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Semantics of Taiwanese ū

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SEMANTICS OF TAIWANESE Ū

by

Lijung Wendy Lu

A THESIS SUBMITTED
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Semantics of Taiwanese Û
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Abstract

Taiwanese Û has been studied in association with the Mandarin perfective particle le and the existential verb yóu. Û has been analyzed either as a suppletive form of le or an equivalent of a higher abstract verb 'YOU', that asserts the existence of an event or a state. The latter analysis seems plausible. However, when we carefully examine the various semantic functions of Û, we find that they lack the constancy which would allow them to be united as can be described as under any hyper abstract semantics, e.g. a higher existential 'U'. This does not mean that there are various separate Û's. Actually, we propose there is only one single morpheme Û. The 'major' various semantics we have discovered for Û, i.e. 'expectation', 'emphasis', 'perfectivity' and 'existence-possession', are, metaphorically, connected like a 'chain'. The links between them are
reflected in a series of ambiguous sentences with \( \tilde{u} \), in which an identical form of utterance may represent different meanings according to different contexts of use. It is also proposed in this paper that language 'emerges' or reveals itself in the context of use, and because of this nature, there will be unlimited subsets of meanings of \( \tilde{u} \) that will emerge, so long as human intelligence is active and discourse goes on.
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Chapter one

Introduction

The systematic study of the Taiwanese language started no earlier than two decades ago. There have been limitations not only in quantity and scale, but also in the approach to the analysis. Most of the research on Taiwanese has been undertaken in comparison with Mandarin and based on the theoretical frameworks established for Mandarin structure. This tendency is the result of a superficial assumption that the linguistic structure of Taiwanese is very similar to that of Mandarin because they are genetically related; more specifically, they are nothing but dialects of the same language—Chinese. It is definitely true that any two languages which are genetically related are apt to have more similarities in structure than those which are genetically unrelated. However, it is not necessarily true that they always resemble each other in every aspect of language structure. In addition, every language, as Saussure (1959) points out, is a unique structure, or system of relations. The linguistic units we identify in a certain language function only in relation to other units within the same language
system. Therefore, we should analyze every language in terms of its own relational network, even though it is so-called a 'dialect' of some language.¹

1.1 Primitive motive for the study of ū.

The first study of the Taiwanese morpheme ū, as might be expected, was not done until linguists had investigated the Mandarin postverbal morpheme le as a perfective aspectual marker. As is well known, the postverbal le does not occur in negative sentences, where we find a negative marker měi and an optional occurrence of the verb yǒu 'to have', as is shown in (1b):

(1) a. Tā mǎi le shū.

[3sg buy LE book]

'He bought a book.'

b. Tā měi (yǒu) mǎi shū.

[3sg Neg YOU buy book]

'He didn't buy a book.'

Using the sentences of (2) as an analogical basis, (1b) would be
expected to have the affirmative counterpart sentence as (3); but (3) is ungrammatical.

(2) a. Tā yǒu shū.  

[3sg have book]  
'He has a book.'

b. Tā méi (yǒu) shū.  

[3sg Neg (have) book]  
'He doesn’t have a book.'

(3) *Tā yǒu mǎi shū.²

The failure of (3) was accounted for by a postulation suggested by Wang (1965): the form with yǒu in (3) is the underlying structure of the form with le as (1a); i.e., yǒu is in a suppletive relation with the postverbal le. One of the strongest pieces of evidence for this proposal comes from the grammatical counterparts of (3) in other Chinese dialects like Cantonese, Hakka and Taiwanese.

(4)  'He bought a book.'

a. Keuih yauh mai shi. (Cantonese)  

[3sg HAVE buy book]

b. Ki yu mai su. (Hakka)  

[3sg HAVE buy book]
c. 1 ū bōe chu.³ (Taiwanese)

[3sg HAVE buy book]

The sentences in (4) show the legitimacy of the presence of the 'verb' 'to have' in the underlying representation of Mandarin by its retention in the surface structure of the three southern dialects. Although later on some linguists have attempted to make detailed modifications of the underlying structure of the le-construction and the derivational rules (cf. Teng 1973 and Rohsenow 1977), the fate of the Taiwanese ū has been that it continues to be associated with the Mandarin existential yōu, and the postverbal le as well.

Teng (1973) does not agree with the assumption that the postverbal le alternates with yōu. He states that 'Lp [= perfective le, LWL] occurs with yōu and does not alternate with yōu. Yōu as a higher verb taking complementation asserts the existence of an event or a state, and is not distinct from existential or possessive yōu.' (1973:24) He distinguishes Lp from yōu by claiming that the former indicates perfective aspect while the latter performs the discourse function of assertion. Moreover, Teng denies any relatedness between Lp and Taiwanese ū. His arguments are based on the following observations. First, ū does not mark perfective aspect
under any circumstances. Second, Lp is restricted to non-stative verbs while ū has no such constraint. Third, those sentences with ū are only used in response to previous questions, accusations, etc., and in placing emphasis on the assertion of the existence of an event or state. Mandarin Lp lacks this force. No matter whether those observations are accurate or not (which will be discussed in the following sections), it is easy to discover that Teng intends to differentiate ū from Lp, and to equate ū with yǒu (or more properly, the 'higher' yǒu).

In Rohsenow's paper on the postverbal le in 1977, he presents a reanalysis in which it is a marker of both the perfect aspect and relative anteriority, similar to the English 'perfect have'. Also, he points out a 'universal existential quantifier' like the Mandarin yǒu, also exists in a number of other languages such as French avoir, il y a; Spanish haber, hay; Japanese arimasu, aru, etc. He renders this existential verb as YOU rather than by the usual inclusion symbol ∃. 'The effect of predicating the existential verb YOU over the atomic predicate COME ABOUT (which itself commands an action or state) is to describe that state or action as 'having come about'. Thus, similar to the case in English (and those other languages where some form of
the existential or 'have' is associated with the perfect...), the existential verb here expresses the ordering relation of *anteriority.* (Rohsenow 1977: 274-75)

There have been a number of studies on the Mandarin *le* and many modifications and new approaches have appeared since the initial stage described just above. However, research on Taiwanese *û* has remained still relatively undeveloped. Most of the studies still treat *û* as a perfective aspectual marker related to temporal interpretations, or consider it as an emphatic marker to assert the existence of the event or state in question. In the following sections we will evaluate some other studies which deal with *û.*

1.2 Contemporary studies of *û*

Cheng's papers in 1977, 1979, 1985 and 1989 are the only detailed studies that could be found dealing with *û* in terms of aspect and modality. Basically, Cheng follows previous arguments that *û* functions to specify a perfective aspect, asserting the actual existence or occurrence of a state or event, which includes present habitual or past actions, although he confuses 'perfective' with 'perfect' (1985:359; 1979:158) and alternates such terms as
'assertive-existential aspect' and 'assertive-aspectual' with 'assertive-modal', 'aspectual-modal', or 'modality-aspectual' for different purposes. He never clearly defines 𡨿 as an aspect or as a modal marker until his 1989 work in which he classifies 𡨿 as an aspect marker, distinct from phase markers. This is done in order to help in arguing that Taiwanese aspect and phase markers occur before the verbs or at the end of sentences. In his analysis, Taiwanese aspect and phase markers do not interrupt the entire event situation (verb phrase) as they do in Mandarin, which allows most of the aspect and phase markers to occur within verbal phrases, e.g. the postverbal le. Cheng defines 'aspect' as indicating the relationship between reference time and event time; more specifically, it designates the way in which the speaker observes the event situation from the reference time. Aspect is systematically expressed in Chinese by adverbs, auxiliaries, verbal suffixes and sentential particles. 'Phase', however, refers to the different internal phases of an action. It usually constructs an event situation by combining with the verbal objects, quantifiers, or verbal complements. [Cheng 1989: 1, LWL] Some examples are shown below for clarification:
Aspects:  înt-kêng lâi a̍h 'already came' (adverb)
        ē/u̍h lâi 'will/did come' (auxiliary)
        chia chit-pòaN khi a̍h 'ate half away' (verbal suffix)
        tín-lâi a̍h 'has come back' (sentential particle)

Phases:  khùn san-tiâm cheng 'slept for three hours'
        (quantifier)
        pûng chia líao a̍h 'the meal has been done' (verbal
        objects)\textsuperscript{5}
        san sóo chheng-khi 'wash clothes clean' (verbal
        complement)

We do not intend to explore the details of Cheng's arguments
here. Cheng attempts to categorize Chinese aspects and phases on
the basis of syntactic changes and structures. As a matter of fact,
grammatical categories are universally fuzzy and continuous,
especially so the aspect-modality system, which is 'probably the
most complex and frustrating to the linguist.' (Givon 1984:269) That
is why Givon cannot avoid discussing tense, aspect and modality
together and putting these supposedly three categories into one. We
found, in fact, from the study of ū, that this morpheme cannot be
assigned to any single grammatical category existing in any contemporary theoretical approach. We cannot but doubt the legitimacy of grammatical categories which force such assignments. Does human cognition require them to process language? Do children acquire their language through the recognition of them? In order to prove the fallacy of grammatical categorization we attempt in the following chapters to explore all the possible semantics of ū, which may include modality, aspectuality and other semantics that might have been placed in contrasting categories by traditional grammar. We intend in the concluding chapter to integrate these semantics of ū by adopting an innovative concept of 'chain', instead of the classical concept of 'categorization'.

