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THE POLYSEMIOUS *LIĀH* 力 IN EARLY MODERN SOUTHERN MIN
AND ITS CONTEMPORARY FATE¹

Yunfan Lai

Université Paris III - Sorbonne Nouvelle

ABSTRACT

Based on Early Modern Southern Min texts from Ming and Qing dynasties, this paper studies the different functions of 力 *liāh* in Southern Min and the grammaticalisation pathways that led to the polysemitism. 力 *liāh* could appear as a content verb ‘to catch’ or a polyfunctional case marker in Early Modern Southern Min; while in Contemporary Southern Min, its verb use has become overwhelming, and its grammatical uses are mostly fossilised. The history of this word is worthy of the attention of typological studies.

SUBJECT KEYWORDS

Early Modern Southern Min Lì Jing Jì Object marking Grammaticalisation Affectedness Hierarchy

1. INTRODUCTION

The character 力 *liāh* was used in Early Modern Southern Min² for multiple purposes. It not only retained its original meaning as a lexical verb, ‘to catch, to take, to seize’ (Lien 2002), but also developed alternative verb uses, and furthermore underwent grammaticalisation into a polysemous case

marker. Productive as it was in the Ming dynasty, 力 *liāh* might however well have suffered twists and turns with the vicissitude of Chinese dynasties, and is only used as a verb contemporarily, with only a few fossilised traces of grammatical morpheme. This paper aims to account for the main functions of 力 *liāh* in Ming and Qing dynasties with typological analyses. In the first place, in Section 2, I will talk about the orthographic variants of this morpheme, 力 and 掠 in different versions of script plays; in Section 3, I will briefly discuss the etymology of 力 *liāh*; Section 4 describes the verb uses of 力 *liāh*. From Section 5 to Section 7, 力 *liāh* as a grammatical morpheme will be taken care of, before Section 8 comes up with some ambiguous constructions concerning this character. In Section 9, competing markers such as 共 *kāng* and 甲 *kap* will be mentioned. Section 10 focuses on the contemporary uses of 力 *liāh* and the paper comes to a conclusion in Section 11 with a discussion.

2. ORTHOGRAPHIC VARIANTS

The morpheme *liāh* has three orthographies in Ming and Qing dynasties, 力, 扞 and 掠.

力 is the only character used in the *Jiājìng* version of *Lì Jìng Jì* (1522-1566) and *The Classical theatre and art song of South Fukien* (van der Loon 1992) (dating from 1604, within the reign of 萬曆 *Wànli* (1572-1620) in the Ming dynasty), which indicates the Chōan-Chiu (泉州) origin of their authors. In contemporary Chōan-Chiu, 力 is pronounced *liāk* (Lin 1993), not sounding too far from *liāh*; we however have enough evidence to show that this contemporary pronunciation is irregular: in the historical Chōan-Chiu dictionary of *Hüiyīn miàowù* (Hong 1996), dating back to 1800, the colloquial pronunciation of 力 (represented as 掠) was under the rhyme class 京 *-iaⁿ*, indicating *liāh* or *liāⁿh*, without the velar coda.

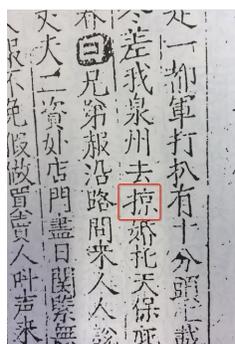
扞 is found in *Arte de la lengua Chio Chiu* (Klötter 2009) (Chioⁿ-Chiu 漳州 dialect), with two glosses: ‘to catch, to hold’ as a verb and classifier of textiles. We are not sure if 扞 as a classifier is of the same origin of *liāh* in this paper, therefore it will not be discussed here.

With *Hüiyīn miàowù*, we know that the character 掠 was accepted by Chōan-Chiu people in 1800. However, the script play case must be studied separately. 掠 is the only character used in script plays of two periods: the reign of *Wànli*, with 明萬曆刊荔枝記 *Míng Wànli Kān Lìzhījì* (Wu 2001b), 蘇六娘 *Sūliuniáng* (Wu 2002a) and 金花女 *Jīnhuānǚ* (Wu 2002b); and the reign of 乾隆 *Qiánlóng* of the Qing dynasty, with 同窓琴書記 *Tóngchuāng Qínshū Jì* (Wu 2003). In other script plays including 清順治刊荔枝記 *Qīng Shùnzhì Kān Lìzhījì* (Wu 2001d), 清道光刊荔枝記 *Qīng Dàoguāng Kān Lìzhījì* (Zheng 2010) and 清光緒刊荔枝記 *Qīng Guāngxù Kān Lìzhījì* (Wu 2001c), 力 is overwhelmingly used, whereas 掠 is also occasionally found, with 2 instances each in *Shùnzhì*, *Dàoguāng* and *Guāngxù*.

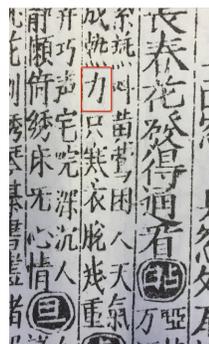
The choice of 掠 to represent *liāh* shows that its users spoke a dialect in which 力 did (and probably still does) not sound similar to *liāh*. Such dialects are generally spoken in the Southern part of Southern Min speaking regions. It is presumably the Tiê-Chiu dialect 潮州, as Wu (2001b) suggests in the preface. In Tiê-chiu, 力 is pronounced *lak⁵* and 掠 *liā⁵* (Lin & Chen 1996: 283, 293). Furthermore, apart from 看 *k^hòanⁿ* ‘to look’, we notice the coexistence of 体 *thóⁿ* in these resources, which is the common word for ‘to look’ in modern Tiê-Chiu dialects³.

Therefore, the versions with 掠 as *liāh* should be treated with caution that it might reveal dialectal variance in Early Modern Southern Min.

The figures below show the photocopies of 力 and 掠 in their original appearance.



(a) 掠 in *Wànli*



(b) 力 in *Jiājìng*

Figure 1: Examples of 力 and 掠 in script plays

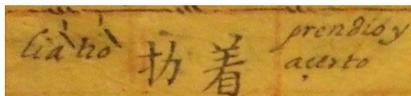


Figure 2: 扞 in *Arte de la lengua Chio Chiu*

3. ETYMOLOGY OF 力 *LIĀH*

As Lien (2002, 2010) suggests, the etymology of 力 *liāh* should be 擱, *nuò* in Mandarin. I would like to take this opportunity to add more comments on this etymology.

The original meaning of the character 擱, as in 說文 *Shuōwén* (100-121 AD), was ‘to press’⁴. The *Guǎngyùn* 廣韻 (1008 AD) has two entries for 擱, both with the meaning ‘to catch’ or ‘to hold’⁵. Duàn Yùcái (段玉裁), in

his Commentaries on *Shuōwén*, underlines that the meaning ‘to catch, to hold’ is recent⁶. Combined with the *Guǎngyùn* evidence, it is clear that the meaning of 搨 had already shifted to ‘to catch, to hold’ before the Ming Dynasty. Therefore, semantics-wise, the 搨 hypothesis is plausible.

