

The Grammaticalization of Stance Markers in Chinese

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1 Introduction

Every utterance we make signals our stance—toward someone, something, someplace, some event or situation, or some idea. Essentially, our stance is the expression of our beliefs, perspectives, evaluations, and attitudes, and can be expressed explicitly (e.g. *I don't like this*) or implicitly (e.g. *I guess this will do*). It can be detected, not only at the clausal level as just shown, but also at the lexical (e.g. *awful*) and phrasal (e.g. *not quite what I expect*) levels as well (Xing 2006). Naturally, for a more comprehensive assessment of a speaker's stance, we will need to evaluate numerous utterances—sometimes on multiple occasions, and in various contexts, and on a broader scale at the discourse level as well. The focus of this chapter is on stance markers that have emerged as a result of frequent and conventionalized usage, often involving pragmatic implicature. Among the stance markers to be discussed in this chapter are epistemic, evidential, and attitudinal markers. We will focus on three major pathways for the emergence of these stance markers in Chinese, namely, the verbal, nominal and indexical pathways.

2 Stance markers and discourse

Stance markers are used not only to express the speaker's subjective views, judgments, and intentions; they are also often used to signal the speaker's alignment or disalignment with other interlocutors—that is, they often also serve an interpersonal or 'intersubjective' function (see Traugott 2010). For this reason, stance markers play an important role in the negotiation of speaker's and hearer's footing (i.e. their positioning relative to the message and to others) in the course of interactive talk.

Stance markers can be found in a variety of positions within an utterance. Some stance markers occur in utterance-initial position, with many of them having developed from discourse markers, as in the case of Mandarin disagreement marker *nà* 那 'but' (which is derived from distal demonstrative 'that') shown in (1). This is not surprising, given that discourse markers often occur at turn-transition points in a conversation, and thus are in an ideal position to signal the speaker's evaluation of what was said in the previous turn, and to then signal his/her expectation of how the subsequent turn(s) would unfold (Yang 2017).

- (1) 那你還是去看一看醫生吧，雖然你說已經好多了。
Nà nǐ hái shì qù kàn yī kàn yīshēng ba,
NA 2SG still go see one see doctor SFP,
suīrán nǐ shuō yǐjīng hǎoduō le.
though you say already better SFP
'But you'd better still go and visit the doctor, though you said you are already better.'

Some stance markers in clause-initial position have also developed from complement-taking verb constructions, among them cognition verbs such as *wǒ juéde* 我覺得 ‘I think’ which often give rise to epistemic readings, as in (2a), and perception verbs such as (*wǒ*) *tīngshuō* (我)聽說 ‘(I) hear’ which frequently yield evidential readings (see further discussion in §3.1.2). Some of these stance markers can also occur in utterance-medial and utterance-final positions, as illustrated with *wǒ juéde* in (2b) and (2c) respectively. The Chinese language is known to be rich in utterance-final mood particles, with some particles (e.g. *de*) combining with other particles (e.g. *la* and *ba*) to form complex sentence final particles such as *dela* ‘I’m sure’ and *deba* ‘I suppose’ in (3) (see Yap, Deng & Caboara 2017).

(2) a. 我覺得他不會成功的。

wǒ juéde tā bú huì chénggōng de
1SG think 3SG NEG FUT succeed SFP
‘I think/Probably he will not succeed.’

b. 他, 我覺得不會成功的。

tā, wǒ juéde bú huì chénggōng de
3SG 1SG think NEG FUT succeed SFP
‘He, I think/probably, will not succeed.’

c. 他不會成功的, 我覺得。

tā bú huì chénggōng de, wǒ juéde
3SG NEG FUT succeed SFP 1SG think
‘He will not succeed, I think/probably.’

(3) 他不會成功的啦/的吧。

tā bú huì chénggōng dela/deba
3SG NEG FUT succeed SFP
‘He will not succeed (I’m sure /I suppose).’

Most stance markers have their origin as a lexical or grammatical item. Via different pathways of grammaticalization, they have evolved into stance markers indicating different shades of speaker meanings. For instance, in (1), *nà* is no longer a deictic demonstrative meaning ‘that’, but is more appropriately understood as a stance marker indicating the speaker’s disagreement with the assessment of the situation as suggested by the addressee in the prior turn (in this case, the addressee’s assessment that she is now already better). As a versatile indexical, the deictic demonstrative *nà* has grammaticalized into a stance marker, such that the *nà*-prefaced turn could now indicate the speaker’s disagreement with what was said in a prior turn. In (2), *wǒ juéde* has extended its function from a complement-taking construction with the meaning ‘I have a particular opinion’ to an epistemic phrase indicating probability, and often further used as a pragmatic hedge with politeness and solidarity-enhancing functions. In (3), we see nominalizer *de* often combining with other particles to form complex sentence final particles that convey subtle differences in the speaker’s subjective and intersubjective stance (e.g. *dela* to convey certainty and *deba* to convey a supposition rather than an assertion).