Let us first go back to review Cheng's discoveries about ū. In his comparative study (1979) of Taiwanese ū and Mandarin yōu, Cheng explores all the possible functions of ū, some of which are shared by Mandarin yōu. They both function as a verb expressing possession and existence, and as an auxiliary verb designating assertive existential aspect. Mandarin allows only negative sentences with méi(yōu) to assert existence. (cf. 1.1) Cheng proposes a general meaning termed 'inclusion' to encompass those functions like possession, existence
and assertion of existence. Actually this is not innovative. Recall
the higher YOU suggested by Rohsenow (1977) cited in Section 1.1. It
might be also presented as a logical symbol $\exists$, meaning inclusion.
Basically Cheng still holds the traditional viewpoint in this respect.
The other general semantics proposed for ū in his paper is
'approximation', which is demonstrated by the following sentences:

(5) Chit-tâu kîo ū 100 kong-chhioh.

          [this-CL bridge U 100 meter]

'This bridge is as long as 100 meters.'

(6) Lî ū i hiah kôan.

          [2sg U 3sg that tall]

'You are as tall as he is.'

As (5) and (6) show, the element preceding ū approaches the element
following ū in quantity or quality, which reveals the semantics of
approximation.

Later in his paper, Cheng points out several functions unique to
ū. First, he describes ū, as a syntactic operator, just like English do,
a required 'auxiliary that is used to form a yes-no question, negative
sentence or elliptical reply...' (153). This usage of ū semantically
functions to emphatically assert the existence of both active and
stative verbals. Second, the assertive-existential ū could be used as an infix to occur in resultative compounds such as:

(7) kîaN-ū-chhut-khî

[walk-U-out-go]

'walked, and did get out'

'succeeded in walking out'

Whether the treatment of expressions like kîaN-chhut-khî 'walk out' as compounds is proper or not will be discussed in the next chapter. As Cheng analyzes it, kîaN 'walk' is an assumed or presupposed element while chhut-khî 'out' is asserted and focussed by the device of the infix ū. The third function is actually the same as the preceding one except that Cheng calls it by another name--possessive ū as resultative complement, which is illustrated as follows:

(8) Góa chahng boe ū/bô chu.

[1sg yesterday buy U/BO book]

'I managed to buy a book yesterday, and I succeeded in getting one/failed to get one.'

ū in (8) denotes possession of a book as the consequence for the result of the cause action--buying.

In his 1977 paper, Cheng compares two pairs of modal verbs:
ű/bô 'do/do not', and ă/bôe 'likely/unlikely'. His main purpose here is to explain why they prefer different tense interpretations in sentences without time adverbs. He finds out that the pair ű/bô denotes emphatic assertion of an observed event or its non-occurrence, respectively; so ű and bô naturally tend to be used with past or present actions rather than with future actions, which are not observable. The other pair ă/bôe signifies conjecture on the likely/unlikely happening of an event, so they cannot occur in a sentence with past event time. 'It is because a past event tends to have been observed rather than conjectured upon.' (Cheng 1977:251) Illustrations are given below:

(9)a. Gôa ű khì thâk-chu.

[isg ű go study]

'I did go to study.'

'I indeed went to study.'

b. Gôa ă khì thâk-chu.

'I will go to study.'

'I am likely to go to study.'

So far we have made a general review of all the previous analyses of ű. In the next section we will point out their
shortcomings and present a few problems which they would cause.

1.3 Problems with previous analyses.

Cheng's analysis seems quite plausible since he has described every possible function of ū. In fact, he has not. First of all, the nature of meaning he discovers for ū and (optional emphatic assertion of an actual happening and conjecture on likelihood of a happening, respectively) cannot account for the phenomenon illustrated in the following sentences:

(10)a. Lín me-me ū kó-chuí bô?
[your younger sister ū adorable BO]
'Is your younger sister adorable?'

b. Lín me-me ē kò-lâng-dân bôe?
[your younger sister E obnoxious BOE]
'Is your younger sister obnoxious?'

c. Lín me-me ē kó-chuí bôe?
[your younger sister E adorable BOE]
'Is your younger sister adorable?'

d. ?? Lín me-me ū kò-lâng-dân bô?

Tai (1985) claims, Chinese, being a non-inflectional language, relies
heavily upon auxiliary words and word order in its grammatical system. Taiwanese interrogative constructions offer support to this statement. They are similar to Mandarin A-not-A questions in form except that Taiwanese requires such auxiliaries as ū, 㷇, etc. The crucial point here is how we explain the anomaly of (10d), if (10a) is acceptable. If we could ask whether someone is in the existing state of being adorable, why couldn't we ask whether he is in the existing state of being obnoxious? It seems that there are other semantics of ū that have not been discovered by Cheng and must be described in order to explain the discrepancy in (10). Cheng's assertive-existential analysis seems not to account for these data. Another case that his analysis fails to cover is as follows:

(11) a. Góa chahng ū sía chî-tiuN phoe.
   [1sg yesterday U write one-CL letter] 'I did write a letter yesterday.'

b. Góa chahng sía chî-tiuN phoe. 'I wrote a letter yesterday.'

c. Góa ū sía chî-tiuN phoe. 'I wrote a letter.'

'I did write a letter.'
d. ??Góa sía chít-tiuN phoe.

The difference between (11a) and (11b) is that the latter, without ū, simply states an event 'writing a letter', which happened yesterday, while the former, with ū, emphasizes the performance of this event. If it is true that the presence of ū marks emphatic assertion while the absence of ū does not, then why do sentences (11c) and (11d), which lack nothing but the indication of the event time 'yesterday', not reflect this truth? Why is (11d) semantically odd without ū? And why does the presence of ū in (11c) also allow the gloss without the sense of emphasis as in (11b). It is apparent that ū performs other functions than marking emphasis. And the presence or absence of a semantic frame provided by the time adverb 'yesterday' also interacts with the use of ū.

There are other cases that cannot be accounted for by the previous analysis. They will be presented and discussed in Chapter Two. It seems that there are many problematic aspects of ū which remain to be understood. Only when we extend the scope of research to cover those other cases in which ū occurs with other aspect/modal markers, or in other constructions, can we work out an overall solution to the semantics of ū. A related problem remaining is: how
many "'s are there? Cheng (1979) admits that he cannot find a more general meaning of " which will cover both the meanings of 'inclusion' and 'approximation' that he has generalized. Is it because of the inadequacy of Cheng's analysis or is it because historical development has created two or even three homonyms of "? Or is it because the various meanings of " are actually related in other cohesive ways than being governed under a general abstract hyper-meaning, as is usually assumed? We attempt to answer this question in the final chapter.
Notes

1. How to define 'dialects' is always an issue for argumentation. It is well known that Mandarin differs from southern dialects like Taiwanese to the extent of being mutually unintelligible. And it is often pointed out that they differ from one another just as those 'languages' of the Romance family do.

2. Influenced by the syntax of Taiwanese, sentence (3) is very commonly used in the form of Mandarin spoken in Taiwan. (Cf. (4)) For further discussion of the change of Mandarin spoken in Taiwan, see Kubler 1985 and Cheng 1989.

3. The Taiwanese transcription adopted in this paper is a system of Romanization described in Cheng and Cheng 1977.

4. There are cases where Lp marks emphasis (Teng 1973:25, Note 8):

   i. Zúotīn tā shuō tā yào lái.
      
      [yesterday 3sg say 3sg want come]
      
      'Yesterday he said he wanted to come.'

   ii. Zúotīn tā shuō-le tā yào lái.

      'Yesterday he did say he wanted to come.'
However, Teng does not further talk about them.

5. In Taiwanese, the object of the transitive verb followed by a complement must be moved to the front of the verb. Therefore, \textasteriskcentered \textipa{ch\textipa{i}a li\textipa{ao p\textipa{n}g a} [eat up meal PERF] 'already finished the meal' should be changed to the form \textipa{p\textipa{n}g ch\textipa{i}a li\textipa{ao a}.
Chapter Two

Semantics of ū

Cheng (1977) claims that ē 'likely' and bōe 'unlikely' denote a conjecture on the occurrence or non-occurrence of an event or state, respectively, while ū 'have' and bô 'not have' indicate the assertion of the actual happening or non-happening of an event or state. Owing to the conjectural semantics of ē and bōe, they are apt to occur with future time settings and to be treated as future tense markers. Similarly, the fact that ū and bô assert actualization/non-actualization contributes to a mistaken analysis that they are past tense markers (cf. Cheng 1985: 359, Cheng 1977). Cheng's findings about the nature of these four morphemes is sufficient for the data he considers, but the additional usages introduced below will show his description to be incomplete.

2.1 Indication of expectation

Mandarin has a form of interrogative construction usually termed 'A-not-A', a type of disjunctive question. The choice between an affirmative or its negative counterpart is presented to the
respondent by juxtaposing them, as in the following examples:

(1)a. jú-zi sūn bù sūn?
   [tangerines sour NEG sour]
   'Are the tangerines sour?'

b. Tā gāo bù gāo?
   [3sg tall NEG tall]
   'Is he tall?'