Phonology-wise, *Guǎngyùn* gives two pronunciations of 搨: 女角切 (*ŋæwk*) and 女白切 (*ŋæk*). The two pronunciations in Middle Chinese have several different reflexes in Modern Southern Min. As for 女角切, we would expect **lōh* in Modern Southern Min, which does not seem to be the right paraphrase; on the other hand, in the case of 女白切, we would well expect *liāh* as a regular correspondence, as unrounded rhymes in the 梗 *gěng* rhyme class, regardless of the rhyme grade, appear as *-iah* in Modern Southern Min (Lo 1930).

The Eastern Min cognate of *liāh* is *nie?* (Fúzhōu dialect, Chen & Li 1991: 116). The correspondence Eastern *-ie?* :: Southern *-iah* traces back to Proto-Min **-iak*, which matches perfectly the Middle Chinese unrounded 梗 *gěng* rhymes (Norman 1981: 70). The *n-* onset of Eastern Min also indicates that the etymology cannot be 掠, the other candidate, whose onset comes from Proto-Min **l-*.

Summing up all the evidence above, 搨 ‘to press, to hold, to catch’ seems to be the best candidate for the etymology of 力 *liāh*.

4. VERB USES

The original meaning of *liāh*, ‘to catch, to hold’, is attested in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, examples are shown below:

- (1) a. 你是乜人卜力阮
lí sī mīh lāng bēh liāh góan
 2SG be what man want catch 1PL
 Want to arrest me? Who are you?⁷ (嘉靖 43.013)

b. 亞娘使-小七天邊去力鳥都著去

a.niú sái-sió.chhit thiⁿ.pīⁿ k^hi liāh chiáu
mistress caus-sio.chhit edge.of.sky go catch bird
to tiōh k^hi
as.well must go

Mistress, I will do it even if you want me (Sió-chhit) to go beyond the horizon to catch a bird. (光緒 39.022)

c. 伊力荔枝便揆-落-來

i liāh nai.chi piān tàⁿ-lōh-lāi
3SG seize lychee conj throw-downwards-come
She took a lychee and threw it down. (順治 7.111)

The structure of example 1c is similar to the transitive constructions that we are going to talk about in Section 5, in which *liāh* will be analysed as an object marker. However, in this example, the conjunction 便 *piān*, marking the succession of two events, indicates that *liāh* should be the predicate of the first event.

Other verb uses are illustrated in 2.

(2) a. 掠我不-值半文錢

liāh góa m̄-tāt pò^a.bún.chiⁿ
consider 1SG neg-worthy half.a.penny
She thought that I was not worth half a penny. (金花女 迫姑掌羊)

b. 任伊有千-軍共万-馬,我力一-片-忠心

jīm i ū ch^hian-kun kāng
no.matter 3SG have thousand-army and
bān-má góa liāh it-p^hiàn-tiong.sim
ten.thousand-horse 1sg have one-cl-loyalty
I do not care how powerful an army he has, I have all my loyalty.
(絃管 滿天春 下)

c. 力阮情迷

liāh góan chêng-bé
caus 1SG be.passionate
That makes me passionate. (絃管 滿天春 下)

In 2a (written as 掠), *liāh* takes the meaning of a perception verb, ‘to consider as’; 2b is an antithetical pair of clauses, with 有 *ū* ‘to have’ in the first clause corresponding to our 力 *liāh* in the second. These two verbs should have similar meanings given the situation, therefore, *liāh* in this case has less of an action verb meaning, and more of a stative one: ‘to possess, to have’; In 2c, *liāh* appears as a causative verb, ‘to cause to do’.

5. TRANSITIVE OBJECT

In Southern Min of the Ming Dynasty, *liāh* has already developed into a grammatical word, with the first function of *liāh* to be noticed being the object marker of transitive constructions. *liāh* occurs formally in the following syntactic constructions as an object marker (see also Lien 2010: 46):

(3) Monotransitive constructions

(a) *liāh* + NP + V

力-媒姨 打

liāh-bôe.î

p^hah

LIAH-match-maker hit hit the match maker

(b) *liāh* + NP + V + resultative/phase compound

力-只-門 掩-上

liāh-chit-mîg

ám-siōng

LIAH-door

shut-up

shut the door up

Ditransitive constructions

liāh + NP₁ + V + (resultative/phase compound) + NP₁

力-荔枝手帕 獻 乞-我

liāh-nāi.chi.ch^hiú.p^heh

hiàn

k^hit-góa

LIAH-handkerchief.with.lychee

give

DAT-1SG

give me the handkerchief with lychee inside

As an object marker, *liāh* is deeply grammaticalised with no room for an alternative verbal analysis. First, contrary to a real verb, *liāh* is never attested with a TAM marker (I use the asterisk symbol “*” to indicate that we do not find this sequence of constituents):

- (4) a. 力-玉盞打-破-除
liāh-giōk.chóan p^hah-p^hò-a-tú
 LIAH -jade.cup hit-break-PFV
 He broke the jade cup. (嘉靖 18.020)
- b. *力-除 玉盞打-破
 **liāh-tú giōk.chóan p^hah-p^hò-a*
 LIAH-jade.cup hit-break

Second, unlike a verb, *liāh* can never be formally negated. The negation of a *liāh* construction has always the negator on the main verb:

- (5) a. 力-阮不-做人
liāh-góa m̄-chò-láng
 LIAH-1SG NEG-do-man
 They don't take me as a human being. (絃管 滿天春 下)
- b. *不-力-阮 做人
 **m̄-liāh-góa chò-láng*
 NEG- LIAH-1SG do-man

Thirdly, unlike many Sinitic languages (Chappell 2006), resumptive pronouns never occur with *liāh*. The prohibition of resumptive pronoun indicates that the marker itself is capable of taking on objects.

- (6) a. 子期 死-後力-琴-不-彈
chi.kī sí-aū liāh-kim-m̄-tóaⁿ
 Chi.Ki die-after LIAH-chinese.zither-NEG-play
 After the death of Chi Ki, he never played the zither. (道光 27.016)
- b. *子期 死-後 力-琴-不-彈-伊

**chí.kí sí-āu liāh-kím-m̄-tôaⁿ -i*
 Chi.Ki die-after LIAH-chinese.zither-NEG-play-3SG

In the following subsections, I will first examine the referentiality of *liāh*-marked objects in 5.1, and the affectedness of the verbs available for *liāh* constructions from 5.2 to 5.3.

5.1 Referentiality and definiteness

Referentiality, as defined by Li and Thompson (1989), is the fact that a noun phrase is used to *refer to an entity*. *This entity may be physical or conceptual, real or hypothetical, singular or plural*. A referential noun phrase can be definite or indefinite.

Southern Min is overwhelmingly an SVO language. However, when the object marker is used, the object itself must be preposed. Such construction is often referred to as the ‘disposal construction’ in the Sinitic tradition, and a great deal of accounts have been put forward for Standard Mandarin and other Chinese dialects.