3 Sources of stance markers

Stance markers in the Sinitic language family are derived from a rich variety of sources. In the subsections that follow, we briefly illustrate three robust grammaticalization pathways, namely, the verbal pathway (§3.1), the nominal pathway (§3.2), and the indexical pathway (§3.3).

3.1 Verb-based stance markers

3.1.1 Stance markers derived from serial verb constructions

A common source for stance markers in Chinese is the serial verb construction, where the second verb (V₂) in a V₁-V₂ construction often evolves into a marker of aspect, tense, and/or mood, the latter often broadly construed to include a wide range of speaker's subjective and intersubjective stance. We illustrate with the Mandarin verb *liǎo* 了 'finish'. The completive verb *liǎo*, attested in Old Chinese as seen in (4a), has developed into both a perfective and perfect aspect marker *le*, as shown in (4b) and (4c) respectively, as well as an interactional sentence final particle *le* (4d). This interactional particle *le* comes with a realis interpretation that often conveys a ring of finality and closure to a discourse topic at the end of a speaker's turn of talk and in this way helps to open up the conversational floor for a next-speaker turn (see Lu & Su 2009).

- (4) a. 晨起早掃, 食了洗滌

chén qǐ zǎo sǎo , shí liǎo xǐdí

morning get.up early sweep eat finish wash

'(One should) get up in the morning, sweep (the house) and wash (clothes) after finishing the meal.'

(*Quanhanshu*, Eastern Han, 25–220 AD, PKU Center for Chinese Linguistics Corpus)

- b. 我買了一本書。

wǒ mǎi le yī běn shū

1SG buy LE one CL book

'I (have) bought one book.'

- c. 他過來了。

tā guòlái le

3SG come.over LE

'He has come over.'

- d. E: [你]們也是用中文就對了。

nǐmen yěshì yòng zhōngwén jiù duì le.

2PL also use Chinese PRT right LE

'You also use Chinese, right?'

- J: (0) 對。

duì

right

語意學他們是用中文。

yǔyìxué tāmen shì yòng zhōngwén

semantics 3PL FOC use Chinese

‘Yeah. They teach semantics in Chinese.’

(Lu & Su 2009: 162-163; re-glossed)

As a marker of next-speaker turns, *le* frequently occurs as part of addressee-engaging expressions such as *jiù duì le* ‘right?’, in response to which the next speaker often produces brief reactive tokens such as *duì* 對 ‘yeah’ / ‘right’, as seen in (4d). In other words, *le* is often used as a marker of the speaker’s intersubjective (i.e. interpersonal) stance. Also worth noting here is that the semantic extension of *le* from serial verb to aspect marker and sentence final particle is accompanied by syntactic scope expansion as well: [Serial.verb V *liǎo*] > [Postverbal.aspect V-*le*] > [(Inter)subjective.stance [Finite.clause (NP) VP] *le*].

3.1.2 Stance markers derived from complement-taking verb constructions

Complement-taking verbs (with or without the first person matrix subject ‘I/We’) are also good sources for (inter)subjective speaker stance markers. Consider the English *I think* construction (5a), which is lexically already inherently subjective. Not surprisingly, inherently subjective constructions involving the mental state of the speaker as in the case of *I think* often develop into an epistemic marker (5b-d), and in the process often triggering the insubordination of the complement clause (*he’s going to win*) into a new finite main clause, with *I think* in the matrix clause reinterpreted as the speaker’s subjectivity marker, namely, epistemic hedging and/or pragmatic softening (see, for example, Thompson & Mulac 1991; Kärkkäinen 2003). The use of *I think* as an epistemic marker allows the speaker to hedge his/her claims for a wide range of reasons, including going beyond the subjective function of expressing the speaker’s guarded inference, uncertainty and/or anxiety (5b-c) to the intersubjective function of downgrading the strength of the speaker’s epistemic claim and thereby enhance solidarity with the addressee (5d).¹ From a syntactic perspective, it is worth noting that the utterance-final position is ideally suited for the socio-interactional purpose of shifting turns of talk, which includes building rapport with the addressee.