Unlike Mandarin, Taiwanese, in constructing such interrogations, first, obligatorily requires a modal marker to precede the predicate; secondly, Taiwanese only requires the negative modal marker to appear at the end of the sentence, rather than the whole negative predicate. Some Taiwanese examples are given in the following:

(2)a. Kam-á ū tiN bôte?
   [tangerine U sweet Neg]
   'Are the tangerines sweet?'

b. Kam-á ē sng bōe?
   [tangerines E sour Neg]
   'Are the tangerines sour?'
(3)a.  l ū khiào bô?
[3sg U smart Neg]
'Is he smart?'
b.  l ē gōng bōe?
[3sg E foolish Neg]
'Is he dumb?'

Sentences (2a, b) are the most common expressions used in asking the fruit vendor whether the tangerines are desirable or not before making a purchase. Sentences (3a, b) are the usual way of demanding to know whether a certain person is clever. It is sentences such as (2) and (3) that have led to the desirable /undesirable analysis proposed by Embree (1984). He provides ū with this definition: 'V: is (before SV [= stative verbs, LWL] signifying something speaker considers undesirable.)' (65) Under the entry of ū, he presents this contrastive definition: 'V: is, are (before SV signifying something speaker considers desirable.)' (291) On the basis of (2) and (3), Embree's generalization seems to be plausible. Since sweetness of tangerines and cleverness of a person are considered preferable qualities, ū is used with them. On the other hand, ē is used to express the undesirable feelings toward sourness
in tangerines and stupidity in people. However, as sentence (4c) shows, ū can also occur with something favorable in the mind of the speaker. And ū can also occur with something undesirable as long as the speaker anticipates it. For example, a sentence such as kam-á ū sng bô? 'Are the tangerines sour?' can be drawn from (2b) only if the speaker wants them to be sour; otherwise it sounds odd.

(4a). Lín mei-mei ū kut-lât bô?
[your younger sister ū hard-working Neg]
'Is your younger sister industrious?'

b. Lín mei-mei ē pîn-tōaN bôe?
[your younger sister ē lazy Neg]
'Is your younger sister lazy?'

c. Lín mei-mei ē kut-lât bôe?
[your younger sister ē hard-working Neg]
'Is your younger sister industrious?'

The difference between sentence (4a) with ū and sentence (4c) with ē is in the speaker's expectation. It is clear in the former utterance (i.e. [4a]) that the speaker anticipates an affirmative answer, i.e. your sister is industrious. Suppose the hearer has been acting as a matchmaker, trying to introduce his sister, who is not present, to his
friend, the speaker, who has never met her. Sentence (4c) would probably be used when the introductory conversation begins. Since the speaker does not know much about her, he might want to start by asking some general questions, like (4c) with ̃e, which would be better translated as 'Is your sister, by any chance, industrious?' There might be a number of such questions followed as 'Is she, by any chance, amiable?', 'considerate?', etc. Or the speaker might choose to get the information the other way around by questioning whether she has certain bad qualities, as in (4b). ̃e would be used with those questions until the speaker begins to get serious and really concerned about the possibility of dating the girl after being informed of her many good qualities during the conversation. Then sentences with ̃u on the model of (4a) would be used. Now he thinks it likely that she will have additional desirable qualities because she has already demonstrated some. ̃u satisfies such an expectation.

In the scenario outlined above, the younger sister in sentences (4a, b, c) is not an acquaintance of the speaker and is not present. Will it affect the implication of ̃u and ̃e if the participant becomes an acquaintance or is present in the speech situation? The answer is no. Take the following sentences, for example:
(5) a. Góa (á-ne) ǔ mĩao-thiêu bô?
   [1sg (like this) U slim Neg]
   'Do I look slim (like this),'

b. Góa (á-ne) ě tọa-kho bôe?
   [1sg (like this) E fat Neg]
   'Do I look fat (like this)?'

c. Góa (á-ne) ě mĩao-thiêu bôe?
   [1sg (like this) E slim Neg]
   'Do I look slim (like this)?'

The situation for sentences (5a, b, c) might be that the speaker, finishing dressing herself, stands in front of the hearer and asks the opinion of someone present about her looks. Sentence (5a) is uttered when the speaker is pretty sure that she looks slim dressed this way and simply expects the hearer will agree with her. Or she might not be so sure about herself, but since she has already spent a while dressing cautiously or trying on several suits to avoid appearing puffy, she really hopes that she will make it this time. ǔ in this usage suggests either an expectation of confirmation or expectation of an affirmative response. It does not merely ask for an opinion or judgment as the ě in (5b) and (5c) does. Using ě the speaker does not
have any idea about her own looks nor does she make any presumption about the hearer's response.

It is also the semantics of expectation that contributes to the co-occurrence of ē with the morpheme kào 'sufficient' forming an adverbial, commonly used to describe a state's being satisfied or unbearable to the extent that one expects no more. This use of ē with kào in general seems paradoxical, but look at the following examples first:

(6) Góa ē/*ē kào súi bô/*bōe?
    [1sg   enough  pretty  Neg]
    'Am I pretty enough?'
    'Am I as pretty as required?'

(7) Góa (sit-chäi) ē/*ē kào hō-ūn!
    [1sg  (truly)  enough  good-luck]
    '(lit.) I (really) am lucky enough.'
    'How lucky I am!'

(8) Góa (sit-chäi) ē/*ē kào suei!
    [1sg  (truly)  enough  unlucky]
    '(lit.) I (really) have enough bad luck.'
    'How unlucky I am!'
By using " and kao together, sentence (6) implies that in the speaker's mind she needs a favorable response, which is affirmative, as she expects. Or it could be that she is just wondering whether her prettiness meets the requirement (say, for being an actress), that is, whether it satisfies the hearer's expectation. Sentences like (7) and (8) are exclamatory utterances which express the feelings that one has enough of something. Conceptually, when one has enough of something, it means that he cannot have more of it. In other words, the situation has reached the extreme of his expectation, which involves so strong a feeling that it usually comes out as an exclamation, as (7) and (8).

Ek is not possible in sentences (6)-(8) because it attributes no expectation to the hearer or to the speaker himself, or ek denotes something beyond the domain of one's expectation, which contradicts the semantics of kao. But ek does correspond with the semantics of siun 'too/excessive', as will be illustrated in the following:

(9)a. 1  "  kōan  bō?
     [3sg  U tall Neg]
  'Is he tall?'
b. I ǔ/rique kāo kǒan bô/ripe?
   'Is he tall enough?'

c. I ǔ kǒan bōe?
   'Is he tall?'  ('he' is unknown)
   'Is he, as he is, (reckoned) tall?'  ('he' is known or present)

d. I ǔ/rique stūn kǒan bōe/ripe?
   [3sg too tall Neg]
   'Is he too tall?'
   'Will he be too tall?'

Sentences (9a) and (9b) are simply given as a contrast. As noted earlier, it does not matter whether the participant 'he' in sentence (9c) is an acquaintance or not, present or not present. The use of ǔ suggests that either the speaker does not have an idea whether 'he' is tall since he never met 'him'; or seeing 'him' in person, the speaker does not know if he is going to be considered tall for the present purpose. Actually (9d), with stūn 'too', is the more explicit version of one of the semantic contents expressed in (9c). When one uses stūn 'too' in utterances, the speaker conceptually figures that the state or event in question, somehow, exceeds his scope of anticipation.
Recall Embree's proposing the desirable/undesirable opposition in trying to capture the contrastive meanings of \( \tilde{u} \) and \( \tilde{e} \). Now we can explain his intent by means of our analysis discussed above. \( \tilde{u} \) denotes the speaker's anticipation of an affirmation to the state or event in question. It is psychologically true that under normal circumstances, people prefer to include favorable things in their expectation domain, and to exclude unfavorable things from it. That is why \( \tilde{u} \) usually occurs with desirable states or events, while \( \tilde{e} \) occurs with undesirable ones. But it is not always the case, as already discussed. As a matter of fact, \( \tilde{e} \) co-occurs with desirable things much more often than \( \tilde{u} \) co-occurs with undesirable things, and this is due to the alternative semantics of \( \tilde{e} \), one which is devoid of expectation and so either one of the two choices is acceptable, i.e. desirable or undesirable.

2.2 Indication of emphasis

By comparing \( \tilde{u} \) with the morpheme \( \tilde{e} \) in the Taiwanese equivalent of the Mandarin A-not-A interrogative construction, we establish one aspect of the semantic contents of \( \tilde{u} \), i.e. expectation. The speaker expects an affirmative reply from the hearer. So far, we
have only observed the morpheme Ȧ in the single context of making disjunctive questions. More data with more varieties of discourse contexts must be examined before we attempt to decide the overall semantics of Ȧ. Let us first look at a simple sentence such as (10):

(10) Kam-á Ȧ tiN.

[tangerine  U  sweet]

'The tangerines are indeed sweet.'

Suppose you walk into a reception hall where there are desserts and fruits served on the table. One of your friends says hello to you and mentions to you that the food is good, especially the tangerines, which are very sweet. You walk up to the table, take a piece of tangerine and taste it. It is indeed sweet. Then you might turn around to that friend of yours and utter sentence (10) to him, instead of a neutral statement as (11):

(11) Kam-á chin tiN.

[tangerine very sweet]

'The tangerines are sweet.'

As in Mandarin, almost all of the adjectives in Taiwanese may function as verbs. Very much like the Mandarin morpheme hĚn 'very', the Taiwanese chin 'very' in (11) is normally not stressed and the
meaning of 'very' has been 'bleached' leaving chin to mark the positive degree when occurring with an 'adjective verb phrase' like theIN 'sweet' in (11).