In Standard Mandarin, for instance, the disposal construction in 把 *bǎ* is used with strict semantic constraints. In her chapter on differential object marking in Sinitic languages, Chappell (2016) observes that preverbal objects in Standard Mandarin must be referential and affected by a highly transitive predicate (which causes a change of state or a change of location).

In Early Modern Southern Min, disposal constructions exhibit a similar pattern concerning referentiality of the object. In many a case, the object is also marked by the definite marker 只 *chit*, as shown by the examples below:

- (7) a. 力-只-寒衣 脫-幾重
liāh-chit-gôaⁿ-i t^hng-kú-tiông
 LIAH-DEF-cold.clothes take.off-several-time
 I took off several layers of my winter clothes.

b. 力-只-春 來-留滯
liāh-chit-ch^hun lâi-lâu.tè
 LIAH-DEF-spring come-let.stay
 To let this spring stay⁸.

Ten out of 62 examples of *liāh* as an object marker are attested with the definite marker 只 *chit*. In other examples, we find pronouns, person names and body parts, etc., which are most likely to be specific and referential.

Even those objects without any formal indication of referentiality can be proven to imply definite referentiality:

(8) 故意 力-鏡 打-破
kò.ì liāh-kiàⁿ p^hah-p^hòà
 deliberately LIAH-mirror hit-break
 You deliberately broke the mirror. (嘉靖 19.216)

In the episode from which example 8 is drawn, Tân-Saⁿ (陳三), who disguised himself as a mirror polisher, deliberately broke the mirror of Ngō-Niû (五娘), whom he had a crush on. In order to be able to see Ngō-Niû, he tried to frame the maidservant, Ek-Chhun (益春) with the breaking of the mirror. Driven mad, Ek-Chhun shouted at Tân-Saⁿ, “It’s you that were trifling with the expensive mirror and *it’s you that deliberately broke the mirror!*”

Given the situation, it is obvious that 鏡 *kiàⁿ*, even though unmarked, is actually referential to the expensive mirror owned by Ngō-Niû, and broken by Tân-Saⁿ. It represents old or given information.

Examples involving a noun phrase marked by *liāh* marked by the character — *chit* ‘one’ are rare, only 7 examples are found in all the five versions of *Lì Jìng Jì*:

- (9) 力-一-鼎 打-破
liāh-chit-tiáⁿ p^hah-p^hòà
 LIAH-one?-wok hit-break
 He broke the wok. (順治 9.384)

To account for this irregularity, we have two hypotheses. First, these examples are all from the versions of the Qing dynasty, more than a hundred years later than the first version. It could be due to the evolution of the marker, for which the semantic constraints have become looser. Second, we suspect that the character 一 *chit* is a mistaken form for the homophonous definite marker 只 *chit*. We cannot determine which of the hypotheses to choose, but the rarity of 一 *chit* does not have a big enough impact on the general referential reading of the noun phrase marked with *liāh*, even if 一 *chit* is really an exception.

5.2 Affectedness Hierarchy

Before looking into the semantic roles of the objects and the verbs suitable for *liāh* constructions, it is worthwhile to introduce Tsunoda (1985)'s AFFECTEDNESS HIERARCHY which deals with transitive verb types. In this paper, we adapt a simplified version of the Hierarchy, presented in the following table:

Table 1: Affectedness Hierarchy

1		2	3	4	5	6	7
Direct effect on object		Perception	Pursuit	Knowledge	Feeling	Relationship	Ability
1a	1b						
Resultative	Non-resultative						
打破 <i>p^hah,p^hòà</i> 'break'	打 <i>p^hah</i> 'hit'	看 <i>k^hòàⁿ</i> 'look at'	等 <i>tán</i> 'wait'	記得 <i>ki.tit</i> 'remember'	畏 <i>ùi</i> 'be afraid'	有 <i>ū</i> 'have'	肴 <i>gáu</i> 'be good at'

In the hierarchy, the leftmost type of verb, having a direct affect on object, tends to have an argument that is most likely to be marked as patient (if the language in question does mark the patient). The degree of patient-likeness decreases as the hierarchy goes rightwards. Therefore, if we consider

the Mandarin case, we can easily find that only the resultative verb (Type 1a), implying a change of state on the patient, is suitable for the disposal *bǎ* construction. In the following subsections, I will discuss the case of Early Modern Southern Min.

5.3 Patient

5.3.1 Proto-typical patient

Type 1a verbs (resultative verbs) in Earlier Southern Min often involve a second resultative element such as 破 *phò* ‘break’ or 上 *siōng* ‘up’, etc; others might not have any additional element, and can only be identified through their semantic context.

We have already seen examples of the prototypical patient marked with *liāh* in 8 and 9 with the resultative transitive verb 打破 *phah phò*. More examples are provided in 10.

- (10) a. 且力-只-門掩-上
ch^hia liāh-chit-m̄ng am-siōng
 CONJ-PATIENT-door shut-up
 So I shut the door. (嘉靖 28.021)
- b. 阮來三哥力-火點-光光只-處暍
góan.lái saⁿ-ko liāh-hóe tiám-kng.kng chit-ch^hù
 turn.out Saⁿ-Ko PATIENT-fire kindle-bright DEM-place
k^hùn
 sleep
 It turns out that San-Ko lit the candle and slept there. (嘉靖 29.023)
- c. 益春力-鋪陳收-起
ek-ch^hun liāh-p^ho.tín siu-k^hi
 Ek-Chhun PATIENT-bed.clothes pack-up
 Ek-Chhun, pack up the bed clothes. (道光 31.064)

5.3.2 Non-resultative patient

Type 1b verbs (non-resultative verbs) do not necessarily cause a change of state in the patient. Examples include:

- (11) a. 你力-媒姨打是乜道理
lí liāh-bôe.î p^hah sī mih
 2SG N.R.PATIENT-match-maker hit be what
tō.lí
 reason
 Why did you hit the match maker? (嘉靖 14.254-55)
- b. 煩你力-書收
hōan lí liāh-chu siu
 please 2SG N.R.PATIENT-letter receive
 Please take this letter. (嘉靖 25.225)
- c. 力-君來攬
liāh-kun lâi-lám
 N.R.PATIENT-2SG come.embrace
 Let me embrace you. (嘉靖 48.088)

Such constructions are ungrammatical in Standard Mandarin (at least for the author), while well attested in Earlier Southern Min.

5.3.3 Ditransitive constructions

Ditransitive constructions can also be marked by *liāh*, illustrated by the sentences below:

- (12) a. 你力-荔枝手帕獻乞-我做-乜
lí liāh-nāi.chi.ch^hú.p^hè hiàn k^hit-góa
 2SG PATIENT-handkerchief.with.lychee give DAT-1SG
chō-mih
 do-what
 Why did you give me the handkerchief with the lychee inside? (道光 22.202)
- b. 力-拙-恩愛全頭共-伊細說
liāh-choat-un.ài chōan.t^hâu kāng-i

PATIENT-DEM-love from.the.beginning DAT-3SG
sè-seh
 carefully-say
 Tell her carefully about this love right from the beginning. (嘉靖
 8.073)

5.3.4 Perception

The next category in the Hierarchy, Type 2, perception verbs, are available for *liāh* constructions. Examples are shown in 13. 13a and 13b illustrate the perception use with simple transitive verbs, and 13c is somewhat structurally ambiguous, in which 力 *liāh* can be understood as the predicate, or alternatively, a grammatical word marking the observed object, 有心 *iú.sim* ‘care’, while 做 *chòe* ‘make’ being the predicate. Following the latter analysis, the construction can be termed a *double-object perception construction*.

