprocation. It does not mean to ‘go back’ to the learning for a second time, nor to ‘resume’ learning. Rather, it means that taking Chinese people (in ex. (37)) and other countries’ strong points (in ex. (38)) as the role model, one should emulate them in order to succeed. Here, the ‘source’ meaning has become salient. On occasions like these where *faan1* is used with the verb *hok6* ‘learn’ (i.e. in the context of ‘learning’), it marks the ‘return’ to a role model. This role model is the ‘source’ of learning, which is also the ‘goal’ of this learning path. In other words, by looking at others as a reference point, one might learn from these others for self-improvement, and become a better person which is comparable to this source reference. Although this reference is not the *original* source to which one has been before, this is the *ideal* source (i.e. the role model) which one needs to consult in one’s journey of learning. In other words, *faan1* in these examples still expresses the meaning of ‘return’; it means ‘to go back to the ideal’, or, ‘to go back to the role model’. However, this ‘return’ has become more abstract, in the sense that it is no longer a concrete, physical return to the original location.

Observations from our database have shown that when *faan1* is used with *hok6*, it is *always* (i.e. 100%) accompanied by verbs like *jiu3* 'need to', *soeng2* 'want to', or *jing1* 'ought to', reinforcing that the emulation is really what one *should* do for a good result. A point to note is that this use of *faan1* must go with one's forte, but never one's shortcoming; a shortcoming is never the 'goal' of one's learning path. Thus, (39) below is perfectly good while (39') is unacceptable, unless *faan1* is left out.

- (39) 你應該學返人哋嘅好處。

Nei5 jing1goi1 hok6 faan1 jan4dei6 ge3 hou2 cyu3.
 you should learn *faan1* other people LP good point
 'You should emulate others' good points.'

- (39') ?你唔應該學返人哋嘅壞處。

?*Nei5 m4 jing1goi1 hok6 faan1 jan4dei6 ge3 waai6 cyu3.*
 you not should learn *faan1* other people LP bad point
 'You shouldn't emulate others' bad points.'

At a later stage, this meaning of 'what one should/ought to do' has become salient and more established, and has been associated with *faan1* as an independent sense, illustrated in (40)-(42) below taken from films from the late 1940s.

- (40) 而家老爺過咗身，

Ji4gaal lou5je4 gwo3 zo2 san1,
 now master pass PERF body

你都應該搵返個老婆㗎。

nei5 dou1 jing1goi1 wan2 faan1 go3 lou5po4 aal.
 you also should find *faan1* CL wife PRT
 'Now that your father has passed away, you should find a wife.'

(Dragon 1947)

- (41) 著返件睡褸，

Zoek3 faan1 gin6 seoi6 laul,
 wear *faan1* CL sleep gown

顧住凍親你㗎。

gu3zyu6 dung3 can1 nei5 bo3.
 beware cold PRT you PRT

'(You should) put on the sleeping gown, and take care not to catch a cold.'

(Pak 1949)

- (42) 著返套西裝，
Zoek3 faan1 tou3 sailzong1,
 wear *faan1* set suit
 戴返個金絲眼鏡，
daai3 faan1 go3 gam1 sil ngaan5geng2,
 wear *faan1* CL gold wire glasses
 返支土的，
zaal faan1 zil si6dik1,
 hold *faan1* CL stick
 我話你似台灣嘅紳士。
ngo5 waa6 nei5 hai6 Toi4waan1 ge3 san1si2.
 I say you like Taiwan LP gentleman
 ‘Wear a suit, put on a pair of golden glasses, carry a walking stick — I say
 you look like a (pleasant) Taiwanese gentleman.’ (Dragon 1947)

In these examples, *faan1* is performing some kind of modal function — a kind suggestion made by the speaker to a second person about what he should do to gain advantage. It is noticed that this *faan1* is no longer restricted to the verb *hok6* ‘learn’, but is used with a wider variety of verbs or actions. Example (40) suggests that it is good for the person to find a wife because his father has now passed away (and that person does not need to worry about his father anymore). The ‘should/ought to’ meaning of *faan1* in (41) and (42) is even more salient as it is no longer accompanied by an explicit modal (i.e. *jing1goi1* ‘should’). The speaker in (41) is suggesting to another person to put on a gown because it is cold outside and it should be good for that person to do so, so that he will not easily catch a cold. The speaker in (42) is suggesting that the addressee should perform a series of actions, including *wearing a set of suits*, *putting on a pair of golden glasses*, and *carrying a walking stick*, so that he will look like a pleasant gentleman.