Sentence (10) shares with sentence (11) an identical proposition that the tangerines are sweet. The reason why (10), rather than (11), fits the discourse context described above is that you had already been told by the hearer about the tangerines' being sweet, there is no reason, under normal circumstances, to repeat to the hearer, by uttering (11), what he already knows. The only reason that can be identified for the repetition is that the speaker intends to emphasize its context. That is exactly the purpose which ediator serves here. As a matter of fact, in the same context, sentence (10) can be also interpreted as 'The tangerines are indeed sweet, as are expected.' This corresponds to the psychological reality that since you, the speaker, already knew the tangerines are sweet you naturally have the expectation that they will taste sweet. It seems that sentence (10) can be ambiguous for the reason that the particle iator can simultaneously carry the semantic functions of expectation and emphasis. This means that (10) can signal: (i) emphasis alone (ii) emphasis and expectation together (iii) expectation alone. What
prompts one understanding or another lies in the presence or absence of the mutual knowledge that the tangerines are sweet. From the speaker's point of view, sentence (10) will be used as a repetition to emphasize the sweetness of the tangerines and also to confirm that fact as being expected, if he assumes or knows that the hearer knows about it, just as in the context mentioned above, in which the speaker has just been given the fact of the tangerines' being sweet by the hearer. If someone else on the spot contends to the speaker that he does not think the tangerines are sweet, then the speaker will probably use (10) again to defend himself. \( \tilde{u} \), in this use, essentially denotes the emphasis alone. On the other hand, if the hearer has no idea at all whether the tangerines are sweet or not, which is assumed or known by the speaker, then the speaker will utter (10) to convey that he knows and expects the tangerines to be sweet, and makes the hearer try some.

While we discover \( \tilde{u} \) signals the sense of expectation in the A-not-A question forms, we also find out that, in addition to expectation, \( \tilde{u} \) may also designate emphasis in such sentences as (10), which causes the semantic ambiguity. Figure 1 presents the semantics of \( \tilde{u} \) in a continuous, nondiscrete way.
Example (2)-(5) (10) (12)-(14)

Discourse disjunctive question confirmation defense function

Semantics 'EXPECTATION' 'EXPECTATION' and 'EMPHASIS' 'EMPHASIS'

Figure 1. Two aspects of the semantics of ū

We move from those transparent cases of 'expectation' at the left end of the scale in Figure 1 toward the middle, an indeterminate area where the semantics of 'expectation' overlaps with that of 'emphasis', then to the right where the sense of 'emphasis' becomes more salient. Some examples are given in (12), (13) and (14) in which 'emphasis' is the dominant sense of ū, and 'expectation' is absent:

(12) Gōa ū chīa, tān-sī bō chīa òan.
    [1sg U eat, but NEG eat FINISHED]

    'I did eat something, but I didn't finished eating it.'
(13) Gọa ū chhōe, tān-sī bô chhōe tînh.

[1sg U seek, but NEG seek ACHIEVED]

'I did search, but I failed to find it.'

(14) Gọa ū tī-ē thiaN, tān-sī thiaN bô.

[1sg U PROG listen, but hear NEG]

'I am listening, but I cannot understand it.'

Sentences (12)-(14) are similar in that they all have two contrastive events connected by the conjunction 'but'; the first event emphasizes the execution of the activities--eating, searching or listening, followed by the second event indicating the ineffective results--not eating up, not finding or not understanding. These sentences could be used to defend oneself when accused of failing to perform a certain activity, which brings up the unsuccessful results. Sentence (12) can be a child's defensive response to his mother's blaming him for not even touching the vegetable on the plate which is still as full as she made it half an hour ago. Because the mother is accusing the child of not eating the vegetable, in order to defend himself well, the child must deny his failure to perform the activity of eating by putting an emphasis on the actual performance of it. What he intends to do is to argue that it is something other than the failure to eat that causes
the leftover of the vegetable, perhaps his inability. The particle Ú plays the appropriate role of designating emphasis in this context.

Similarly, you might want to use sentence (13) in the situation where your boss is questioning whether you are too lazy to seek the missing file he happens to need. Since the last impression you wish your boss to get from you is that you are so lazy that you neglect your duties, you are eager to counter his presumption by laying stress on the actuality of your performance of searching for the file. The use of Ú conveys the accentuation required here. Sentence (14) might occur to you when your physics teacher asks why you do not have the answer to his question, which has just been given in class. Is it because you do not listen to him at all? You answer that you have been listening, but somehow, you are not able to find the answer because the subject is too difficult to you. Again, you need a linguistic signal to carry the semantic function of emphasis to the hearer, and Ú does this.

2.3 Aspectual use of Ú

'Emphasis' has been determined to be one aspect of the basic semantics of Ú. It seems logical to predict that if Ú is absent from a
sentence, the remainder constitutes a good sentence except that the original emphatic assertion is reduced to a neutral statement. The pair of sentences in (15) proves the deduction is correct:

(15)a. I chahng û lâi gûn tao.

[3sg yesterday U come our house]

'He did come to our house yesterday.'

b. I chahng iâi gûn tao.

'He came to our house yesterday.'

With the presence of û, (15a) emphasizes the event that he came to our house yesterday, while (15b), without the presence of û, simply states the fact of his coming over yesterday. Suppose there is a question given as such:

(16) Asam chahng khì toûi?

[Asam yesterday go where]

'Where did Asam go yesterday?'

The only appropriate answer will be (15b), which provides information concerning the fact that he came to our house. The emphatic sense of (15a) is incongruous to this context. On the other hand, if the question is raised in a disjunctive A-not-A form as such:
(17) Asam chahng ⚷ lai lin tao bo?

[Asam yesterday U come your house NEG]

'Did Asam come to your house yesterday?'

or in a rhetorical way as such:

(18) Asam chahng kam ⚷ lai lin tao?

[Asam yesterday RHE Que U come your house]

'Did Asam really come to your house yesterday? (I doubt.)'

then (15a), with the emphatic ⚷ to confirm the fact, becomes the only appropriate answer. However, the examples in (19), a construction syntactically parallel with (15), do not show such a parallel semantics. Sentence (19b), with the absence of ⚷, is not complete (or not specific) in meaning.

(19)a. 1 chahng ⚷ chīa pīn̄g.

[3sg yesterday U eat rice]

'He had a meal yesterday.'

'He did have a meal yesterday.'

b. ??1 chahng chīa pīn̄g.2

Sentences (15) and (19) are minimal pairs. The only element they do not share is the events. The former has the event of coming
to someone's house and the latter has the event of having a meal. Both events occurred in the past, which is indicated by the temporal adverb 'yesterday'. Sentence (15a) shows an emphatic assertion that he did come to our house yesterday. Sentence (19a) can also be understood emphatically as 'He did have a meal yesterday' in the context of a disjunctive or rhetorical question, in which the proposition is confirmed; this is the same situation as for (15a). Moreover, (19a) could appear in the same non-emphatic context that (15b) can. Like (15b), the first English gloss of (19a) can occur when responding to the interlocutor's query. He might have asked a question such as:

(20) Asam chahng 旺 chhonq siaN bo̍h?

[Asam yesterday U do what, any NEG]

'Did Asam do anything yesterday?'

Note that this question would fail without the presence of 旺. Otherwise, 旺 might be replaced by another aspectual marker teh, 'IMPERFECTIVE' and thus form a question such as:

(21) Asam chahng teh chhonq siaN?

[Asam yesterday IMPERFECTIVE do what, any]

'What was Asam doing yesterday?'
And the answer would be:

(22) l chahng tēh chīa pīng.

[3sg yesterday IMPERFECTIVE eat rice]

'He was eating food yesterday.'

Compare the interrogative context for (15b). There exists no obligatorily explicit aspectual or modal indications. The obligatory presence of aspectuality or modality for the event chhông sīañ 'so something; do what' is explained by the linguistic fact that the event 'do' is atelic in Taiwanese, which requires other elements like modality or aspectuality to specify the semantics of the event. The event of 'coming to our house' is telic and thus specific by itself. Another piece of evidence to show that chīa pīng is atelic and that lāi gūn tao is telic can be obtained from the observation that chīa pīng may appear with the imperfective morpheme tēh, as in l chahng tēh chīa pīng, but lāi gūn tao may not. The sentence *l chahng tēh lāi gūn tao is not acceptable.

Unlike (15b), (19b) sounds odd without u, and the oddness of (19b) lies in its 'incompleteness'. In contrast with (19a), sentence (19b) lacks u, which construes the event in an aspectually perfective way, thus completing the semantics of the sentence. Then why is
(15b) perfective, and therefore 'complete' without ū? The explanation is: 'coming to someone's house' is a telic event in Taiwanese, while 'having a meal' is atelic. In other words, the former event has boundaries in itself (i.e. the arrival) and need not be redundantly marked by ū to show the perfectivity, while the latter event of eating food lacks inherent boundaries and thus requires something to signal their presence, which is achieved here by ū. ū adds the semantics of perfectivity to the unbounded event, 'having a meal', and thus completes the semantics of the sentence. As for (15b), since 'coming to our house' is telic itself and does not require ū to make the event bounded, ū is interpreted as adding emphasis.