- (13) a. 力-我不-撇采
liāh-góa m̄-ch^hiu-ch^hái
 PERCEPT-1SG NEG-take.notice
 She ignores me. (順治 15.346)
- b. 且 力-只-水影 來照看
ch^híá liāh-chit-chúí.iáⁿ lâi chiò.k^hòan
 CONJ PERCEPT-DEM-reflection to look.at
 Let me look at my own reflection in the water. (絃管 百花賽錦)
- c. 力-伊有心做無心
liāh-i iú.sim chòe bô.sim
 PERCEPT-3SG care make heartlessness
 To (mistakenly) regard his care as heartlessness. (嘉靖 18.010)

5.3.5 VO Constructions

liāh constructions, with an OV word order, can go back to their VO versions without changing the semantics (but not *vice versa*).

In Episode 24 of *Li Jing jì*, in a moonlit night, Tân-Saⁿ went to Ngō-Niû’s garden, but hesitated about going in. He started making noises, in the

hope that Ngō-Niū would hear him. Ngō-Niū did hear the noises, and asked Ek-Chhun, her maidservant if someone was outside. Ek-Chhun thought it was just a cuckoo, and this caused Ngō-Niū to fall into melancholy: spring-time was too short, and even a cuckoo sang sad songs about it. Ek-Chhun asked Ngō-Niū if she was able to let springtime stay, and Ngō-Niū felt powerless to help. The question, uttered by Ek-Chhun, is in 14a, with a *liāh* construction. What Ngō-Niū answered about it is in 14b, with the same meaning, but using the VO construction.

- (14) a. 啞娘 今 有 乜 計 力-只-春來-留滯
a.niū taⁿ ũ mih kè liāh-chit-ch^hun
 mistress now have what solution PATEINT-DEF-spring
lâi-lâu.tè
 come-let.stay
 Mistress, have you got any idea how to let springtime stay? (嘉靖 24.088)
- b. 愛卜 共-伊人 留春 想 都 無 計
ài.beh kāng-i.lāng lâu ch^hun siūⁿ to
 want BEN-3SG let.stay spring think even
bō kè
 not.existent solution
 I want to let springtime stay, but I know it is impossible. (嘉靖 24.089)

Other VO constructions with Type 1 and 2 verbs are listed below.

- (15) a. 你 俥年卜 打破-阮-鏡
lí chai.ní bēh p^hah.p^hó-a-góan-kiàⁿ
 2SG how.come want hit.break-1PL-mirror
 Why did you break my mirror? (嘉靖 19.282)
- b. 不-惜-福 句卜 打-人
m̄-sioh-hok koh bēh p^hah-lāng
 NEG-cherish-happiness still want hit-person
 You not only don't cherish your good luck, but also want to hit people. (順治 19.133)

c. 看許-樓上 娘仔 搵-乜-落-來
kʰòɑⁿ hit-lâu.siông niú.á taⁿ-mih-lōh-laí
 look DEM-building-up girl throw-what-downwards-come
 See what the girl from upstairs threw down. (嘉靖 17.106)

d. 請入-內食-些兒-茶飯
chʰiáⁿ jīp-lāi chiāh-kóa.jī-tê.pīng
 please enter-inside eat-some-tea.food
 Please come in and have a meal. (嘉靖 14.203)

e. 看日落在-天邊
kʰòɑⁿ jīt.lōh chāi-tīⁿ.pīⁿ
 look sunset LOC-edge.of.sky
 Watching the sun setting down on the horizon. (嘉靖 4.206)

We can see that the referentiality constraint is not applicable for VO constructions, as 15b, 15c and 15d show.

liāh is never found with verb types lower than Type 2 in the Hierarchy, only VO constructions are permitted in these cases:

(16) a. **Pursuit**
 須等-鳳凰來宿
su tán-hōng.hōng lai siok
 must await-phoenix come dwell
 Must wait for a phoenix to come and live here. (嘉靖 26.061)

b. **Knowledge**
 那畏後去 祿-記得-小妹
nā ùi āu.kʰì bē-kì.tit-sió.mōe
 that be.afraid after NEG-remember-little.girl
 I'm afraid that you won't remember me. (嘉靖 23.044)

c. **Feeling**
 又畏-伊-爹媽
iū ùi-i-tia.ma
 then be.afraid-3SG-parents
 But she is afraid of her parents. (嘉靖 28.065)

d. Possession

伊-娘 有-一个-照身寶鏡
i-niû ũ-chit.ê-chiò.sin.pó.kiàⁿ
 1SG-mistress **have**-one-expensive.mirror
 Her mistress has an expensive mirror. (嘉靖 18.096)

e. Ability

人客 即是 肴-說話
lângk.heh chiah.sī gâu-seh.ōe
 guest really **be.good.at**-talking
 You are really eloquent. (順治 9.094)

5.3.6 Interim summary

As an object marker, I have shown *liāh* is compatible with transitive verbs having a direct effect on object and perception verbs, which occupy the first and second slots of the Affectedness Hierarchy. See Table 2 for a better view of its distribution:

Table 2: *liāh* Constructions in Affectedness Hierarchy

1		2	3	4	5	6	7
Direct effect on object		Perception	Pursuit	Knowledge	Feeling	Relationship	Ability
1a	1b						
Resultative	Non-resultative						
打破 <i>p'ah.p'òà</i> 'break'	打 <i>p'ah</i> 'hit'	看 <i>k'òàⁿ</i> 'look at'	等 <i>tán</i> 'wait'	記得 <i>kì.tit</i> 'remember'	畏 <i>ùi</i> 'be afraid'	有 <i>ũ</i> 'have'	肴 <i>gâu</i> 'be good at'

6. INSTRUMENTAL

Early Modern Southern Min also uses *liāh* to mark the instrument. This construction resembles a serial verb construction, and may be interpreted alternatively as a serial verb construction, as Lien (2002) suggests. See 17 for an example.

- (17) 不免 力-扇連-面-遮-除
m̄.bián liāh-siⁿ liān-bīn-chia-tú
 inevitably INSTR-fan whole-face-cover-PFV

She inevitably cover her face with a fan. (絃管 滿天春 上)

liāh not only marks real instruments, but is also a marker of instrumental noun phrases denoting means or manner, which are generally abstract nouns and cannot be held by the hand. This is illustrated in 18.