Now, we have demonstrated how *faan1* can possibly move from expressing the directional meaning ‘return’, to giving a strong implication of what one should do in the context of ‘learning’ (i.e. when *faan1* is used with the verb *hok6* ‘learn’, reinforced by a modal, to imply ‘returning to an existing model and learn from it’), then to a modal marker in its own right to mark a kind suggestion. The modal force in (40)-(42) is derived from the speaker’s judgment of the hearer’s situation. That is, in consideration of the circumstantial environment, a certain action should be performed so that a desired state can be achieved.

Developing from this use of making a ‘kind suggestion’ of what one should do for a pleasant result, the function of *faan1* has shifted towards greater subjectivity, coming

to serve as a grammatical marker externalizing the speaker's assessment of what is pleasurable. Consider again the two examples taken from our film data.

(43) 沖返個涼。

=(24) *Cung1 faan1 go3 loeng4.*
wash *faan1* CL shower
'(Let me) enjoy a shower.'

(Gamblers 1974)

(44) 飲返杯冰凍啤酒。

=(25) *Jam2 faan1 bui1 bing1dung3 belzau2.*
drink *faan1* CL chill beer
'(Let's) have some nice chilled beer.'

(Contract 1978)

In either example, *faan1* is used to mark the *speaker's* subjective assessment of the action concerned (i.e. 'taking a shower' in ex. (43) and 'drinking beer' in ex. (44)). Without *faan1*, they are absolutely grammatical, with the same propositional content. With *faan1*, however, the pleasurable feeling as a result of the action is highlighted. This *faan1* has a much stronger subjective colour as the evaluation made is solely based on the speaker's perspective, not necessarily on any circumstantial factors. It can only be used to express the *speaker's* subjective assessment, not *someone else's*. It cannot be used to describe a third person's enjoyment of an activity. Thus, it would be rather unacceptable to use *faan1* in a narrative context to describe *someone else's* enjoyment of the shower, as in (45) below.

(45) ?...跟住，佢去沖返個涼...

?... *gan1zyu6, keoi5 heoi3 cung1 faan1 go3 loeng4.*
then s/he go wash *faan1* CL shower
'After that, he went to enjoy a shower.'

If we want to describe that the person really 'enjoys' taking that shower, we need to make use of other means such as an adjectival. For instance:

(45') ...跟住，佢去沖個靚涼...

... *gan1zyu6, keoi5 heoi3 cung1 go3 leng3 loeng4.*
then s/he go wash CL beautiful shower
'After that, he went to take a lovely shower.'

The subjective nature of this *faan1* is further reinforced if we consider the following set of examples.

- (46) a. 我想食返餐 buffet。
Ngo5 soeng2 sik6 faan1 caan1 buffet.
 I wish eat *faan1* CL buffet
 ‘I’d love to enjoy a buffet.’
- b. ?佢想食返餐 buffet。
?Keoi5 soeng2 sik6 faan1 caan1 buffet.
 s/he wish eat *faan1* CL buffet
 ‘S/he’d love to enjoy a buffet.’

Example (46a) above is perfectly good but (46b), where the first person subject is replaced by third person, is bad. In (46a), the speaker is suggesting that by going to a buffet, he or she should be able to gain an enjoyable experience. This positive remark about going to a buffet is essentially subjective. That is, it is only the speaker’s point of view that going to a buffet is good, but not necessarily other people’s view. This explains why (46b) is rather odd. Nevertheless, the utterance would become acceptable again if it is used in reported speech, as it is actually the third person who has used *faan1* to encode his or her pleasurable feelings. Further consider (46c) and (46d) below.

- c. 佢話佢想食返餐 buffet。
Keoi5 waa6 keoi5 soeng2 sik6 faan1 caan1 buffet.
 s/he say s/he wish eat *faan1* CL buffet
 ‘S/he said s/he wants to enjoy a buffet.’
- d. 佢想食返餐 buffet 㗎。¹³
Keoi5 soeng2 sik6 faan1 caan1 buffet wo5.
 s/he wish eat *faan1* CL buffet PRT
 ‘S/he said s/he wants to enjoy a buffet.’

In addition to the above examples, (47) below further proves that the feature [+enjoyment] has become part of *faan1*’s semantics (rather than a pragmatic inference) since it is no longer cancellable; *faan1* cannot be followed by a negative comment.

- (47) 有時我食完宴會飲(?返)杯咖啡，
Jau5si4 ngo5 sik6 jyun4 ngaan3 wui5 jam2 (?faan1) buil gaa3fel,
 sometimes I eat finish lunch would drink (*faan1*) CL coffee

¹³ The particle 㗎 *wo5* is used as a device to report what someone else has said.