When we claim that 'coming to someone's house' is telic, while 'having a meal' is atelic, we do not mean they are 'absolutely' telic or atelic. In fact, an event's being telic or not is a question of context. If we put all events into a scale, they will form a continuum in terms of telicness. A verb might be 'absolutely' telic or atelic, but that value may change as the context changes. For example, chīa pŋ 'eat food' is atelic, but chīa gō a ē pŋ [eat-1sg-POSSESSIVE-rice;food] 'eat my food', in which the object 'my food' becomes definite, is semantically telic. The sentence ??l chahng chīa pŋ sounds odd but l
chahng chīa góa ê pōng is a perfect sentence, which means he ate my food yesterday. And this sentence with û, l chahng û chīa góa ê pōng is emphatic only as (15a) is. As we observe from (15) and (19), the presence or absence of û and the interpretation of it is closely related to the telicness, i.e., perfectivity of events. In the following sections we attempt to investigate this correlation in order to reveal another aspect of the semantics of û.

Going back to the examples of (15) and (19), we observe that the time setting such as 'yesterday' helps the event form boundaries. This can be shown by the following sentences:

(23)a. l û lâi gûn tao.

'He came to our house.'

b. ??l lâi gûn tao.

(24)a. l û chīa pōng.

'He had a meal.'

b. ??l chīa pōng.

Contrasted with (15b), sentence (23b) fails without the adverb 'yesterday' to provide a semantic frame within which the event described by the sentence, coming to our house, occurs. It thus lacks boundaries, which the û in (23a) provides; and the sum forms a
complete sentence with the perfective sense but not the emphatic sense of utterance (15a). The time setting 'yesterday' helps specify the event boundaries to 'coming to our house' and ̄ continues to designate emphasis.

The adverbs of time are not the only element that can set semantic frames for the event described. The adverbs of manner can, too. Observe the following sentences:

(23)b. ?? ̄ chĩa pǐng.

(24)a. ̄ man-man-á chĩa pǐng.

[3sg slowly eat rice]

'He had the meal slowly.'

b. ̄ ̄ man-man-á chĩa pǐng.

'He, indeed, had the meal slowly.'

The oddness of sentence (23b) is cured by adding an adverb of manner 'slowly' to delimit the event 'have a meal' with a semantic frame and to make it thereby a specific event--have the meal, as shown in (24a). As the event is perfective, the ̄ in (24b), again, is interpreted in an emphatic sense.

We have claimed that ̄ performs the role of default perfective marker; in other words, it does not usually mark perfectivity unless
the sentence has no other device to designate completeness/specificness and requires one to make the sentence complete semantically. Once the event described in the sentence is complete either because it is inherently bounded or because it is made so by means of external elements that provide boundaries, such as the adverbs of time and manner mentioned above, or perfective markers like Ṣ, kọ which will be discussed below, then the particle ụ will be alternatively manifested in terms of emphasis.

Consider now (25):

(25)a. I ̂lai Ọ

[3sg come PEF]

'He has come.'

'He is come.'

'Here he comes now.'

b. I ụ ̂lai Ọ

'He is indeed come.'

The event in (25a) is indicated to be perfective by the final 'perfective' particle Ọ. Now the ụ in (25b) functions to emphasize the event with perfectivity. When the event is externally marked perfective and emphasized by ụ, it is usually the perfective part of
the event that is emphasized. As the English translation reveals, sentence (25b) expresses that the speaker witnessed or was informed of the presence of 'him' and the speaker now transfers his knowledge of this fact to the hearer by placing the emphasis on the completion of the event, i.e. the resultative state of the event—he is already here. Therefore, it is (25a), rather than (25b), that could occur when the speaker is standing at the door and witnessing 'him' coming toward the house from outside. Another similar case is provided below in which the particle kòe is involved in signaling perfectivity.

(26)a. I (bat) lâi kòe chia.

[3sg (ever) come EXPERIENCE here]

'He has been here before.'

'He has the experience of being here.'

b. I ù lâi kòe chia.

'He was indeed here (and is gone now).'

Sentence (26a) communicates his having been here as an occasion of experience, while (26b), by using ù, emphasizes the completion of the experience, which in turn brings out the state following the experienced event, i.e., 'he' is no more here. One of the most likely
contexts of (26b) could be that the speaker happened to find 'his' footprints on the floor and inferred that 'he' probably stayed here for a while but has now left. What was remains is the trace of his having been here. It is the emphasis of the current resultative state, which is derived from the perfectivity of the event, that triggers the usage of ū.

It is a general fact in Taiwanese grammar that the action or activity verbs, which denote ongoing actions or continuous activities, are usually distinguished from achievement or accomplishment verbs, which specify the final resultative state by adding 'resultative words' at the end, putting event limits to the verbs. Examples are as shown in (12) and (13), where chīa 'eat' as an activity verb contrasts with chīa-ōan 'finish eating; eat up' as an achievement verb; chhōe 'search' contrasts with chhōe-tiōh 'find'. The first events in these two sentences are preceded by ū, which functions to emphasize that the activities of 'eating' and 'searching' were done in a specific past time, which provides the non-telic verbs with specific instantiation (i.e. 'There was an occasion on which I ate/searched'), thus bounding them within that frame and making them 'complete'. Technically speaking, ū, in this use, indicates 'perfectivity' and 'emphasis' at the
same time. The second events (chīa-ôn and chhōe-tiôn) are telic and preceded by bô, the 'presumed' negative counterpart of ū.5 Here the particle bô is used to form a negative contrast with the preceding emphatic affirmative ū, and it focuses to negate the resultative states of the events, i.e. 'finished' and 'found', instead of the events 'eating' and 'searching' themselves. In other words it emphatically negates the perfectivity of the telic events.

It is true that ū makes non-telic verbs perfective and emphasizes the perfectivity of telic verbs, which in turn inclines ū to emphasize the ending states of the event verbs. This inclination is mainly due to the characteristic of telic verbs--having a salient ending point or state. ū does not in and of itself emphatically focus the result of the event. That is why when people really intend to place the focus on the resultative part of an event, they relocate the particle ū to the immediate front of the focussed element, to avoid any semantic ambiguity. Let us examine the following:

(27)  a. l ū chāo chhut-laî.

[3sg ū run  out]

'He did run out.'
b. I cháo ē chhut-lâi.

'He tried to run out, and he succeeded.'

It appears that (27a) views the event 'running out' as a whole, emphasized by ē, while (27b) treats the event 'running out' as two consecutive parts: he ran first, then he got out. The speaker aims to attract the hearer's attention to the latter part of the event, i.e. the resultantive state of being out. It would be clearer if we present these two sentences in negative forms, as shown in (28):

(28) a. I bô cháo chhut-lâi.

[3sg NEG run out]

'He didn't run out.'

b. I cháo bô chhut-lâi.

'He tried to run out, but he failed.'

Since bô denies the event of running out as an entirety in (28a), it is difficult to comprehend whether his failure in getting out is equal to (28b) or whether he did not run at all. The ambiguity can only be resolved by consulting the discourse context. Sentence (28b), on the other hand, has only one interpretation that his attempt of running did not succeed. In other words, an important distinction is made that (28a) can mean that he did not ran at all, but (28b) always means
that he tried.

A parallel case will be discussed below where the boundary of the event is provided by quantified adverbials rather than resultative states.

(29)  

a.  I khùn saN tiam-cheng kú.  

[3sg sleep three hour long]  

'He slept for three hours.'  

b.  I tū khùn saN tiam-cheng kú.  

'He did sleep for three hours, (as you expect him to.)'  

c.  I khùn tū saN tiam-cheng kú.  

'He slept for as long as three hours.'  

Sentence (29a) is a neutral statement with the proposition that he slept for three hours. Without tū, the sentence is semantically complete by itself with a quantitatively bounded event. Sentence (29b), with tū before the verb, emphasizes that he did really sleep for three hours. This emphatic utterance could occur to respond to a question given by a doctor who had asked 'him', the patient, to sleep for three hours. The question, as shown in (30a), might be put by using the particle tū to show the inquirer's expectation of an affirmative response.
(30)  a.  l  อ  ขุ่้น  saN  ไถ่-ช่ง  kú  bô?
      'Did he sleep for three hours?'

       b.  ขุ่้น  อ  saN  ไถ่-ช่ง  kú  bô?
       'Did he sleep for as long as three hours?'

As is characteristic of quantified events in Taiwanese, the quantitative part is more salient than the other part of the event. So the phrase 'for three hours' in (29b) is inclined to be considered as the emphatic focus that the อ qualifies. Sentence (30b), by moving อ to the front of 'three hours', explicitly realizes the semantics of focusing the question on the quantity of the sleeping hours. Sentence (29c) is the affirmative reply for (30b). Even sentence (31a), the negative counterpart of (29b), under normal circumstances, has such an inclination as in (29b), and is apt to be understood as he slept for less than three hours.

(31)a.  l  bô  ขุ่้น  saN  ไถ่-ช่ง  kú.
       'He didn't sleep for three hours, (as you expect him to.)'

       b.  ขุ่้น  bô  saN  ไถ่-ช่ง  kú.
       'He slept for not so long as three hours.'

However, in order to make the expression explicit and precise, that is, to avoid the other possible interpretation of (31a)--he did not
sleep at all, an utterance such as (31b) is preferred, in which the particle ʰə is shifted exactly to the front of the negatively focussed element, i.e., the quantitative phrase 'for three hours'.

So far, we have discovered 'perfectivity' as the third aspect of the semantics of ʰə by examining the interaction of the telicness of events with the emphatic sense of ʰə in terms of various perfective contexts. Generally speaking, ʰə functions to emphasize the perfectivity of telic (and therefore 'complete') events or it provides 'specificity' ('completeness' or 'boundary') to non-telic events. However, when we explore in more detail the contexts in which ʰə occurs, we find occasions of imperfective and stative settings. How do the semantics of ʰə that we have identified operate in those contexts?