- (5) a. *I think* (that) *he’s not going to win*.
b. *I think* [UNSTRESSED] *he’s not going to win*. [= ‘Probably, he’s not going to win.’]
c. *He, I think, is not going to win*. [= ‘He probably is not going to win’]
d. *He’s not going to win, I think*. [= ‘He’s not going to win, probably.’]

Similar constructions have also been observed in Chinese. The epistemic markers *wǒ juéde* and (*wǒ*) *kǒngpà* (我)恐怕 ‘I’m afraid’ have also evolved into a sentence final epistemic marker indicating the speaker’s attenuated degree of commitment to the proposition (Endo 2010; Lim 2011; Yap, Yang & Wong 2014). We elaborate further using *kǒngpà*, as shown in (6).

- (6) a. 恐怕他不會成功的。
kǒngpà tā bú huì chénggōng de
afraid 3SG NEG FUT succeed SFP
‘I’m afraid/Probably he will not succeed.’
- b. 他恐怕不會成功的。
tā kǒngpà bú huì chénggōng de
3SG probably NEG FUT succeed SFP

‘He **probably** will not succeed.’

c. 他不會成功的,(?恐怕)。

tā bú huì chénggōng de (?kǒngpà)

3SG NEG FUT succeed SFP probably

Intended meaning: ‘He will not succeed, **probably**.’

Note that whereas *wǒ juéde* as seen earlier in (2c) is sometimes used in utterance-final position in tag-like fashion, the use of *kǒngpà* as an utterance tag in (6c) is marginal. This is partly because the verbal semantics of ‘fear’ in *kǒngpà* is still lexically transparent and the use of *kǒngpà* is largely restricted to adversative contexts, where overt expression of the speaker as an affectee is preferably avoided for taboo reasons.

While mental/psych verbs such as ‘think’ and ‘be afraid’ often yield epistemic and inferential readings, perception verbs such as ‘hear’ and utterance verbs such as ‘say’ typically yield instead hearsay evidential readings, as shown in (7a-b). Hearsay evidential uses of these utterance verb constructions often also serve as an indirect hedging strategy, allowing the speaker to distance himself/herself from full responsibility for an epistemic claim by borrowing the voice of others. In Chinese, as illustrated in (8a) and (8b), these complement-taking verbs with a hearsay evidential function can appear with or without the first person subject *wǒ* (‘I’) in the matrix clause. Crucially, even without overt expression of the first person subject (= speaker), a subjective reading still obtains. There are also variations in the way the speaker weighs his/her epistemic commitment to the source of information. As seen in (8c), hearsay expressions sometimes explicitly express a/some third person referent(s) (e.g. using *rénmen* 人們 ‘people’ or *tāmen* 他們 ‘they’) as the source of information; these constructions with third person sources often imply that although some/most people think a certain way (e.g. that so-and-so will win the contest), the speaker himself/herself thinks otherwise, or the outcome turns out otherwise. The construction is more marked than expressions which do not explicitly single out what other people say, as it expresses the speaker’s disalignment to the norm.

(7) a. {**I hear/see**} he’s not going to win.

b. {**People say / They say**} he’s not going to win.

(8) a. 我聽說他不會贏。

wǒ tīngshuō tā bú huì yíng

1SG hear.say 3SG NEG will win

‘**I hear/see** he is not going to win.’

b. 聽說他不會贏。

tīngshuō tā bú huì yíng

hear.say 3SG NEG will win

‘**It is said** (< I) hear (people) say) he is not going to win.’

c. 人們說/他們說他不會贏。

rénmen shuō / tāmen shuō tā bú huì yíng

people say/ 3PL say 3SG NEG will win

‘**People say/ They say** he is not going to win.’

3.1.3 Stance markers derived from versatile transfer verb constructions

An interesting stance-marking strategy that has thus far not been observed in other languages is the Chinese ‘speaker affectedness’ marker in expressions such as *Huā gěi sǐ le* 花給死了 ‘The flowering plant, alas, has withered and died’ (Chen & Yap 2018). The grammaticalization of the ‘give’ verb *gěi* into a speaker affectedness marker involves a valence-reducing process. As shown in the Mandarin Chinese examples in (9a-d), the ‘give’ verb (9a) can develop into a causative verb meaning ‘let’ or ‘allow’ (9b) (see Lord, Iwasaki & Yap 2002), and as seen in (9c), the ‘give’ verb can also be reinterpreted as a case marker for defocused agents in passive constructions (e.g. *gěi xiāofángyuán* 給消防員 ‘by the firefighters’) (see Hashimoto 1988; Yap & Iwasaki 2003). Of particular interest here, and rather rare in the languages of the world (attested thus far only within the Sinitic language family, typically observed among speakers of Mandarin and Southern Min varieties, as shown in (9d) and (9e-f) respectively), the ‘give’ verb can further be used as a speaker affectedness marker (Chen & Yap 2018). Matthews, Xu and Yip (2005) and Lin (2011) discuss this function of the ‘give’ morpheme in terms of adversity marking, while Huang (2013) identifies it as a case marker for ‘phantom (i.e. covert or implicit) affectees’ that include an affected speaker. This grammaticalization process involves the extended use of the ‘give’ verb from a causative (3-place predicate) construction to a passive (2-place predicate) construction in virtually all Chinese varieties, and further to an unaccusative (1-place predicate) construction in only some Chinese varieties (Huang 2013; Chen & Yap 2018).