但係我唔算太鍾意。

daan6hai6 ngo5 m4 syun3 taai3 zung1ji3.

but I not consider very like

‘Sometimes I’d have a cup of coffee after my lunch — but actually I’m not very fond of it. (without *faan1*)’ /

‘?Sometimes I’d love a cup of coffee after my lunch — but actually I’m not very fond of it. (with *faan1*)’

It has been shown quite clearly that the appraisal of ‘enjoyment’ that *faan1* expresses is essentially subjective (i.e. from the speaker’s perspective), and has been reinterpreted as part of its semantics. One possible path by which this subjective *faan1* shifted towards the positive side of an evaluative scale is, as discussed earlier, by highlighting the ‘positive’ component of the modal force that *faan1* has developed in the course of its grammaticalization — what is ‘good’ based on the objective circumstances has become what is ‘good’, ‘pleasant’, etc. from the speaker’s perspective. The fact that *faan1* as a verb has the implication of ‘good’ makes this subjectification path of *faan1* even more probable.

4.2.3 The subjective *faan1* — its origin

To recall, the core semantics of *faan1* is ‘to return to the source/original location’. This ‘source’ is often interpreted as the original point from which the movement started, as in the very first example we gave, repeated as (48) below.

(48) 我聽日返香港。

=(1) *Ngo5 ting1jat6 faan1 Hoeng1gong2.*

I tomorrow *faan1* Hong Kong

‘I’m going back to Hong Kong tomorrow.’

Under normal circumstances, (48) implies that some time in the past the speaker has been to Hong Kong and now he is *going back* to Hong Kong. However, a speaker who has never been to Hong Kong can still utter (48) if properly contextualized; *faan1* can be interpreted as returning to a goal which the speaker has never been to, if this goal is in fact his ancestral homeland. If (48) is uttered by a non-Hong Konger, *faan1* can only mean a physical return that ‘Hong Kong’ is a place which the person left, and is now coming back to — ‘back to the source’. Metaphorically, this ‘source’ is extended to one’s native place and can be interpreted as one’s ‘source of origin’, that is, the place where one comes from or belongs to. In English we can also say ‘*go back* to your roots’.

If the speaker of (48) is a Hong Kong Chinese, then Hong Kong is considered his ‘place of origin’. Even if this person has never been to Hong Kong, he can still use *faan1* as he is conceptualized as going ‘back to the source’, back to where he belongs and came from originally. Following this direction, we can see why examples (49)-(51) below are possible.

- (49) 我聽日第一日返工。
Ngo5 ting1jat6 dai6jat1 jat6 faan1 gung1.
 I tomorrow first day *faan1* work
 ‘Tomorrow is my first day of work.’
- (50) 我個女聽日開始返幼稚園。
Ngo5 go3 neoi2 ting1jat6 hoilci2 faan1 jau3zi6jyun2.
 I POSS daughter tomorrow start *faan1* kindergarten
 ‘My daughter will start going to kindergarten tomorrow.’
- (51) 我希望我有一日可以返天堂。
Ngo5 heilmong6 ngo5 jau5 jat1 jat6 ho2ji3 faan1 tin1tong4.
 I hope I have one day can *faan1* heaven
 ‘I hope I can go to heaven one day.’

The ‘sense of belonging’ that *faan1* possesses is more salient in (49)-(51). One can probably work out from the contexts that the subjects have never been to the places where they *faan1* (i.e. ‘return to’): the workplace, the kindergarten, and most obviously, heaven! However, *faan1* can still be used because places of work or study are often closely associated with one’s place of belonging and where habitual structured activities are performed. These are places which define a person’s identity and which a person is emotionally attached to: a work place, a study place, and, an ‘eternal home’ (from a religious perspective). There is a general, cross-cultural conception of ‘home’ (i.e. where one belongs to) as a place of love and shelter. Returning to this source/where one belongs is often associated with a good and positive feeling, especially in the Chinese community. This association of ‘home is good’ forms another conceptual link that bridges the gap between the directional sense ‘return’ and the subjective sense ‘enjoyment’: returning to places where one belongs to often creates a pleasurable feeling.

The discussion here has illustrated that it is the implication of ‘source’ that motivates the subjectification of *faan1*. The semantic features developed from this ‘source’ meaning, including the [+pleasurable] and [+positive] features, are retained in *faan1*’s grammaticalization. In fact, besides the verb use, it is not difficult to find instances of the particle use of *faan1* in which the ‘source’ meaning is also very salient. Consider (52)-(54) below taken from the Cantonese Corpus (HKUCC).