(32)

a. ʰə  chin  sūi.

[3sg  very  pretty]

'She is pretty.'

b. ʰə  sūi.

'She is indeed pretty.'

We have explained, when discussing sentence (11) above, that the construction with ʰə as (32a) is a common neutral expression for
describing the quality or characteristics of the participant involved in the sentence. Sentence (32b) with the replacement of û is perceived either as 'She is (with stress) pretty, as expected.' in terms of the sense of expectation, or as 'She is indeed pretty.' with an emphatic discourse purpose. The reason why the û here cannot be realized as a device of bounding the event, as it usually does to non-telic events, is that there is no way to make a state like 'pretty' perfective in Taiwanese. Therefore, û has no choice but to sustain the modal role of indicating emphasis or expectation. Sentence (11) provides another example.

û can also occur with imperfective events as signaled by the progressive marker teh in (33):

(33) a. l teh sê saN.

[3sg PROG wash clothes]

'He is washing clothes.'

b. l û teh sê saN.

'He is (with stress) washing clothes.'

Sentence (33a) states an ongoing activity without the emphatic marker û. Sentence (33b) employs û to stress the involvement in performing the currently ongoing event. Specifically telic events,
which explicitly specify the achieved point or resultative state such as chhōe-tīh 'find', chīa-ūn 'eat up', cannot be put into imperfective contexts in Taiwanese (e.g. one cannot say *l tēh kāo-ūi [3sg PROG arrive] 'He is arriving.'), so the imperfective sentences as (33), in which no event results are specified, the participant could either probably attain the terminal point of that event or never achieve the goal. When ū is absent from the imperfective construction, it seems that the attainment of the event goal is not so much a concern as it is when ū is present. So in (33b), the speaker, on the one hand, confirms to the hearer about 'his' being in the middle of washing clothes and, on the other hand, he also relieves the hearer's worry that 'he' might fail to finish washing the clothes. ū, in imperfective contexts, turns out to emphasize the participant's involvement in the ongoing event, which suggests his concern of the final achievement of the event or his attempt to attain it. Recall the situation for sentence (14). The student tries to stress his having been listening to the lecture to show the concern and effort he has made to understand, but somehow, he did not succeed.
(14) Gôa ū tî-ē thiaN, tān-sī thiaN bô.
[1sg U PROG listen, but hear NEG]
'I am (with stress) listening, but I cannot understand it.'

Another piece of evidence comes from the cooccurrence of ū and other modal verbs such as beh 'want to, will, be about to'. Consider (34):

(34)a. l beh khî.
[3sg want go]
'He wants to go.'

'He will go.'

'He is about to go.'

b. l ū beh khî.

'He has the intention to go.'

'He does want to go.'

*'He is about to go.'

Sentence (34b) differs from sentence (34a) in that the former lacks the expression of 'readiness' to go. The emphatic sense of ū applied to the modality of intention could be comprehended in a way that the speaker confirms the participant's intention to go, or in the other way that the participant is concerned with the result of his intending
to go and spends time in considering and making up his mind. That is why (34b) cannot have the third gloss of (34a), the expression of being about to go. Instead, (34b) implies a sense of conservativeness and hesitation, which is due to the concern with having the decision made.

2.4 \( \tilde{u} \) in terms of lexical meaning

So far, we have dealt with the morpheme \( \tilde{u} \) in the realm of grammatical function words. In this section we attempt to discuss the lexical content of \( \tilde{u} \) to complete all the applications of this morpheme. Meanwhile, the interplay of the intrinsic lexical meaning and the semantic functions of \( \tilde{u} \) as a grammatical form will be investigated.

The lexical \( \tilde{u} \) is mainly a verb meaning 'to have' or 'to possess', followed by nominals, which are possessed or owned by the participant preceding \( \tilde{u} \), as shown in (35) and (36):

\[
(35) \text{Go' a} \quad \tilde{u} \quad \text{chit-keng} \quad \text{chhu}.
\]

\[
[1sg \quad \text{have one-CL} \quad \text{house}]
\]

'I have a house.'
(36) Chhia ʊ si̍t-ê lián-á.
[car  have  four-CL  wheel-DIM]
'Cars have four wheels.'

The lexical ʊ can also mean the existential 'there is/are' when the participants preceding ʊ refer to time or space, and cannot be understood as possessive of the element following ʊ. Consider (37) and (38):

(37) Tōh-têng ʊ chît-poe te̍.  
[table-top  exist  one-cup  tea]
'There is a cup of tea on the table.'

(38) Chît-nî pêng-kun ʊ sî gō ê hong-thai.  
[one-year average  exist  four  five  CL  typhoon]
'There are, on the average, four or five typhoons in a year.'

Although they have a similar structure, sentences (39) and (40), however, do not quite show a possessive relationship between the two nominals.

(39) Chît-tíao kîo ʊ saN-pá kong-chhioh.  
[This-CL  bridge  have  three-hundred  meter]
'This bridge is as long as 300 meters.'
(40) I  ṅ₁ sì-châp  hœe.
[3sg have four-ten year]
'He is as old as forty.'

The seemingly nominal phrases '300 meters' and 'forty years' are actually measure phrases. They look like nominals in form, but act more like stative verbals in function. Unlike the lexical verbal usage of ṅ₁ in (35) and (36), the morpheme ṅ₁ in (39) and (40) performs more like a grammatical marker, which indicates that the measure specified is a value expected by the speaker. Compare the following sentences without ṅ₁.

(41) Chit-tâo  kîo (tâng) saN-pâ  kong-chhioh.
[This-CL bridge (long) three-hundred meter]
'This bridge is 300 meters long.'

(42) I  (kim-nî)  sì-châp  hœe.
[3sg (this year) four-ten year]
'(This year) He is forty years old.'

Without ṅ₁, sentences (41) and (42) objectively describe the facts that the bridge has the length of 300 meters and 'he' is forty years of
The speaker makes no assumptions and forms no expectation in his mind before the utterances, as in the cases of (39) and (40) with ū. Cheng (1979) treats such sentences as (39) and (40) as an abbreviated structure with the lack of kào 'enough' following ū. For example:

\[(43) \text{Lí } ū (kào) \text{ lī-cháp hēe bô?} \]

\[\text{[2sg U (enough) two-ten year NEG]}\]

'Are you as old as twenty?'

Sentence (43) could occur in a context where the speaker wants to know whether the hearer has reached the legal age for voting, i.e. twenty, as expected in general. The structure with ū and measure phrases functions analogously with those sentences discussed in 2.1 with ū and stative verbs instead. (Cf. note1)

We observe that measure phrases have the appearance of nominals but indeed act in the way that stative verbals do, so that the morpheme ū is not any longer interpreted in terms of its lexical content, but has shifted to a more grammatical use of indicating the modality of expectation. In the following case, we will see an identical form of utterance with two different meanings.
(44) Lí ū hōan-įó bod
[2sg U worry NEG]
I 'Do you have worries?'
II 'Are you worried?'

The ambiguity of (44) results from one of the characteristics of Chinese grammar: there is no formal distinction between nominals and verbals. To understand sentences like (44) specifically, one needs to consult the context. For the first gloss, the speaker is asking the hearer about worries in general, while in the second gloss, the speaker and the hearer have a mutual knowledge of the particular incident involved.

In summary, it seems that ū tends to shift from the intrinsic lexical meaning to grammatical specifications when the following element becomes more eventlike. If we plot those elements after ū into a scale in terms of event---participant, and add the four semantics of ū we have discovered, the following correspondences emerge:
EVENT--------------------------------PARTICIPANT
telic atelic imperfective stative(adjective) measure nominal

'EMPHASIS' 'PERFECTIVITY' 'EXPECTATION' 'POSSESSION'/EXISTENCE'

GRAMMATICAL--------------------------------LEXICAL

Figure 2
Notes

1. Cheng (1979:147-48) describes a similar construction with the term 'approximation'.

2. This sentence without مرك will be acceptable if put in a contrastive context, such as leck-hng chǐa pēng, kim-á-lit chǐa mì. 'He eats rice yesterday, but eats noodle today.' So are sentences (23b) and (24b).

3. As will be briefly discussed in the paragraphs below, in Taiwanese, any 'incomplete' sentence will fail if lacking semantic 'specificness'. The 'specificness' can be satisfied by adding such devices as temporal adverbs, adverbs of manner, quantitative phrases, aspect markers, modal verbs, etc. From a personal communication with Dr. Lilly Chen, whether the content of a sentence is 'newsworthy' or 'informative' might also contribute to the 'completeness' or 'specificness' of the sentence.

4. We do not intend to discuss the semantics of бро here for the sake of space. Chen (1989:25-26) describes бро as an aspectual marker indicating 'the perfectivity of action' when follows activity verbs or telic verbs, and a final particle indicating a 'changed state' when
follows stative verbs. 'Actually it indicates that the change to this situation is in different stages of development: it may be about to take place, in progress, or completed.' We observe in (25a) that $a^*$ indeed, has at least these two functions of perfectivity and inchoativity, which are reflected in the English glosses.