- (18) a. 再 力-金蓮步 行進
chai liāh-kim.liân.pō hêng.chìn
 then INSTR-female.trotting.manner walk
 And then, she walks in a female manner. (絃管 郭華買胭脂)
- b. 又 力-言語 來-氣-阮
iū liāh-giân.gí lâi-k^hi-góan
 CONJ INSTR -speech to-irritate-1SG
 And he irritated me with bad words. (絃管 深林邊、招商店)
- c. 力-只-醜事 相-侷譬
liāh-chit-ch^hiú.sū sio-lún.p^hi
 INSTR-DEM-scandal DETRAN-compare
 To compare that with this scandal (絃管 蒙正冒雪歸窯)

As Givón (1995: 27) notices, noun phrases marked with instrumental *liāh* are *characteristically indefinite, non-referential and non-topical*, which is totally the reverse case of the patient marker *liāh*. Examples like 18c with the definite marker are not many.

In 19 below, we have an antithetical pair of sentences with the general instrumental marker 用 *ēng*⁹ corresponding to *liāh* in the second. This example confirms the instrumental use of *liāh*.

- (19) 莫-閑-苦痛 枉 奔波, 莫-力-青春 空 煩惱
bōk-ēng-k^hó.t^hiàⁿ óng p^hun.p^ho
 PROH-INSTR-pain vainly toil
bōk-liāh-ch^heng.ch^hun k^hang hóan.ló
 PROH-INSTR-youth vainly worry

Stop toiling with pain in vain, don't waste away your bloom of youth with sadness. (同窓琴書記 仙伯遊春)

7. SUMMARY OF THE FUNCTIONS

A summary of the functions of *liāh* is provided in Table 3¹⁰ below.

Table 3: Functions of *liāh* and their proportions

	Verb (to catch)	Verb (causative)	Verb (stative)	Verb (consider as)	Object (patient)	Object (Perception)	Instrument
JJ (98)	28/33 (28.6%/33.7%)	0/10 (0%/10.2%)	0	0	51/63 (52%/64.3%)	2/5 (2%/5.1%)	1/5 (1%/5.1%)
WL (48)	18/21 (37.5%/43.8%)	0/3 (0%/6.3%)	0	3/3 (0.1%/0.1%)	15/21 (31.3%/43.8%)	4/4 (8.3%/8.3%)	2/2 (4.1%/4.1%)
SZ (125)	43/49 (34.4%/39.2%)	1/13 (0.8%/10.4%)	0	0	56/74 (44.8%/59.2%)	2/2 (1.6%/1.6%)	4/6 (3.2%/4.8%)
DG (67)	10/13 (14.9%/19.4%)	0/10 (0%/14.9%)	0	0	36/51 (53.7%/76.1%)	4/4 (6%/6%)	2/5 (3%/7.5%)
GX (102)	40/47 (39.2%/46.1%)	0/11 (0%/10.8%)	0	0	36/56 (35.3%/54.9%)	4/5 (3.9%/4.9%)	1/5 (1%/4.9%)
JS (27)	2/2 (7.4%/7.4%)	0/1 (0%/3.7%)	0	9/9 (33.3%/33.3%)	12/13 (44.4%/48.2%)	1/1 (3.7%/3.7%)	1/1 (3.7%/3.7%)
TC (20)	1/1 (5.00%/5.00%)	0	0	1/1 (5%/5%)	15/15 (75%/75%)	2/2 (10%/10%)	1/1 (5%/5%)

The first five rows show the data of different versions of *Lì Jīng Jì* in their chronological order. The last three lines are those of the other resources, also chronologically ordered. The grey-coloured rows are texts using 掠 as *liāh*.

The data listed in the table above are not directly usable without the following precisions:

- 1) The sample size of *liāh* is relatively small for a detailed and significant statistic analysis. Resources with total *liāh* counts lower than 70 are to be treated with caution.
- 2) We are not including the data of van der Loon (1992), as in many cases, the characters are hardly recognisable or simply missing. However, examples will be cited when necessary.
- 3) Script plays with 掠 may show diactectal variance, which will be discussed later on. They are to be treated separately.

7.1 Summary of verb uses

Looking through the five versions of *Lì Jīng Jì*, we can see that the meaning 'to catch, to hold' is relatively stable, of around 30% to 40% (the

Dàoguāng version, with lower than 20%, has however only 67 occurrences of *liāh*, which is hardly significant).

Most of the causative verbs are in ambiguous constructions (c.f. Section 8), we have only one instance of pure causative use, in van der Loon (1992) (see example 2c).

The stative meaning of *liāh* is extremely uncommon, only found in van der Loon (1992) (example 2b).

The distribution of *liāh* meaning ‘to consider as’ (including the fossilised expression 掠做 *liāh.chò* ‘to consider as’), interestingly, is found to be limited to the script plays using 掠. This could indicate the early innovation of South-Western Southern Min, probably the Tiê-chiu dialect.

7.2 Summary of marker uses

From *Jiājìng* to *Guāngxù*, the patient marker use of *liāh* undergoes a slight decrease in frequency. The percentage of perception object use is low but stable, while the one in *Wànli* (another dialect) is higher than the other versions. Instrument use is not common, either, of around 5% in each version. Whether or not the phenomena observed here are related to the evolution of Southern Min will be discussed in Section 11.

8. AMBIGUOUS CONSTRUCTIONS

Ambiguity may arise due to syntactic, semantic or pragmatic properties. Whereas all types of ambiguity are included in the statistics in Table 3, in this section, I will focus on the syntactic and semantic types. Four main classes of ambiguity will be accounted for, object marker *vs* causative verb, object marker *vs* instrumental marker, object marker *vs* verb ‘to catch’ and verb ‘to catch’ *vs* instrumental marker.

8.1 Object marker *vs* Causative verb

The ambiguity between an object marker and a causative verb rises when the transitivity of the main verb can be interpreted in two ways. For instance, 閃 *siám* in 20a can be either transitive ‘to wrench’ or intransitive ‘to be wrenched’, which leads to two possible translations. 嫁 *kè* in 20b can be either ditransitive ‘to marry sb. to sb.’, or intransitive ‘be married to sb.’, the two readings both match the context semantically.

- (20) a. 力我-腰閃-一下
liāh gó-a-io siám-chit.ê
LIAH 1SG-waist wrench/be.wrenched-one.time
(a) He wrenched my waist.
(b) He caused my waist to be wrenched. (道光 10.015)
- b. 卜力仔嫁乞-林大
bēh liāh kiáⁿ kè kʰit-lím.tōa
want LIAH daughter marry - DAT-Lím.Tōa
(a) They want to marry their daughter to Lím Tōa.
(b) They want to make their daughter marry Lím Tōa. (嘉靖 14.422)

8.2 Object marker vs Instrumental marker

As in a disposal construction, the object is preposed, it gives room to add another noun phrase as direct object behind the transitive verb, which creates a new OV construction. The original object, already fronted by the marker *liāh*, can be therefore considered demoted into an oblique function. As a result, the addition of the noun phrases 哀怨 *ai.òan* ‘melancholy’ in 21a and 就裏 *chiū.lí* ‘reason’ in 21b cause alternative readings in the examples below.