- (52) 你問返人事部。
Nei5 man6 faan1 jan4si6boul.
 you ask *faan1* Human Resources Unit
 ‘You better ask the Human Resources Unit (in order to solve your problem).’
- (53) 你睇返個 result 係乜嘢。
Nei5 tai2 faan1 go3 result hai mat1 je5.
 you see *faan1* CL result BE what thing
 ‘You better see what the result is (before you make the decision).’
- (54) (我)要 check 返啲旅行書。
Ngo5 jiu3 check faan1 di1 leoi5jau4 syul.
 I need check *faan1* CL travel book
 ‘(I) need to check those travel guidebooks (before I can answer your question).’

There is no sense of a physical return in (52)-(54). Rather, the object where the subject *faan1* in each example is the ‘source’ that the subject should consult in order to solve the problem/issue concerned. Similar to (49)-(51), in each of (52)-(54), it is in fact the *first* time that the subject is ‘returning’ to these sources: the Human Resources Unit, the result, and the travel guidebooks. The particle *faan1* here is used to highlight the ‘source’, even though the subject has never been this ‘source’ before.

At this point, the link between ‘return’ and ‘good’ has become more apparent. The two senses are not totally unrelated, as remarked in some past studies. Despite the fact that most previous studies have noticed this more abstract, non-directional use of *faan1*, it is often described by general labels such as an ‘idiomatic expression’, an ‘empty morphological form’, or simply a ‘grammaticalized marker’, without further elaboration. Developed from its core semantics ‘back to the source’, it is found that *faan1* has acquired a positive implication, which has made the semantic development ‘objective direction’ > ‘subjective good’ possible. When this implicature of ‘goodness’ is semanticised, the particle *faan1* can be used with something subjectively good, without any association with ‘direction’.

More recently, *faan1* is observed to have undergone further grammaticalization, from expressing a speaker-based meaning, towards giving a more hearer-oriented function. The grammaticalization of *faan1* is observed to be comparable to Traugott’s proposal of the semantic development subjective > intersubjective, what we are going to discuss in the next section.

4.3 Intersubjectification of *faan1* — how *faan1* is employed as a politeness strategy

While the subjective meaning of *faan1* has received a lot of attention, its hearer-oriented use is comparatively less studied. In some recent examples of *faan1*, it is observed that the pleasurable feeling of the ‘self’ of the speaker has been extended to the ‘self’ of the hearer. This development ‘speaker-oriented’ > ‘hearer-oriented’ is attested in Traugott (2003b) and is motivated by the hearers’ face wants in a conversation. As an intersubjective marker, *faan1* is used for politeness reasons. It is used as a tone-softener to mitigate, and to create a sense of ‘mood’ alongside the sense of request and suggestion, with the hearer’s comfort taken more into account. Consider the example below which the author encountered at a government press conference; this incident, as a matter of fact, sparked my interest in the intersubjective use of *faan1*.

- (55) 想問返曾先生呢...
Soeng2 man6 faan1 Zang1 sinsaang1 nel ...
 wish ask *faan1* Tsang(surname) sir PRT
 ‘I’d like to ask Mr. Tsang ...’

At a government press conference in Hong Kong, a reporter uttered (55) as a preface to a question directed at the former Chief Executive, Mr. Donald Tsang. It was obvious in the actual speech situation that he was not returning to the act of asking a question, but asking his first question. Here, *faan1* functions as a tone-softener and is interpreted as a sign of the reporter’s respect for Mr. Tsang, the former Chief Executive. The preface sounds more polite with the use of *faan1*; and, politeness typically implies a certain degree of respect. It would have been more direct and straightforward if *faan1* had not been used. Example (56) below is another instance occurring in a well-known parenting website in Hong Kong.¹⁴

- (56) 想問返三個月 BB 可以食啲乜?
Soeng2 man6 faan1 saam1 go3 jyut6 BB ho2ji3 sik6 di1 mat1?
 wish ask *faan1* three CL month baby can eat CL what
 ‘I’d like to ask, what can a 3-month-old baby eat?’

Similar to (55), example (56) is perfectly fine without *faan1*. Again, the particle is used to soften the tone, making the question relatively more polite. This intersubjective *faan1* is also used on many other occasions, as observed in our Cantonese corpus

¹⁴ Baby Kingdom (<http://www.baby-kingdom.com/forum.php>).

(HKUCC), as illustrated in (57) and (58).