- (9) a. Lexical verb ‘give’ (Mandarin Chinese)
 他給了我一個機會。
tā gěile wǒ yīgè jīhuì
 3SG GIVE-PFV 1SG one.CL chance
 ‘He gave me a chance.’
- b. Light verb ‘give’ in causative construction (Mandarin Chinese)
 你應該給他上學。
nǐ yīnggāi gěi tā shàngxué
 2SG should GIVE 3SG go.to.school
 ‘You should let him go to school.’
- c. ‘Give’ as case marker of defocused agent (Mandarin Chinese)
 火給 (消防員) 滅了。
huǒ gěi (xiāofángyuán) miè-le
 fire GIVE (firemen) extinguish-PFV
 ‘The fire was extinguished (by the firefighters).’
- d. ‘Give’ as a ‘speaker affectedness’ marker (Mandarin Chinese)
 金魚給它死了。
jīnyú gěi (tā) sǐ-le
 goldfish GIVE 3SG die-RVC
 ‘Alas, the goldfish has died. (Someone must have overfed it and I’m upset).’
- e. ‘Give’ as a ‘speaker affectedness’ marker (Hui’an Southern Min)

金魚與伊死去。

kiə¹m¹h²u² khɔ̃⁵⁻⁴ i¹ si³kh²u⁰

goldfish GIVE 3SG die-RVC

‘Alas, the goldfish has died. (That’s unfortunate and I’m upset).’

- f. ‘Give’ as a ‘speaker affectedness’ marker

(Hui’an Southern Min)

金魚與伊死去。

kiə¹m¹h²u² khɔ̃⁵⁻¹ si³kh²u⁰

goldfish GIVE.3SG die-RVC

‘Alas, the goldfish has died. (That’s unfortunate and I’m upset).’

The narrative for the emergence of the ‘speaker affectedness’ marker is worth a closer look. Essentially, as seen in (9d), the versatile and semantically bleached ‘give’ morpheme can still retain traces of its causative function that we see in (9b), such that in mainland Mandarin Chinese varieties native speakers often associate the third person pronoun *tā* (3SG) in (9d) with an implicit causer, which often gives rise to interpretations with a tinge of blame assignment (e.g. ‘*Someone/Something* caused the boat to sink’).

In Southern Min varieties such as Hui’an, on the other hand, the ‘give’ morpheme in (9e-f) tends to lean more towards a case-marking function, more specifically as a case marker for affected participants. As noted in Chen and Yap (2018), the Hui’an third person pronoun *i¹* (3SG) as seen in (9e-f) is far more grammaticalized than its Mandarin counterpart *tā* (3SG) in (9d), in that it is highly pleonastic and could refer not only to singular third person referents (3SG) but also to plural third person referents (3PL), as well as to second person referents (2SG). This highly pleonastic Hui’an third person pronoun *i¹* can thus refer to a wide variety of referents that are affected by the adversative event, among them the affected patient and affected others in the discourse, *including the speaker himself/herself*. Thus, in subtle contrast to Mandarin speakers as shown in (9d), Hui’an speakers as shown in (9e-f) are more inclined to focus on the adversative outcome than on an implicit causer.

Overall, for both the Mandarin and Southern Min varieties, it is largely due to the underspecified status of the third person pronoun (sometimes explicitly expressed but often elided as in the case of Mandarin *tā* in (9d) or phonologically incorporated as in the case of Hui’an *i¹* in (9f)) that the speaker-affected ‘give’ construction has come to also express the subjective stance of the speaker.

3.2 Noun-based stance markers

It has often been observed that stance markers often share the same form as nominalizers derived from general nouns. This syncretism has been attested in many language families, among them Tibeto-Burman (see Mattisoff 1972; Noonan 1997; Bickel 1999; Watters 2008; DeLancey 2011; Morey 2011; *inter alia*), Japanese and Korean (e.g. Fujii 2000; Horie 2008; Rhee 2008, 2011), as well as Chinese (e.g. Yap, Choi & Cheung 2010; Yap, Deng & Caboara 2017). Crosslinguistically, the grammaticalization trajectory takes the following path: general noun > nominalizer > stance marker (Yap & Grunow-Hårsta 2010; *inter alia*). Below we will focus on how noun-based stance markers emerge from copula-elided constructions.