- (21) a. 力只-琵琶彈-出-哀怨
liāh chit-pí.pê tōaⁿ-chʰut-ai.òan
LIAH DEM-pípa play-out-melancholy
(a) play the pípa to convey melancholy
(b) convey melancholy with the pípa (絃管 滿天春 上)

b. 力只-恩愛 從頭 共-伊說-出 拙-就裏
liāh chit-un.ài chēng.t'âu k̄ā-i
LIAH DEM-love from.the.beginning DAT-3SG
seh-ch'ut choat-chiū.lí
say-out DEM-reason
(a) Tell her all about my love from the beginning.
(b) Tell her the reason right from the beginning through my love.
(道光 22.067)

8.3 Object marker vs Verb 'to catch'

This class of ambiguity depends on the semantic interpretation of the text, and is found in ditransitive constructions.

- (22) 力我-三哥 送 到官司
liāh góa-san.ko sàng kàu-koaⁿ.si
LIAH 1SG-third.brother send to-government.office
(a) send my third brother to the government of ice
(b) arrest my third brother and send him to the government of ice.
(光緒 36.034)

The context of 22 allows the interpretation of 'to catch', we therefore cannot determine whether it is a real object marker or an action verb.

8.4 Verb 'to catch' vs Instrumental marker

The hesitation to choose between verb 'to catch' and instrumental marker is also caused by semantic properties, as 23 shows.

- (23) 力只-小扇 撲流螢
liāh chit-siò.sìn p'ok liū.êng
LIAH DEM-small.fan flick firefly
(a) take a small fan to lick the fire flies
(b) lick the fire flies with a small fan (絃管 滿天春 上)

Here, *liāh* can be interpreted either as a verb or an instrumental marker. This example is different from 17 in that the noun phrase following *liāh* is

marked with definite article 只 *chit*, which makes it less likely to be a canonical instrumental argument (c.f. Givón 1995).

9. COMPETING MARKERS

9.1 將 *chiong*

The marker 將 *chiong* can appear as an object marker as well as an instrumental marker in Early Modern Southern Min. Identical constructions of 將 *chiong* and 力 *liāh* are put together in 24, 25 (object marker) and 26 (instrumental marker), some of which come from the same texts.

According to (Lien 2002:192), the noun phrase marked by 將 *chiong* is more often than not inanimate, unlike the case of 力 *liāh*. We will see that the noun phrases marked by 將 *chiong* enjoy a larger range than those marked by 力 *liāh*, as far as semantic roles are concerned.

- (24) a. 不免將-這-鏡來-打-破
m̄.bián chiong-chiá-kiàⁿ lái-p^hah-p^hòà
 inevitably PATIENT-DEM-mirror to-hit.break
 Inevitably broke this mirror. (嘉靖 19.173)
- b. 不免力-只-鏡來-打-破
m̄.bián liāh-chit-kiàⁿ lái-p^hah-p^hòà
 inevitably PATIENT-DEM-mirror to-hit.break
 Inevitably broke this mirror. (嘉靖 19.188)
- (25) a. 將-只-禮聘送轉還-伊
chiong-chit-lé.p^hèng sàng.tng hêng-i
 PATIENT-DEM-betrothal.gift send.back return-3SG
 Send this betrothal gift back to him. (嘉靖 14.177)
- b. 你力-只-禮聘送轉去還-伊人
lí liāh-chit-lé.p^hèng sàng.tng.k^hi
 2SG PATIENT-DEM-betrothal.gift send.back
hêng-i.lâng
 return-3SG

Send this betrothal gift back to them (嘉靖 14.109)

- (26) a. 娘仔 將-手帕 包 荔枝
niú.á chiong-ch^hiú.p^hè pau nāi.chi
girl INSTR-handkerchief wrap lychee
The girl wrapped the lychee with a handkerchief. (順治 26.053)
- b. 伊 力-手帕 包 荔枝 搥-落-來
i liāh-ch^hiú.p^hè pau nāi.chi
3SG PATIENT-handkerchief wrap lychee
taⁿ-lōh-lai
throw-downwards-come
She wrapped the lychee with a handkerchief and threw it down. (嘉
靖 18.055)

將 *chiong* has also extended functions, such as marking the path in 27.

- (27) 將-門 踏入 去
chiong-m̄ng tāh jīp k^hi
PATH-door step in go
Step inside the door. (光緒 34.037)

It is an analogy of the disposal construction, with 踏入門去 *tāh jīp m̄ng k^hi* (step-in-door go) as the original construction. This example shows that 將 *chiong* enjoyed looser usage constraints than 力 *liāh*.

9.2 甲 *kap* and 共 *kāng*

甲 *kap* and 共 *kāng* are worth mentioning as they are often found in disposal constructions in Modern Southern Min (Lien 2002: 194-195), although not quite so in the Ming dynasty.

Lien (2002) summarises the functions of 甲 *kap* and 共 *kāng* in *Li Jing Ji*.

In Southern Min of Ming and Qing dynasties, 甲 *kap* and 共 *kāng* generally marked animate objects, especially human objects.

共 *kāng* appears often with dative and ablative functions that mark goal (28a) and source (28b).

- (28) a. 待我共-阮-阿娘 咀
t̃hāi góa kāng-góan-a.niú tàⁿ
 wait 1SG DAT-1SG-mistress say
 Let me tell my mistress about it. (萬曆 06.024)
- b. 值人卜共-你-討恩
t̃i.lāng bēh kāng-lí-t̃hó.un
 who want DAT-2SG-ask.favour
 Who wants to ask a favour from you? (嘉靖 22.280)
- (29) a. 甲-啞媽 討一-對-金花
kah-a.ma t̃hó chit-tùi-kim.hoe
 SOURCE-mother require one-pair-gold.flower
 Ask the mother for a pair of lowers. (嘉靖 13.114)
- b. 甲-你-鏡 打-破-除
kah-lí-kiàⁿ p̃ah-p̃hò-a-t̃i
 PATIENT-2SG-mirror hit-break-PFV
 He broke your mirror. (嘉靖 19.346)
- c. 甲-我來-賣-乞-人-飼
kah-góa lâi-bōe-k̃h̃it-lāng-ch̃h̃
 PATIENT-1SG to-sell-DAT-person-feed
 They sold me to others. (嘉靖 13.050)

10. CONTEMPORARY USE

Our contemporary data are mainly based on the database of National Tsinghua University, 台語文數位典藏 *Tâi Yūwén Shùwèi Diǎncáng*, and online dictionaries. The examples include contemporary folklores and narratives and date from 1880 up until now.

The verbal meaning ‘to catch, to hold’ of *liāh* is by far the dominant use in Contemporary Southern Min, which represents over 90% of the occurrences by my estimate.

The meaning ‘to consider as’ is retained, being fossilised with 做 *chò* and other similar verbs: 掠做 *liāh.chò* ‘to consider as’, 掠準 *liāh.chún* ‘to believe firmly’, etc.