5. Bô has always been considered the negative counterpart of $u$. The major reason might be due to the correspondence between them in terms of lexical meaning. Consider the following pair of sentences:

A. I $u$ hăo-sìN.  

[3sg have son]  

'He has sons.'

B. I bô hăo-sìN.  

[3sg NEG son]  

'He has no sons.'

However, $u$ and bô lack the correspondence when they are used as grammatical markers. Bô can negate sentences with $u$ or without $u$. That is, bô can be the negative counterpart of both $u$ and $a$. For example:
C1. I chahng ū lâi hâk-hâo.
   [3sg yesterday U come school]
   'He indeed came to school yesterday.'

C2. I chahng bô lâi hâk-hâo.
   [3sg yesterday NEG come school]
   'He did not indeed come to school yesterday.'

D1. I chahng ø lâi hâk-hâo.
   [3sg yesterday come school]
   'He came to school yesterday.'

D2. I chahng bô lâi hâk-hâo.
   [3sg yesterday NEG come school]
   'He did not come to school yesterday.'

It seems that bô might mark both perfectivity and emphasis, and that causes the ambiguity of C2 and D2, which will be disambiguated only by speech contexts.

6. Unlike Taiwanese, Mandarin can perfectivize stative verbs by using the postverbal le. Examples are in the following (see Huang and Davis 1989 for further discussion):
A. Tā pāng le.
   [3sg fat LE]
   'He's gotten fatter.'

B. Tā gāo le liǎng cùn.
   [3sg tall LE two inch]
   'He's gotten two inches taller.'
   'He is too tall by two inches.'
Chapter Three

Conclusion

In summarizing the semantics of ū in the preceding chapter (cf. Figure 2 there), we found the semantic content of the element following ū, whether an event or participant, to be a major factor in determining the semantic manifestation of ū. On the one hand, if ū co-occurs with an element that acts as a participant, ū will be interpreted lexically as 'possessing'/'having' that element, e.g. a car, three apples, etc. On the other hand, if ū co-occurs with an event, then it will be a grammatical marker designating the perfectivity of that event, when the event is atelic, or denoting an emphasis on the perfectivity of that event, when it is telic. At this point, we may be inclined to consider the lexical ū and the grammatical ū to be two homonyms: the ū as a lexical verb meaning 'to have', which occurs with nominal participants, and the ū as a perfective marker, which occurs with verbal events. Or these data might be even analyzed as a case where ū is an identical phonological realization of three lexemes, that are assigned to the categories of verbs, aspects, and modals, having the meaning of possession, perfectivity and
emphasis/expectation, respectively. To state this problem straightforward, how many ᵁ's are there in Taiwanese? One or more than one? In other words, do these different occurrences of ᵁ represent a polysemy or a homonymy of the same phonological form? If they are polysemous, i.e., if there is only one single ᵁ, we may ask whether there is a single semantics common to these different aspects of function? If so, is that common semantics aspectual, modal or lexical? How are we to interpret these semantic relations? We pursue this issue in the following sections.

3.1 How many ᵁ's are there?

The major arguments for morphemes being homonymous are that, firstly, different meanings are present, which cannot be associated by any means. Secondly, since these different meanings are without associations, they constitute independent morphemes, which are then likely to co-occur with each other in a sentence as are any other independent morphemes. In English, for instance, we may have two homonyms of have and bear occur in the same sentence and say such things as I have had it or I can't bear staying with a bear in the same room. Also in Mandarin, there is a generally accepted
analysis of le which distinguishes the perfective aspect verb suffix -le with the sentence-final particle le. The two major arguments that have been adopted in support of this homophonous le are: first, 'entirely different meanings are conveyed...the verbal LE marks some kind of completion, while the sentential LE signals new situations.' (Shi 1990:96); secondly, 'evidence that they [i.e. postverbal le and sentential le, LWL] are distinct includes the fact that the Perfective -le is suffixed to verbs, while le occurs sentence-finally; they can therefore co-occur' (Li, Thompson and Thompson 1982:42):

(1) Wǒ chī-le sān wǎn miàn le.
[1sg eat-PFV three bowl noodle CRS]
'I ate three bowls of noodles.'

Co-occurrence may then stand as an argument in favor of homonymy. Let us first test this argument in the case of 他.

Assume that we have two 他's. One is the lexical 他 and has the semantic content 'to have' and is followed by nouns; the other is the grammatical 他 and emphatically marks the perfective aspect or the modality of expectation. We may now expect to find sensible sentences that have these two 他's occurring together. Semantically, they are not incompatible in the least. It is absolutely rational in
English to express that one does/did own something as 'He has had three houses' (the aspectual sense of ɐ) or 'He does have three houses' (the modal/emphatic sense). However, in Taiwanese this is not possible. As shown in (2), although the modal ɐ in (2b) can be followed by the verb ɐ 'to have' and composes a perfect sentence, the modal ɐ in (2a) cannot:

(2)a. *l ɐ ɐ saN keng chhù.
[3sg U have three CL house]
'He did/does have three houses.'

b. l ɐ ɐ saN keng chhù.
'He will/is likely to have three houses.'

The co-occurrence of two ɐ's in (2a) does not legitimately express the affirmation or emphasis of someone's possessing three houses, nor is it possible to make a disjunctive question as (3) to express a positive expectation:

(3) *l ɐ ɐ lî-châp kho bô?
[2sg U have twenty dollar NEG]
'Do you have twenty dollars?'
The co-occurrence of two ū's is also unacceptable in such a productive construction as (4b) where the second ū has been through the process of lexicalization and become part of the adjective compound meaning 'polite'.

(4)a. Līm sian-siN chin ū-lémāo.

[Līm Mr. very have-courtesy]

'Mr. Lim is very polite.'


'Mr. Lim is indeed polite.'

c. Līm sian-siN ū lémāo bô?

'Is Mr. Lim polite?'

d. *Līm sian-siN ū ū-lémāo bô?

'Is Mr. Lim polite?'

Unlike sūi 'pretty' in (32) in Chapter Two, the adjective ū-lémāo 'polite' cannot be marked by another ū to denote the modality of expectation or emphasis. The failure of (4b) and (4d) can be paralleled with that of (2a) and (3) by the justification that the ū+noun compounding is not completely lexicalized so that it still retains the syntactic structure with ū as the verb meaning 'to have'.

From (2)-(4), we conclude that only one single ū is required to
simultaneously designate the modal and lexical senses. With a stress on the .iterator, both (2) and (4) acquire the emphatic affirmative sense from the predicate events that he does (with stress) have three houses and that Mr. Lim is indeed (stress) polite. The duplication of  iterator turns out to be anomalous. It seems that the modal .iterator and the lexical .iterator are not separate morphemes that can freely co-occur in the same sentence. This is also true for the other uses of .iterator. It is never possible for any two or more functions of .iterator to be realized in a multiplied form in the same clause. A long list of starred sentences with multiple  iterator's as in (2)-(4) will be omitted here.

We have presented one argument that there might be only one single common .iterator that represents all the semantics of .iterator, i.e., the .iterator's are polysemous rather than homonymous. But how do we account for the polysemy of .iterator? Does it have a common abstract semantics for these different senses, or it might be the case that without some constant meaning these various functions are nevertheless linked together in a certain way by which we do not lose the thread of their unity? We attempt to answer this question in the following sections.

3.2 Entity and substance metaphor
Lakoff and Johnson (1980) point out that our experience of physical objects and substances provides a basis for understanding and identifying parts of our experience as entities or substances. We tend to view things as discrete and bounded entities even though they are not always clearly discrete or bounded. 'So our experiences with physical objects...provide the basis for an extraordinarily wide variety of ontological metaphors, that is, ways of viewing events, activities, emotions, ideas, etc., as entities and substances.' (25) We found that the way Taiwanese people understand the morpheme ገ reflects this kind of metaphor.

Recall the semantic scales in Figure 2. When the element after 仡 is a participant, i.e. an entity, we perceive this element is possessed by the other participant, if it is animate, or we perceive this element exists with respect to the other entity, if it is time or space. Sentences (5) and (6) illustrate this existential relation.

(5) Chit-ni 仡 saN pah lāk-chāp gō kang.

[one-year U three-hundred six-ten five day]

'A year has 365 days (in it).'

'There are 365 days in a year.'
Taiwanese people treat 'a year' and '365 days' as entities standing in the same relationship as the entities 'under the tree' and 'an old man', and as 'he' and 'three houses' in (2). This identical relationship is manifested by the morpheme $\ddot{u}$. Each pair composed of these six entities is recognized as bounded and connected in terms of the relationship of existence or possession. Or as in (7), the relationship between 'Asam' and 'a painful past' becomes more like experience than possession, although the entity 'Asam' is animate.

(7) Asam $\ddot{u}$ chít-tōaN thòng-khố ê kе-khì.

[Asam U one-period painful POSS past]

'Asam had a painful past.'

An idea as 'what I want to buy' in (8) could be viewed as an entity and get involved in the relationship manifested by $\ddot{u}$, which might turn out to be 'enumeration'. Sentence (8) is one of the examples:

(8) Gọa beh bọe ê műng-kīaN $\ddot{u}$ pit, chọa kā băm-đơh.