As seen in (10), from Mandarin Chinese, nominalization constructions such as *wǒ zuótiān mǎi de* 我昨天買的 ‘the one that I bought yesterday’ are frequently used in copula constructions (10a.i), where the head-final nominalizer (in this case *de* 的, which is etymologically derived from the noun *dǐ* 底 meaning ‘base, foundation, bottom’), can end up in utterance-final position and be reinterpreted as a sentence final mood particle (10a.ii). Such reanalysis is facilitated by the nominalizer being situated in utterance-final position, where it can easily host the utterance-final prosody of the speaker (see Yap, Choi & Cheung 2010). Given that copula constructions such as (10a) are focus constructions with assertive force, the default mood reading associated with sentence final particle (SFP) *de* is assertive as well. Reanalysis of head-final nominalizer (NMLZ) *de* to sentence final mood particle (SFP) *de* is also made easier in Chinese because the language allows for subject and copula elision, as seen in (10b).

(10) a. 這個是我昨天買的。

zhège shì wǒ zuótiān mǎi de

this.CL COP 1SG yesterday buy NMLZ/SFP

(i) ‘This is [**what** I bought yesterday].’ (< ‘This is [**that which** I bought yesterday].’)

(ii) ‘[This is what I bought yesterday] **de** (=you can take my word for it).’

b. 我昨天買的。

wǒ zuótiān mǎi de

1SG yesterday buy NMLZ/SFP

(i) ‘(This is) **something (that)** I bought yesterday.’

(ii) ‘(This) I bought yesterday.’ / ‘I bought this yesterday.’

Elision of the matrix subject and copula, as in (10b), yields a stand-alone nominalization construction that is reinterpreted as the new main clause. This syntactic restructuring phenomenon is widely attested crosslinguistically, and involves a process known as ‘insubordination’ (Evans 2007; Evans & Watnabe 2016). Basically, we see a subordinate complement clause (in this case, a *de*-type nominalization construction in the form [Complement.clause [*wǒ zuótiān mǎi* _] *de*] ‘[that which [I bought yesterday]]’) which is reanalyzed as an independent finite structure, with nominalizer *de* reinterpreted as a sentence final mood particle (SFP) and hence the finiteness marker for the new insubordinated clause (i.e. [New.main.clause [[*wǒ zuótiān mǎi* _] _] *de*] ‘I bought (it) yesterday’). This reanalysis is highlighted in (10’) below.

(10’) [Subject *zhège* [Copula/Focus *shì* [DE-type.nominalization.construction [*wǒ zuótiān mǎi* _] *de*]
 → [DE-type,insubordinated.clause [DE-type.nominalization.construction [*wǒ zuótiān mǎi* _] _] *de*]

This insubordination process is facilitated by the frequent association of copula *shì* and nominalizer *de* in copula-based focus constructions (often also called the *shì...de* focus construction). That is, through frequent association in emphatic contexts, nominalizer *de* comes to acquire the assertive force of the *shì...de* focus construction. At the same time, given its utterance-final position by virtue of its being a head-final nominalizer within the *shì...de* construction, *de* also gets to host the speaker’s utterance-final assertive prosody. Both conditions facilitate the syntactic scope expansion that gives rise to the reanalysis of nominalizer *de* as a sentence final mood particle. In sum, the resulting *de*-type insubordinated clause is ‘anchored’ in the discourse by the speaker’s illocutionary force, typically assertive,

with the head-final nominalizer *de* reinterpreted as a finiteness particle. While in most Chinese varieties utterance-final *de* is typically reinterpreted as an assertive mood particle, as seen in (10b.ii), in some northern Mandarin varieties, this finite particle is in addition used as a past tense marker as well (see Simpson & Wu 2002; Cheng & Sybesma 2005).

Other types of semantic prosodies are also possible for utterance-final *de*, depending on contextual and prosodic cues. For example, a rising prosody can help induce either a dubitative (subjective) or confirmation-seeking (intersubjective) reading, as in (11a.i) and (11a.ii) respectively. The ambiguity between a nominalizer and a sentence final mood particle reading for utterance-final *de* is still noticeable in some constructions, as seen in (11b) below.

(11) a. 我昨天買的？

wǒ zuótiān mǎi *de*?