- (30) 日本人有掠做像一款
jīt.pún.jîn *ū* *liāh.chò* *ch^hiū* *chīt.k^hóan*
 Japanese have consider.as be.like same
 Japanese people consider them as the same (pronunciation). (日本話 ê 根底 (1896))

Surprisingly, *liāh* as an object marker is extremely rare in the contemporary language. Type 1a verbs of the Affectedness Hierarchy are never found with *liāh*, and I only found one example of Type 1b verbs:

- (31) 固執 掠-我-罵 *nē* 做 伊 倒去
kò.chip *liāh-góa-mā* *nē* *chòe*
 Obstinate N.R.PATIENT-1SG-scold CONJ make
i *tó.k^hi*
 3SG return
 Obstinate scolded me and returned. (天路歷程2 (1897))

The original version, by John Bunyan, is “(but when they saw that they could not prevail), *Obstinate went railing back* (Bunyan 1684: Part I, Section I, 2.4)”, which shows that *liāh* in this case does mark the object. This example is probably amongst the last productive uses of *liāh* as an object marker.

A limited number of Type 2 verbs are in fossilised construction with *liāh*, as shown in 32.

- (32) a. 你 莫 一直 掠-我 金金 看 啦
lí *mài* *it.tīt* *liāh-góa* *kim.kim.k^hòan*
 2SG PROH always PERCEPT-1SG stare
la

PART
Stop staring at me!

b. 彼-陣仔 毋 就 掠-臭頭仔 做-皇帝 囉啦呼
hit-chūn.a m̄ chiū liāh-c^hhàu.t^hau.á
 DEM-period NEG CONJ PERCEPT-ringworm.headed.child
chòe-hông.tè lo.la.ho
 make-emperor PART
 At that time, they took that ringworm headed guy as the emperor (彰化縣民間文學集十七)

Table 4 shows the contemporary usage of *liāh* in the Affectedness Hierarchy. We can clearly see that *liāh* as a marker moves rightwards to the very end of its old range of use. In the Ming dynasty, it could match verbs of both Type 1 and 2. Later on, it marked the objects of Type 1b and 2 verbs and now it is restricted to Type 2 unproductively.

The gaps that it left in Contemporary Southern Min are filled with the generalisation of 甲 *kap*. Although 甲 *kap* usually marked human objects in the Ming dynasty, but as Chappell et al. (2011: 39) pointed out, there is no longer any semantic constraints for this marker.

Table 4: Contemporary *liāh* constructions

1		2	3	4	5	6	7
Direct effect on object		Perception	Pursuit	Knowledge	Feeling	Relationship	Ability
1a	1b						
Resultative	Non-resultative						
打破 <i>p^hah,p^hòá</i> 'break'	打 <i>p^hah</i> 'hit'	看 <i>k^hòá^h</i> 'look at'	等 <i>tán</i> 'wait'	記得 <i>ki.tit</i> 'remember'	畏 <i>ù</i> 'be afraid'	有 <i>ū</i> 'have'	看 <i>gáu</i> 'be good at'

11. DISCUSSION

11.1 The status of *liāh* in Southern Min

We have shown that *liāh* in Early Modern Southern Min was a polysemous case marker as well as a polysemous lexical verb, and that one function could be ambiguous with another. The coexistence of various functions and

different types of ambiguity suggest that *liāh* was undergoing more than one grammaticalisation pathway at that time.

The polysemy and polyfunctionality of the morpheme in question, however, reflects several principles of grammaticalisation put forward by Hopper (1991). First, it is related to the LAYERING principle (Hopper 1991: 22), which states that the emergence of new grammaticalisation layers do not imply the loss of the older ones, which instead might occur in interaction with the new layers. In Early Modern Southern Min, *liāh* was undergoing different layers of grammaticalisation at the same time; second, the PERSISTENCE principle, referring to the fact that the grammaticalised morpheme might retain traces of its original lexical meaning. Persistence explains why we have ambiguous forms wavering between the original lexical verb and a case marker. Lord (1982: 287) observes the same phenomenon with *kɛ* ‘to take/ACC’ in Gã (Benue-Kwa, West Africa), which can be interpreted as a lexical verb ‘to take’ or an object marker.

The contemporary use of *liāh* is virtually restricted to its original verb meaning. Hopper (1991) talks about DIVERGENCE, which points out that while grammaticalisation, the original form may remain as an autonomous lexical element. In Southern Min, *liāh* never lost its original meaning, which moreover seems to be the most persistent one.

11.2 Fossilisation of *liāh*

The traces of the case marker use of *liāh* are all fossilised constructions with meanings similar to ‘to consider as’. Historical resources tell us that *liāh* with this meaning is restricted to the script plays that used 掠 to represent this morpheme, that is to say, dialects in which 力 did not sound like *liāh*. As I mentioned above, I suspect the dialect using 掠 in early script plays was Tiê-chiu, or at least a South-Western variant of Southern Min. Provisionally, we can call it the 掠 *lüè*-dialects, opposed to the 力 *li*-dialects.

The fossilisation of *liāh* clearly started with the *liè*-dialects, more precisely, with the perception use of *liāh*. Of all 7 instances of perception use found in the *liè*-dialects, 6 imply the meaning of ‘to consider as’ together with the main verb. All 13 instances of lexical use meaning ‘to consider as’ are from the *liè*-dialects, with two of them combined with 做 *chò* ‘to do’.

Today, *liāh* alone cannot have the meaning ‘to consider as’, only 掠... 做 *liāh...chò* and 掠做 *liāh.chò* (and synonyms) are grammatical.

The fossilisation of *liāh* must have moved northwards during the following four centuries. It expanded to the entire Southern Min speaking region.

11.3 *Guāngxù* and Contemporary Southern Min

Although with a decreasing tendency, the *Guāngxù* (1875-1908) version of *Lì Jīng Jì* still contains the productive use of *liāh* as a case marker. However, as we discussed in Section 10, the case marker *liāh* already ceased to be productive at the end of the 19th century. The reason why *Guāngxù* still used *liāh* as a case marker is therefore not related to the natural evolution of the language, but probably to the archaism and tradition of script play writing. I will leave this field to more capable researchers.

11.4 Possible evolutionary pathways

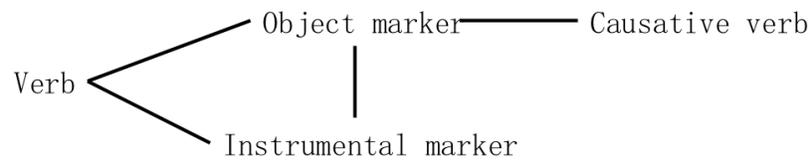
Since *Jiājìng* is the earliest text known in Southern Min, we have no clue of how exactly *liāh* transformed from a verb to a grammatical word. It is however not impossible to put forward hypothetical grammaticalisation pathways based on the data we possess, especially the ambiguous constructions.