- (57) 幫你自己，
Bong1 nei5 zi6gei2,
 help you self
 即係講返件心理過程出嚟。
zik1hai6 gong2 faan1 gin6 sam1lei5 gwo3cing4 ceot1 lai4.
 BE say *faan1* CL psychological process out come
 ‘In order to help yourself, you need to spell out your psychological process
 (when encountering the incident).’
- (58) 各位同學，喺第一行寫返個名。
Gok3 wai2 tung4hok6, hai2 dai7jat1 hong4 se2 faan1 go3 meng2.
 every CL student at first row write *faan1* CL name
 ‘Students, write down your name in the first row.’

In (57) and (58), *faan1* does not denote any sort of return, nor does it help express the positive feeling of the speaker. Rather, it is used to soften the tone so as to create a good and comfortable feeling towards the hearer. In other words, *faan1* is used *intersubjectively* here. In the real context of (57), the hearer has encountered some painful experience that she is reluctant to touch on. The speaker is not asking the hearer to tell *again* about her psychological status, but is using *faan1* to mitigate the tone, and to encourage the hearer to spell out her mental path so as to release her internal pressure and worries. Without *faan1*, the utterance would behave more like an order, rather than a sincere encouragement. Similarly, *faan1* in (58) has no sense of “return” and is unrelated to the expression of the speaker’s positive feeling; it is mainly employed to create a good and amiable feeling with the audience generally, so that the utterance is more like a polite request, rather than an instruction.

This hearer-oriented use of *faan1* is a relatively recent discovery in Cantonese. Fong (2007) has provided a descriptive account of this use of *faan1*, labeling it as the “non-return” *faan1*. Below are some of the examples she gave in her work (ibid: 287).

- (59) 王生，我講返俾你聽，
Wong4 saang1, ngo5 gong2 faan1 bei2 nei5 teng1,
 Wong Mr. I tell *faan1* to you listen
 你嘅手機合約就嚟到期...
nei5 ge3 sau2gei1 hap6joek3 zau6lai4 dou3 kei4...
 you LP mobile contract soon reach deadline
 ‘Mr. Wong, I’d like to tell you that your mobile contract is due soon.’

- (60) 唔該我想問返點解咁耐
M4goi1 ngo5 soeng2 man6 faan1 dim2gaai2 gam3 noi6
 Excuse me I want ask *faan1* why so long
 仲未收到你哋嘅通知書...
zung6 mei6 saul dou2 nei5 dei6 ge3 tung1zi1 syul...
 still not receive you PL POSS notification letter
 ‘Excuse me, I’d like to ask why I still have not received the notification letter after such a long time.’
- (61) 小姐，你覺唔覺塊面好乾，
Siu2ze2, nei5 gok3 m4 gok3 faai3 min6 hou2 gon1,
 Miss you feel not feel CL face very dry
 等我介紹返隻面霜俾你搽...
dang2 ngo5 gaai3siu6 faan1 zek3 min6 soengl1 bei2 nei5 caa4...
 wait I recommend *faan1* CL face cream give you apply
 ‘Miss, do you feel that your face is very dry? Let me recommend a face cream for you.’

Despite the fact that a functional label for *faan1* is lacking, Fong’s study is very useful as it has nicely captured the different facets of *faan1*, supported by examples that she has encountered in her daily life. She has identified and listed four features of this “non-return” *faan1*: (i) it is mostly used with quotative verbs; (ii) it is used to predicate a future event; (iii) it is mostly used in informal situations; and (iv) the utterances are mostly used to open a conversation (Fong 2007:288). If we consider *faan1* as an inter-subjective marker having a hearer-oriented function, the reasons why it can be used in these utterances with the above-mentioned four properties, can be easily accounted for.

The speakers in (59)-(61) have employed *faan1* for politeness, using it as a tone-softener to mitigate the effects of the utterance. Nobody likes to be needlessly reminded, nagged at, or commented on (especially negatively)! The speakers on these occasions are infringing the hearer’s negative face. However, the use of *faan1* can create a sense of ‘mood’ alongside the request or suggestion, making the utterance less face-threatening.

As a hearer-oriented tone-softener, *faan1* is used to mitigate the strength of the request/suggestion made by the speaker. Since it is often used with a request/suggestion, there is no surprise to find it being attached to a quotative verb and used in the first part of a conversational pair (i.e. to open a conversation), predicating a future event. Another of Fong’s observations that *faan1* is mostly used informally is explainable if we take into account its developmental pathway. Since *faan1* as a subjective marker is often used in colloquial contexts, it is not surprising to find that when it is further developed

into an intersubjective marker, it is more likely to be used in informal contexts. However, a lot more data will be needed to prove whether this *faanl* is really ‘mostly’ used in informal situations. As a politeness marker, *faanl* is used to mitigate or soften the tone. It is observed from daily conversations that *faanl* is also quite commonly used in formal situations, as in the “Mr. Tsang” example.