1SG yesterday buy NMLZ/SFP

(i) ‘Is **THIS** what I bought yesterday?’ (\neq wǒ shì zuótiān mǎi *de*?)

(ii) ‘Did I buy this **YESTERDAY?**’ (= wǒ shì zuótiān mǎi *de*?)

b. 我昨天去的？

wǒ zuótiān qù *de*?

1SG yesterday go NMLZ/SFP

(i) ‘Is it [**that** I went (there) yesterday]?’ (nominalizer/complementizer *de* reading)

(ii) ‘[Did I go there yesterday?]’ (sentence final particle *de* reading)

Noun-based nominalizers and stance markers such as Mandarin *de* are frequently derived from general nouns referring to people, objects or places. The semantic generality of such nouns makes them highly versatile, and easily grammaticalizable into nominalizers via a relativization process (e.g. ‘(some)one/(some)thing that VPs’), and further into stance markers via an insubordination process, as illustrated in (11a) above, where nominalizer *de* in ‘(This is) *the thing* (=what) I bought yesterday?’ is reanalyzed as a sentence final dubitative-interrogative marker in ‘*This is the thing* I bought yesterday?’ or ‘*Did I buy this yesterday?*’. A similar insubordination reanalysis applies to (11b).

Nominalizer-derived stance markers also often combine with other utterance-final particles to yield a more specific stance interpretation (Yap, Deng & Caboara 2017). For example, as seen in (12), nominalizer-derived stance marker *de* can combine with another mood particle *ba* 吧 to yield a complex sentence final particle that marks the speaker’s insistent but still uncertain and speculative stance.² A few other examples were also noted earlier (recall example (3) in §2).

(12) 人活到七十三歲，

rén huó dào qīshísān suì
people live to seventy.three years

總有些什麼秘密的吧。

zǒng yǒu xiē shénme mìmì *deba*
always have some what secret SFP

‘People who have lived for seventy-three years must have some secret.’

(*Canxue Zixuan Ji*, PKU Center for Chinese Linguistics Corpus; cited in Yap, Deng

3.3 Indexical-based stance markers

Indexicals such as demonstratives and possessive markers have also been found to be good sources for the development of stance markers (see, for example, Nagaya 2011 on the pragmatic uses of demonstratives *ang* and *yung* in Tagalog and Brosig, Gegentana & Yap, forthcoming on the subjective and intersubjective uses of postnominal possessives in Mongolian). This section explores how demonstratives in Chinese can also be employed as stance markers to externalize the speaker's subjective evaluations and thoughts. Mandarin Chinese *nà* and Cantonese *go²di¹* 嗰啲 'that.CL' constructions will be used as illustrative examples.

In Mandarin Chinese, *nà* is a deictic demonstrative used to indicate an entity that is distant from the speaker, as opposed to *zhè* 這 'this' which indicates a proximal orientation. As seen in (13), *nà* can be used to refer to an entity that has already been mentioned earlier in the text—i.e. for anaphoric referent-tracking.

- (13) 那是他媽媽。
Nà shì tā māma.
that COP 3SG mother
'That is his mother.'

In recent work on spontaneous conversations, Yang (2017) suggests that from this demonstrative function, *nà* has grammaticalized into a connective linking the prior turn to the following turn. Upon further grammaticalization, this linker *nà* has further evolved into a stance marker that indicates the speaker's perspective towards the assessment previously made by the addressee. As shown in (14) below, reproduced from (1), *nà* has totally lost its function as a demonstrative, but is used instead as a stance marker to indicate the speaker's disagreement towards the assessment made earlier – that is, even though the addressee is already feeling better (and the situation might have been improved and the addressee might not need another visit to the doctor), the speaker still believes, on the contrary, that the addressee should still go visit the doctor as a precautionary measure. In effect, we see *nà* extending its use as a deictic marker from the spatio-temporal domain to the socio-interactive domain.

- (14) 那你還是去看一看醫生吧，雖然你說已經好多了。
Nà nǐ hái shì qù kàn yī kàn yīshēng ba,
NA 2SG still go see one see doctor SFP,
suīrán nǐ shuō yǐjīng hǎoduō le.
though you say already better SFP
'But you'd better still go and visit the doctor, though you said you are already better.'

In some Chinese varieties, classifier-demonstratives have also developed into stance markers. In Cantonese, the distal demonstrative-classifier *go²di¹* 'that + classifier' has extended beyond its deictic functions (e.g. *go²di¹ zaap⁶zi³* 嗰啲雜誌 'those magazines' (i.e. the magazines that are distal to the speaker at the time of speaking)) to further develop into a

negative attitudinal marker. Consider (15) and (16) below in which classifier-demonstrative *go²di¹* yields a (self-)deprecatory reading.