We have listed four major types of ambiguous constructions in Section 8:

- (33)
1. Object marker vs Causative verb
 2. Object marker vs Instrumental marker
 3. Object marker vs Verb ‘to catch’
 4. Verb ‘to catch’ vs Instrumental marker

The following figure shows clearer relations between these ambiguous functions:

Figure 3: Relations between ambiguous constructions



As shown in Section 8, most of the ambiguities arise in ditransitive or double-object constructions, which suggests the grammaticalisation from an actual verb to a case marker come from older serial verb constructions, in which the first verb (*liāh* in our case) is finally reanalysed as a case marker:

$$(34) \quad S + V_1 + NP + V_2 \rightarrow S + \text{MARKER} + NP + V$$

In consequence, the reanalysis is responsible for two new constructions: a **disposal construction** parallel to OV constructions, and an **instrumental construction**.

$$(35) \quad S + V_1 + NP + V_2 \rightarrow S + \text{OBJECT MARKER} + NP + V$$

- (36) S + V₁ + NP + V₂ + (NP₂) → S + INSTRUMENTAL MARKER + NP₁ + V + (NP₂)

It would not be surprising that synchronic confusions between the object marker use and the instrumental marker use occasionally occur, as their surface structures are similar.

The instrumental construction further gives rise, possibly combining forces with the monotransitive perception object use, to the double-object perception formation, e.g. 力...做 (*liāh* + NP₁ + *chò* + NP₂, see example 13c).

These pathways are by no means strange as far as Sinitic languages are concerned. Peyraube (1989,1996) discusses the same processes in Medieval Chinese, in which the two serial verb constructions, ‘V₁+NP+V₂’ and ‘V₁+NP₁+V₂+NP₂’, developed into disposal and instrumental constructions respectively.

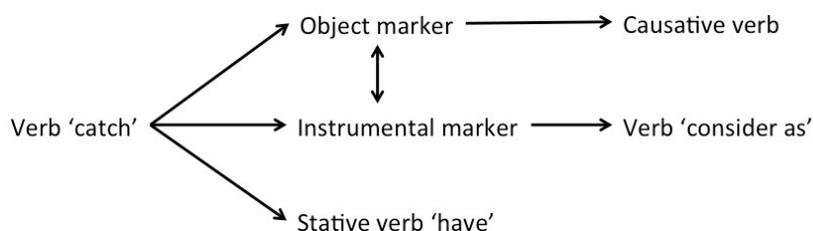
The causative verb is found ambiguous with the object marker only. Chappell (1992) states that the Mandarin disposal marker, 把 *bǎ*, can be conceptually analysed as denoting a causal relationship between an event and an ensuing state of affairs. It is not unclear that many an example of disposal *liāh* can opt for a causative reading, especially with a resultative verb, such as 打破 *p^hah.p^hò* ‘to break’ (see example 15a). Therefore, the causative verb use of *liāh* may well have developed from its transitive object use.

The stative use of *liāh* is only found in one example in the entire database (2b). It should have developed from the original verb meaning of the word, while failed to join the common usages.

The dialectal verb use of *liāh* (*lüè*-dialects) is fossilised from double-object perception constructions by combining *liāh* with the main verb,

as discussed in the previous subsection. Summing up, we can represent the hypothetical evolution of *liāh* with the figure below:

Figure 4: Hypothetical evolution of *liāh*



11.5 What next?

Thanks to script plays from the Ming and Qing dynasties, we have been able to find productive uses of 力 *liāh* as a grammatical marker, which is completely extinct today. Nevertheless, the original verb use of 力 *liāh* is preserved in the contemporary language. It might be intuitive that newly emerged functions outlast older ones, the story of 力 *liāh* gives us a counter-example, its marker uses lost in the competition with other markers, and its oldest function persists until today.

Several tasks are to be completed for further studies.

Most of the elaborated works today on Southern Min concern the variants within Taiwan (which is a sad fact) and efforts on exploring and documenting Southern Min dialects in Fujian have not gone enough. Fieldwork in even the smallest villages in the territory of the homeland of Southern Min should definitely be done. We may find more information about *liāh* and even more insightful facts about the language there.

Comparative studies between *lüè*-dialects and *li*-dialects must be put forward. The syntactic and lexical differences may amount to a considerable number concerning the dialectology of Early Modern Southern Min.

We should also look into other Sinitic languages, as well as languages around the world, in order to see how Early Southern Min studies can contribute to linguistic typology.

ABBREVIATIONS

1SG	first person singular	INSTR	instrumental
1PL	first person plural	LOC	locative
2SG	second person singular	NEG	negative
3SG	third person singular	N.R.PATIENT	patient of non-resultative verbs
3PL	third person plural	OBJ	object
BEN	benefactive	PATH	path
CAUS	causative	PATIENT	patient
CL	classifier	PERCEPT	perception
CONJ	conjunction	PFV	perfective
DAT	dative	PROH	prohibitive
DEF	definite	PART	particle
DEM	demonstrative	SOURCE	source
DETRAN	detransitive		

NOTES

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² c.f. The Southern Min spoken in the Ming Dynasty. The main resource we refer to is the 嘉靖 *Jiā Jīng* version of 荔鏡記 *Lì Jīng Jì*, which dates to the 16th century (Wú 2001a).

³ In *Jiājìng* 5.025, we also attest an example of 体 *thóit*, which is said by Lim-Tōa, a character of Tiê-chiu origin.

⁴ 按也, 從手弱聲 *àn yě, cóng shǒu ruò shēng* ‘To press, its meaning follows the ‘hand’ part (手) and its pronunciation follows the ‘weak’ part (弱).’

⁵ 持也 *chíyě* ‘to hold’; 捉搦又正也 *zhuō nuò yòu zhèng yě* ‘to catch, or to straighten’

⁶ 搦猶捉也。此今義、非古義也。 *nuò yóu zhuō yě. cǐ jīn yì, fēi gǔ yì yě.*
‘搦 means to catch. This is a recent meaning, not an archaic one.’

⁷ In this case, 阮 *góan* ‘1PL’ is in its singular use.

⁸ We will see in Section 8 that this example can also be interpreted as a causative construction, while it would better be understood as a disposal one, according to the context (c.f. Example 14a)

⁹ I accept Wú (2003: 19)'s reading that the character 閑 *ēng* 'spare time' is mistaken and that 用 *ēng* 'to use,' should be the right word.

¹⁰ The numerator indicates non-ambiguous counts of each function, and the denominator the total counts. The corresponding percentages are indicated within parentheses. Resource abbreviations: JJ: *Jiājìng* version of *Lì Jìng Jì*; WL: *Wànlì* version of *Lì Jìng Jì*; SZ: *Shùnzhi* version of *Lì Jìng Jì*; DG: *Dàoguāng* version of *Lì Jìng Jì*; GX: *Guāngxù* version of *Lì Jìng Jì*; JS: *Jīnhuānǚ* and *Sūliùniáng*; TC: *Tóngchuāng Qínshū Jì*. Total counts of *liāh* are parenthesised behind the names of the resources.

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早期閩南語中“力 *liāh*”字之多重功能及其現代命運

賴雲帆

巴黎第三大學

提要

本文立足于明清閩南語文獻研究近代閩南語「力」*liāh* 的多重功能以及引致其多義性之語法化路徑。在早期閩南語中，力 *liāh* 既是表“捉、拿”的動詞，亦是一個多功能的格標記。然而在當代閩南語中，力 *liāh* 的動詞功能尤為顯著，其格標記用法則幾乎喪失能產性。研究力 *liāh* 的歷史可為語言類型學提供有用的材料。

關鍵詞

早期閩南語 荔鏡記 賓語標記 語法化 受動性等第