To arrive at an interim summary, the particle *faanl* is observed to have undergone, in Traugott’s terms, subjectification and intersubjectification in its grammaticalization. The development is found to be comparable with that of *let’s* and *actually* in English — from objective (impersonal) to subjective (speaker-based) and further to intersubjective (addressee-oriented).

4.4 Motivations for the subjectification and intersubjectification of *faanl*

No utterance is ever free of the speaker’s subjective beliefs, state of mind, or attitude, as every utterance results from the speaker’s own conceptualization of the real world. In other words, we can never view the world without our own perspective. Language should provide speakers with the means to express what they think or feel about themselves, as well as about others. This is how subjectification as well as intersubjectification is motivated.

According to the principle of economy, participants in a discourse always try to put in a minimal amount of effort to make communication possible. As Martinet earlier remarked, “in order to understand how and why a language changes, the linguist must keep in mind two ever-present and antinomic factors: first, the requirements of communication, the need for the speaker to convey his message, and second, the principle of least effort, which makes him restrict his output of energy, both mental and physical, to the minimum compatible with achieving his ends” (1962:139). In other words, a speaker prefers expressions that are simple and short while a hearer prefers expressions that are informative and easy to understand. Language should change in order to fulfill its users’ needs.

Accompanied by features such as bleaching and decategorization, the evolution of *faanl* is a good example illustrating a typical process of grammaticalization, in which *faanl* has gradually lost its concrete directional meaning and, in specific contexts, become a grammatical marker expressing the speaker’s subjective judgment. As Heine et al. (1991) commented, ‘grammaticalization can be interpreted as the result of a process which has problem-solving as its main goal’. There are conversational needs for a speaker to express his subjective feelings and also for him to take care of the face wants of the hearers — the other participants in the conversation. A challenge is raised for languages to find a suitable candidate in the grammatical system to satisfy these needs.

Certainly, there are always different ways in achieving the same goal in language use. However the question would be: is there an appropriate and convenient form that a language user can use so that the speaker can convey his message effectively with the least amount of effort? It is this need which motivates the development of *faan1*, along with many other particles, which as a consequence leads to its pragmatic enrichment.

Subjectification and intersubjectification are conversational strategies employed to facilitate communication. *Faan1* is a grammatical resource that users of Cantonese employ to express subjectivity and intersubjectivity in a more economical way. Instead of literally using phrases like *it is very enjoyable to...* or *I feel pleasurable when I...*, speakers can simply make use of *faan1* to express their subjective evaluation of what they consider ideal and pleasurable. In a similar way, *faan1* is also employed intersubjectively to show the speaker's care towards the hearer in an economic way. In order to make communication possible, it is important that the speaker be aware of the 'self' of the addressee and take into account his relationship with the addressee and that person's face/image needs. This can be done in an easy and relatively effortless way with *faan1*.

5. *Faan1* in other syntactic positions

Before we summarize and conclude our findings, we shall look at two other uses of *faan1* which do not fall within the scope of this study — the preverbal use and the adverbial use of *faan1*. The preverbal *faan1* precedes the verb. Its function is very similar to the English prefix “re-”, with the meaning “again”. The adverbial *faan1* follows the adjective. It cannot be treated as a full verb; it behaves more like an adverb modifying the adjective. Although these two uses are still closely related to the “return/resume” sense and may not be directly relevant to our discussion on the subjectification and intersubjectification of *faan1*, an understanding of them would definitely complete the picture of *faan1*.

5.1 The pre-verbal *faan1*

Though less commonly observed, *faan1* can sometimes be used pre-verbally, like an adverb modifying the verb. Below are some examples from Google search.

- (62) 廣州燒鵝名店，
Gwong2zaul siu1 ngo2 ming4 dim3,
 Guangzhou fry goose famous shop

餸尾返煮再賣。

sung3 mei5 faan1 zyu2 zoi3 maa6.

dish left-over *faan1* cook again sell

‘A famous BBQ goose shop in Guangzhou sold re-cooked left-over food.’

- (63) 欣宜返脹，嚇親纖體公司。¹⁵

Jan1ji4 faan1 zoeng3, haak3 can1 cim1tai2 gung1sil.