- (15) 係呀, 喺 hotel.com 嗰啲 book
hai⁶ aa³ hai² hotel.com go²di¹ book
 yes PRT at hotel.com that.CL book
 ‘Yes, I made the booking at those (websites) like hotel.com.’ (OpenU Corpus)
- (16) 冇呀, 住 hostel 嗰啲咋嘛
mou⁵ aa³ cyu⁶ hostel go²di¹ zaa¹maa³
 NEG PRT stay hostel that.CL PRT
 ‘No, I was just staying in hostels, those types (of inexpensive accommodation).’
 (OpenU Corpus)³

In (15) and (16), *go²di¹* functions as a pronoun, referring to slightly cheaper hotel booking websites such as hotel.com as opposed to more expensive travel agencies in (15), and to affordable hostels as opposed to luxury hotels in (16). The deprecatory readings in these classifier-demonstrative *go²di¹* constructions arise from the definite but non-specific reading of pronominal *go²di¹*. Note that in these two examples, the speaker has actually made use of the website *hotel.com* and has stayed in a hostel; thus, the additional use of classifier-demonstrative *go²di¹* seems unnecessary if the speaker’s intention is simply to provide information since *hotel.com* is a proper noun and hence already inherently definite and specific. As it turns out, the presence of *go²di¹* adds a negative evaluative reading to the utterances in (15) and (16). That is, rather than being deployed merely as a demonstrative pronoun that replaces a referent identifiable to both interlocutors (speaker and hearer), *go²di¹* has gained a negative overtone to refer to something trivial or unimpressive. Alongside with its pronominal function, *go²di¹* additionally conveys a negative evaluation, similar to expressing the meaning “nothing significant, it is just like those (not very important) things”. This trivialness reading emerges from the original use of *di¹* as a collective classifier for a substance in small quantities.

Extending from this deprecatory non-specific reference, *go²di¹* can further be used by the speaker to replace anything that is treated by the speaker as a taboo topic. For example, the speaker can utter (17) to mean that he works in the funeral industry – something that tends to be talked about euphemistically in society.

- (17) 我做嗰啲
ngo⁵ zou⁶ go²di¹
 1SG do that.CL
 ‘I do those (kind of) things.’ (Yap & Chor 2016)

This negative bias can be accounted for in terms of the distal meaning of demonstrative *go²* ‘that’, which pragmatically has come to also refer to social and psychological distance, yielding a sense of indirectness – and by extension, politeness, or otherwise ‘feigned politeness’ – that can help to attenuate face threats when negative attitudes are being expressed.

The use of demonstrative-classifier constructions such as *go²di¹* to express the speaker’s negative attitude is not an isolated phenomenon observable only in Yue dialects such as

Cantonese. In fact, this negative attitudinal usage is even more prominent in Xiang varieties. In the Wugang Xiang dialect, for example, the [DEM + CL *di* + N] constructions are used not only to evaluate others negatively but sometimes also for self-deprecation, with the latter function also used to attenuate potential face-threats to others (see Deng, Yap & Chor 2017). An interesting question for future research is whether all or only some Sinitic varieties recruit their demonstrative-classifier constructions for the expression of the speaker's negative attitudinal stance.

4 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have focused on stance-taking, a phenomenon known to be pervasive in human communication, with speakers frequently signaling their stance in both explicit and implicit ways. More specifically, we have identified the development of a number of stance markers in Chinese, paying special attention to their source and grammaticalization pathway(s), and also to the subjective and intersubjective meaning(s) that these stance markers add to our utterance. The three types of source categories identified focused mainly on the verbal, nominal, and indexical pathways.

Among the verbal pathways, serial verb constructions and complement-taking verb constructions were found to be frequent sources for stance markers with epistemic, evidential, attitudinal and other (inter)subjective stance readings. An example from among the serial verb constructions is the 'finish'-type verbs in V₂ position, which in the case of Mandarin *le* has developed into a perfect(ive) aspect marker that is often further recruited to serve as an addressee-oriented interactional particle, often used to signal completion of the speaker's turn and at the same time implicitly solicit agreement from the addressee, particularly in potential turn-transition points in a conversation. In the case of complement-taking verbs such as the 'think'-type and 'hear/say'-type verbs (e.g. Mandarin *wǒ juéde* and *tīngshuō*), reanalysis of these cognition-perception-utterance verbs as epistemic and evidential stance markers further paves the way for their use as pragmatic hedges for politeness and solidarity-enhancing work in interactional talk.