[1sg intend buy NOM thing U pen paper and eye drop]

'What I want to buy are pens, paper and eye drop.'
When the way we see entities and substances is metaphorically implemented in the events that occur with them, the boundedness we see in physical objects is reflected in the events and they are bounded, too. That is why we have those sentences with respect to the perfective semantics of \( \tilde{u} \) in 2.3. As entities and substances can be discrete or continuous, so can events exist with or without boundaries. As people can possess an object as an belonging in the external world, so can they 'possess' an event as an experience in their internal mind or memory. When the event is possessed, i.e. stored like an object in the mind, it is perceived as an entity with boundaries. That is why such atelic events as 'having meals' become bounded when marked by \( \tilde{u} \). And when the speaker intends to claim the existence of the event entity in the mind, this is usually asserted by using \( \tilde{u} \). The fact that such assertions are present in the use of \( \tilde{u} \) with events, but absent in the use of \( \tilde{u} \) with participants is due to the different basic properties of participants and events; the former only has roles, while the latter has assertion in discourse. Therefore the sense of emphatic assertion usually accrues to the sentence with \( \tilde{u} \) followed by events, e.g. Gloss I in (9), but not to the sentence with \( \tilde{u} \) followed by participants, e.g. Gloss II in (9):
(9)  ₁  hôan-lô.

[3sg ₁ worry]

₁ 'He has worries.'

₁₁ 'He is/was (with stress) worried.'

The fact that Taiwanese speakers use an identical form of utterance to express two different messages, as shown in (9), proves that they do not distinguish events from participants when using the ₁ construction. There is a participant, an entity, 'worries', which exists with respect to the other participant 'him', or put in another way, possessed by him. Metaphorically, the incident of worrying in Gloss ₁₁ is seen as an entity, which also exists with respect to 'him'. The only semantic difference for these two glosses is the presence or absence of assertion. Gloss ₁ lacks the sense of assertion because 'worries' is a noun and the verb ₁ is a presentative verb with the existential meaning.³ The presence of assertion in Gloss ₁₁ lies in the inherent function of assertion within ordinary verbs as 'worry', and the ₁, in turn, performs the modal role of emphasizing the assertion of the occurrence of the event or of confirming the expected existence of the event.

In short, we attempt to use the entity and substance metaphor to
account for the semantic extension—from the existential semantics of \( \tilde{\mathfrak{u}} \) in occurrence before participants to the aspectual and modal senses in occurrence before events. This metaphor is first reflected on the syntactic congruity between the \( \tilde{\mathfrak{u}} \) plus participants and the \( \tilde{\mathfrak{u}} \) plus events. Then we see that the major task of this metaphor is accomplished by the semantics of event---participant, which are both treated as entities, either bounded or unbounded, and which might exist either in the external world as possessions or exist in the internal memory as experience. Although this metaphor explains most of the semantic links with respect to \( \tilde{\mathfrak{u}} \), there seems to be something left uncovered. It is like the metaphor of entity provides a skeleton for building up the semantic structure of \( \tilde{\mathfrak{u}} \), while the inner connections between different parts are still lacking. The following section will be devoted to this task.

3.3 Emergent semantic chain

The concept of entity in 3.2 simply explains how the structure of the lexical \( \tilde{\mathfrak{u}} \) followed by nominal elements is metaphorically treated the same as the structure of the grammatical \( \tilde{\mathfrak{u}} \) followed by verbal elements. Other parts of semantic connections such as the senses of
perfectivity, emphasis, and expectation within the grammatical $\tilde{u}$ are still left unsolved. In this section we will introduce the concepts of 'semantic chain' and 'emergent grammar' to account for how these semantic ties of $\tilde{u}$ are bound together.

When we deal with the various functions of $\tilde{u}$, we have difficulty in finding the semantic consistency among them. What we have discovered is a series of identical sentences in which the same $\tilde{u}$ is interpreted in terms of different functions in different contexts. We have a local consistency, but are lacking a global one. As sentence (10) in Chapter Two shows, $\tilde{u}$ might serve either the function of 'emphasis' or 'expectation'. The $\tilde{u}$ in (19a) could mean either 'perfectivity' or 'emphasis'. Sentence (44) can be understood in terms of 'possession', 'emphasis' or 'expectation'. If we use the analogy of chain for explanation, the various semantic functions of $\tilde{u}$ are compared to individual rings and those ambiguous sentences serves as links to connect those semantic rings into a chain. They assure us that all the senses of $\tilde{u}$ are related, but they do not inform us as to what that relation is.

When we talk about semantic consistency, we cannot avoid thinking of the classical definition of morphemes and the issue this
definition brings up to the morphemic analysis. Regardless of the part of definition concerning the non-contrastive distribution in which two or more morphs must occur to be grouped into a morpheme, the other requirement to form a morpheme is to 'have the same meaning' (Hockett 1947: 342), i.e. to have 'constant meaning'. (322) In those structuralist terms, in which language is treated outside discourse context, and no extra-linguistic factors are regarded, the Taiwanese ū would represent multiple morphemes, since we do not see a semantic costancy among those multiple usages presented in Chapter Two. However, language cannot exist exclusive of context. It is only when we consider the context of uses that we can see the links between these various semantic functions of ū.

We feel the way of seeing the semantics of ū as a 'semantic chain' is more realistic in accounting for all those data presented. Moreover, this kind of semantic pattern which ū presents is by no means an isolated linguistic phenomenon. Hopper (1987) proposes a notion of 'emergent grammar' and illustrates it by considering the example of the English indefinite article a/an. This form comes from an Indo-European cognate form that meant the simple numeral 'one', singularity. It is also commonly used to introduce a new participant
into a discourse, and it is used as a general indefinite article as well later in the history of English. In modern English, the old strong sense of *a/an* is weakened and it can be used not only as a non-specific, classifying article, but also have a specific, new-mention sense. Nevertheless, on the other hand, the old strong sense of 'one' or 'one and the same' still exists in some strict contexts. Hopper explains this case and introduces the 'emergent grammar' by saying (1987: 143-44):

'We find in modern English not a uniform, over-all weakening of the meaning, but rather a situation in which the weakened meanings and the older stronger meanings exist side-by-side... Evidently the meanings represented by the English "indefinite article" are not unified under one hyper-abstract function. Instead, an open ended set of small sub-systems has come into being, and the membership of new occurrences of forms with the indefinite article is not specifiable in advance, but is impromptu and negotiable. Even participants in the conversation may not "know" whether a specific new mention or a non-specific indefinite is intended until this has been worked out in the verbal interaction.

Since language has the nature of 'emerging' or revealing itself in uses, like the case of English *a/an*, the Taiwanese *籃* does not have a particular semantic level at which all the patterns/regularities are
statable. In addition to those 'major' semantics we have proposed, i.e., 'existence/possession', 'expectation', 'perfectivity' and 'emphasis', we also found occasions above where ń is used to indicate 'experience' or to 'enumerate' things. Also, we have ń used in fixed phrases as ń-sî-chûn [U-time] 'sometimes', ń-chît-kôa [U-some] 'there are some' or ń-ê-lâng [U-POSSESSIVE-people] 'some people'. The sense of 'some' seems to emerge from these contexts, which may be linked to the existential meaning of ń. Because of the 'emergent' nature of language, the senses of ń will be unpredictable and limitless. But they will be, somehow, sensible extensions of past usages. Meanings (and morphemes) necessarily show this pattern of linked chains. There may be more subsets of meanings concerning ń that have not been discussed in this paper and that can never be exhausted so long as human intelligence is active and discourse goes on.

In conclusion, there is only one ń in Taiwanese, which does not fall into any single category of aspect, modal or lexical. Neither does this single ń have a stable common semantics shared by all the uses. This morpheme ń represents a semantic chain that is constituted by unlimited subsets of functions which are linked to one another and
opened to any other new possible functions to emerge upon.
Notes

1. To explicitly express the modal gloss in (2a), such adverbials as chin-chiaN 'truly, really', khak-sit 'indeed, authentically', etc. can be added:

   (2)c. I \underline{\text{chin-chiaN/Khak-sit}} \, \text{\textua\textua u} \, \text{saN keng chhù.}
   
   [3sg truly, indeed, authentically have three CL house]

   'He really has/had three houses.'

To explicitly express the aspectual gloss in (2a), the sentential perfective particle \( \text{\textua\textua} \) is used:

   (2)d. I \, \text{\textua\textua u} \, \text{saN keng chhù} \, \text{\textua\textua}\text{\textua\textua}
   
   [3sg have three CL house PERF]

   'He has had three houses.'

2. There are many other such stative-verb compounds with the combination of \( \text{\textua\textua u} \) 'to have' and nouns, which can be modified by chin 'very', just like other normal stative verbs. Some examples of this open-ended class are listed in the following:

   \( \text{\textua\textua u}-\text{hÎbÎng} \) [have-hope] 'hopeful'
   \( \text{\textua\textua u}-\text{hÎngchhù} \) [have-interest] 'interested'
   \( \text{\textua\textua u}-\text{kÎtÎt} \) [have-value] 'valuable'
û-`gî [have-meaning] 'meaningful'
û-kenggiam [have-experience] 'experienced'
û-nâisèng [have-patience] 'patient'
û-sinîông [have-credit] 'trustworthy, dependable'
û-pâinhoat [have-schemes] 'able to manage, capable', etc.

3 Hopper and Thompson (1984: 709) claim that 'a prototypical V...must ASSERT THE OCCURRENCE OF AN EVENT OF THE DISCOURSE,' while 'a prototypical N...MUST PLAY A CERTAIN ROLE IN THE DISCOURSE IN WHICH IT FIGURES...[i.e. a] DISCOURSE ROLE.'
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