Yan-yee *faan1* expand scare PRT slimming company

‘The fact that Yan-yee has become fat again scared the slimming company.’

- (64) 返兜舊愛

Faan1 dau1 gau6 ngoi3.

faan1 pursue old love

‘To pursue again an old lover.’

Faan1 in (62)-(64) cannot be considered a full verb; it is more like a prefix to the main verb, indicating that the action denoted by the main verb should be repeated, often for a specific purpose. It is observed that this pre-verbal *faan1* is, to a large extent, interchangeable with the post-verbal *faan1* that we have been discussing throughout this paper, to mean to “re-do” the action. For instance in (62) and (63), it is acceptable to say *zyu2 faan1* and *zoeng3 faan1*, with more or less the same meaning. However, the *faan1* in (64) is a little different. *Faan1 dau1* is a fixed expression which is always used in contexts about pursuing the ex-girlfriend or ex-boyfriend. Thus, it would be a little strange to say *dau1 faan1* in (64), though its meaning is still apparent to speakers of Cantonese.

Although the pre-verbal *faan1* and the post-verbal *faan1* are not very different from each other in giving the meaning ‘again’, with the *faan1* pre-posed, this “again” meaning is often emphasized, many a time with a negative implication. The post-verbal resumptive *faan1*, on the other hand, is more neutral, describing the fact that the situation is resumed, or the action is done again.

5.2 The adverbial *faan1*

Besides occupying the pre-verbal position, *faan1* can also be used to modify an adjective. Consider below two examples from Google search.

¹⁵ 欣宜 “Yan-yee” is an artist in Hong Kong.

- (65) 你覺得自己瘦咗會唔會靚返？
Nei5 gok3dak1 zi6gei2 sau3 zo2 wui3 m4 wui3 leng3 faan1?
 you think self thin PERF will not will pretty *faan1*
 ‘Do you think you will be pretty again if you become thinner?’
- (66) 剃咗 skinhead，依家開始長返。
Caan2 zo2 skinhead, jilgaal hoilci2 coeng4 faan1.
 shovel PERF skinhead now begin long *faan1*
 ‘(I have) shoveled a skinhead, the hair now begins to grow.’

Faan1 in (65) and (66) is like an adverb, describing the resumption of the present situation to the original/previous state. Here, *leng3 faan1* means to become pretty *again*, and *coeng4 faan1* means to become long *again*. With the use of *faan1*, the person concerned in (65) must have experienced before the state of being pretty, and the speaker in (66) must have experienced the state with longer hair. In other words, like the post-verbal resumptive *faan1*, this post-adjectival *faan1* also serves a resumptive function, just that it is about the resumption of state rather than the resumption of action.

In consideration of *faan1*’s evolution as a whole, it might be the case that there was a split in terms of form upon its grammaticalization, in which it started to occupy the pre-verbal position. However, in terms of the semantic change pathway that *faan1* has undergone, the observation that *faan1* can occupy different positions in relation to the verb does not seem to counter our proposed developmental pathway of the subjective and intersubjective functions of *faan1*. It is noted that the semantic function performed by the pre-verbal *faan1* and the adverbial *faan1* is not very different from that of the post-verbal *faan1*, despite its difference in positions. As pointed out earlier, based on the meaning of ‘returning to the original location’, *faan1* occupying the post-verbal position can express a rich array of ‘re-’ meanings, such as ‘redo’, ‘resume’, and ‘reciprocate’. *Faan1* occupying the pre-verbal position and the post-adjectival position also shares the resumptive function of the post-verbal *faan1*, indicating the resumption of action in the former case, and the resumption of state in the latter case.

6. Summary and conclusion

While Traugott’s suggestion of a typical semantic pathway in grammaticalization (i.e. nonsubjective > subjective > intersubjective) has been supported by data from English, few relevant studies have been done in Asian languages. In this present study, a precise developmental path of *faan1* has been delineated, and this path has been shown to be consistent with Traugott’s suggestion. In fact, the Cantonese particle *faan1*

serves a very good example of how objective, impersonal meanings can become, over time, subjective as well as intersubjective meanings.