Rather rare (and possibly unique) crosslinguistically, transfer verbs in some Chinese varieties have developed into speaker affectedness markers; this semantic extension, observable in Mandarin and Southern Min varieties, emerged through a process of valence underspecification. As illustrated in the Mandarin example *huā gěi sǐ le* 'The flowering plant, alas, has withered away and died', the trivalent verb *gěi* 'give' in this unaccusative (1-place predicate or monovalent) construction does not overtly display its full range of arguments (giver, transferred object, and goal/recipient) yet still makes room for the implicit presence of covert arguments, with the affected speaker being among these 'phantom' referents.

Within the nominal domain, general nouns often develop into nominalizers, some of which further develop into utterance-final stance markers (e.g. Mandarin sentence final mood particle *de*). In many languages, indexicals such as demonstratives also often develop into stance markers (see, for example, Adachi 2016 on the paradigmatic use of demonstratives as sentence final mood particles in Vietnamese). In some Chinese varieties, we further see an interesting development in which the distal demonstrative combines with a classifier to yield negative attitudinal readings (e.g. Cantonese *Nei⁵ jau⁶ heoi³ (go²)di¹ gam² ge³ dei⁶fong¹ aa⁴* 你又去(嗰)啲噉嘅地方呀 '(Don't tell me) you are going to (those) kinds of places again?!'). The negative evaluation in this type of demonstrative-classifier construction arises from the psychological-distancing effect of the distal demonstrative *go²* 'that' and is further reinforced

by the trivial value associated with classifier *di*¹. Also worth noting is that versatile distal demonstratives can also develop into stance markers in utterance-initial position, as seen in the case of Mandarin discourse marker *nà*, which is used at conversational turn-transition points to signal speaker disagreement.

To conclude, we often see how resourceful speakers can be in coming up with different stance-marking strategies to express their subjective and intersubjective footing when interacting with others. Crosslinguistically, what is common in the development of these strategies is the strong tendency for stance constructions to emerge from more concrete physical (e.g. referential and spatio-temporal) domains and then further extend to more abstract psychological and socio-pragmatic domains. With reference to previous studies, both diachronic and typological, we have shown how various types of constructions in Chinese have likewise extended their range of functions from the more concrete to the more abstract domains. In some cases, these semantic extensions were accompanied by syntactic reanalyses via robust grammaticalization pathways such as verb serialization and insubordination of complement clauses; in other cases, the extensions traverse less frequently attested pathways, among them the inducement of negative attitudes from classifier-demonstratives and the emergence of speaker affectedness readings from valence-reduced transfer verb (e.g. ‘give’) constructions. Whether widely-attested or rarely-attested, the emergence of these stance markers also form part of the robust tendency observed in numerous grammaticalization phenomena, whereby extended use of a given form leads to semantic generalization and semantic bleaching, which paradoxically paves the way for pragmatic strengthening, as the semantically underspecified form comes to be increasingly associated with its context-of-use (see Traugott 1995 on subjectification and intersubjectification phenomena). From a cognitive perspective, the availability of these various stance-marking strategies co-contribute to the formation of our fairly stable and at the same time permeable, malleable and renewable language systems, which makes it easier for us to meet our expressive needs at both psychological and socio-interactional levels.

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Notes

1 English also has a highly grammaticalized (albeit literary and archaic) form *methink(s)* with a strong subjective evaluative reading, as seen in (i) below. This subjective evaluative marker is characterized by the absence of finite properties, as seen in its non-nominative form (*me* instead of *I*), and the fusion of the non-nominative subject (*me*) and the complement-taking verb (*think*), yielding *methink* or *methinks*.

- (i) a. ***Methink*** *it Grete Skill*. (15th century Scottish English; cited in Williams & McClure 2013)
- b. ***Methinks*** *the answer to this can be summed up in three letters, ...*
- c. *The lady doth protest too much, **methinks***. (Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*; late 16th century)

2 With falling intonation, *ba* signals the speaker's speculative and uncertain stance, as in (i); however, with rising intonation, *ba* serves a confirmation-seeking function, as in (ii):

Nǐ jīntiān huì qù ba.

2SG today will go SFP

(i) 'You will go, **I suppose.**'

(ii) 'You will go today, **am I right?**'

3 The OpenU Corpus is a Cantonese Corpus consisting of 10 short conversations (40 minutes each) developed under the project *Epistemic Modulation and Speaker Attitude in Cantonese: A Discourse-Pragmatic Perspective*, funded by the Research Grant Council of Hong Kong (FDS #UGC/FDS16/H07/14, PI: Dr. Winnie Chor).

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