As a directional particle, *faan1* indicates a movement towards a goal which is always the source of the movement. Upon grammaticalization, various 're-' meanings (e.g. redo, resume, etc.) have been associated with *faan1*. It is because of this, *faan1* is also termed a 'resumptive' marker in many studies (Kwok 1971, Cheung 1972, Gao 1980, Yuan 1989, Chang 1996, among others).¹⁶ When *faan1* is used with the verb *hok6* 'learn' and reinforced by a modal (i.e. in the context of 'learning'), a strong implication of what one *should* do often results. When this implication has become established and conventionalized, *faan1* in its own right can be used to give a modal meaning of what a person should do for his own advantage, without the verb *hok6* 'learn'. This meaning of 'good' has then shifted towards the speaker's perspective, denoting the speaker's internal evaluation of whether something is good/pleasurable. The fact that *faan1* as a verb can mean 'returning to one's root' has made this semantic development 'physical return' > 'subjective good' even more probable, as retuning to one's roots often creates good and pleasant connotations. At the most advanced stage, *faan1* has undergone intersubjectification to become a particle involving an inter-speakers' relationship (i.e. an attempt to be polite in consideration of the speaker-hearer relationship).¹⁷

Lewis (2003) investigated the influence of discourse context on the historical development of discourse particles and found that the semantic change involved in many discourse markers/particles is in the direction of greater subjectification, increased discourse function and increased scope. It was found that many discourse particles can be traced back to VP-adverbials/other expressions which developed into sentence-adverbs, acquiring proposition-wide scope and taking on new, speaker-oriented functions. The development of *faan1* also goes in line with these tendencies. It has been illustrated in this study how *faan1*'s meaning has become more subjective, and also how its semantic scope can be extended from VP-internal, to clausal, then to sentential. However, a very interesting observation about *faan1*'s evolution is that changes in function do not necessarily bring a change in form. At its early stage of development, *faan1* is used to show the directional return as designated by the verb to which it is attached. In other

¹⁶ As pointed out by one of the reviewers, using *faan1* as a resumptive marker is not only observed in Cantonese, but also found in other Yue dialects such as Taishan (Yue 2005) and Nanning (Lin & Qin 2008). This seems to suggest that *faan1*'s grammaticalization took place quite early, probably before the first split of the Yue family.

¹⁷ The 'tone-softener' function of *faan1* as observed in its latest stage of grammaticalization seems to be unique in Yue, as it is not reported in other Yue dialects. While the nonsubjective > subjective development is found to be a robust tendency cross-linguistically, including Sinitic languages, the subjective > intersubjective development has not been that widely attested. This is an area which definitely deserves future research.

words, it mainly deals with the verb. Later on when *faan1* has gained the subjective and intersubjective senses, its semantic and pragmatic scope is extended and it has an effect on the whole clause. The speaker-oriented or hearer-oriented meanings that *faan1* expresses are not only related to the verb, but the whole proposition. Notice however that the position of *faan1* has not visibly moved to a higher level (such as at the end of a clause/sentence) with the scope extension, but still stays very closely with the verb. This apparent lack of syntactic raising (or movement) poses a challenge to current generative theory, and deserves further analysis in future work.

This paper aims at a full picture of *faan1* and it has given, I hope, a more comprehensive account of the semantic change pathway of *faan1* as well as how and why this change is motivated. The relevance of the subjectivity/intersubjectivity dyad to the grammaticalization of *faan1* has been discussed. In a wider perspective, this study has also shown that the dichotomy of subjectification/intersubjectification is more far-reaching than has been recognized. Although there is a paucity of semantic change studies on Chinese languages and apparently the shift nonsubjective > subjective > intersubjective has not yet been reported for many Chinese dialects, more instances of subjectification and intersubjectification are likely to be uncovered. In the case of *faan1*, its evolution seems to be still ongoing. It is expected that the meaning of *faan1* will become more and more empty, becoming a very frequently used discourse marker without a concrete grammatical function. We must wait to see the exact directions that *faan1* will take in the future.

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從「方向」到「正面評價」 ——粵語助詞「返」的語法化、主觀化 及交互主觀化

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本文探討粵語助詞「返」的語法化過程。以十九世紀至當代的粵方言材料為基礎，本文追蹤「返」的歷時發展過程。從一個表「回到原來位置」的趨向動詞，「返」逐漸發展成一個語法標記，表示與「回復」相關的意思，並進一步發展為賦有主觀評價色彩的標記。儘管這些用法在過去已被廣泛評述，本文發現「返」再進一步語法化為一個能減輕說話人語氣的交互主觀化標記。本文認為「返」的主觀化及交互主觀化的動機是基於說話的需求——說話人需表達自己的主觀情感的同時，亦需照顧到其對象的面子需要。由於「返」正是達至這些需求的不二之選，以至它最後發展成一個具豐富語用功能的標記。

關鍵詞：粵語，語法化，主觀化，評價助詞，「返」