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From verb of saying to discourse marker in Southern Min: (Inter)subjectification and grammaticalization

Hilary Chappell

Abstract

The main topic of this paper is the clause-final discourse marker *kong^l* 講 in Taiwanese Southern Min, a Sinitic language. This marker is compatible with several construction types, each of which expresses a distinct type of modality. Differing in terms of syntax and prosody, these constructions code assertions, suggestions, warnings and rebuttals. Discourse data are used to describe the semantic, pragmatic and structural features of each construction. The marker *kong^l* 講 is also examined in terms of its pathway of grammaticalization from its lexical source, a verb of saying, and with respect to the notions of subjectivity and intersubjectivity. The grammaticalization of ‘say’ verbs into discourse markers is briefly illustrated for several other Sinitic languages.

1. Introduction

The present analysis concentrates on a grammaticalization pathway for ‘say’ verbs whereby they develop a modal use as discourse markers in clause-final position. The main focus is on the verb *kong^l* 講 ‘say’ in Southern Min, with brief references to ‘say’ verbs in several other Sinitic languages. It will be argued that a range of different intersubjective inferences is possible, depending on the modality of the given syntactic construction. Four types of construction are discerned on the basis of syntactic form, intonation and pragmatic meaning. These are assertions, suggestions, warnings and rebuttals. All involve some kind of correction or challenging of a presupposition on the part of the speaker.

1.1. Subjectivity and intersubjectivity

In this analysis, we adopt the definition of subjectivity posited by Lyons (1982: 102) and further developed by Traugott (2007, 2010) mainly in relation to grammaticalization, but also in its relation to intersubjectivity. Subjectivity is essentially considered to be speaker-oriented in its reference to mechanisms which express speakers’ attitudes, viewpoints and their evaluation of a situation,

whereas intersubjectivity refers to addressee-oriented expressions reflecting the speaker's attention to the addressee and his or her self-image (Traugott and Dasher 2002: 20–22; Traugott 2010).

However, Traugott (2007, 2010) has defined intersubjectivity in a narrower manner than it will be in this analysis, limiting it mainly to social deixis and considerations of “face”, in which pragmatic meanings inferrable from the context have been “semanticized” (or “intersubjectified”) and become formally coded. This is adeptly exemplified by the use of honorifics and verbal forms appropriate for polite speech levels in Japanese. Included under this concept are also discourse markers, interjections and illocutionary types such as tag questions and imperatives (Traugott 2007: 303, 2010: 37).¹

In this paper, I adopt a broader view on the notion of intersubjectivity as being intrinsic to the communicative process, whereby pragmatic features of context that provide the conditions of use for a particular syntactic structure are necessarily coded as part of the constructional meaning. This approach is more aligned with that of Benveniste (1958: 258–266), who saw this special property of language as being of primary importance in enabling linguistic communication to take place.

Hence, intersubjectivity can be related more broadly to linguistic mechanisms which code many different kinds of interaction between the speaker and the addressee, through the speaker's attribution of subjectivity to the other interlocutor. As aptly explained by Fitzmaurice (2004: 429), the same resources used for the speaker's rhetorical self-positioning (modal verbs, parentheticals, mental verbs and their complements, etc.) may be “marshaled for the speaker's rhetorical reconstruction of the interlocutor's perspective or attitude. In pragmatic terms, intersubjectivity has to do with the representation of speaker stance as addressee stance”.²

1.2. Mood, modality and Sinitic languages

In Sinitic languages, there are no morphological distinctions for mood in terms of the classic definition, which involves marking by verbal inflection (see Chappell and Peyraube, *forthc.*). The traditional categories of mood can, however, be

1 In Traugott (2003: 128), however, a more elaborated view of intersubjectivity is proposed as having two facets: (i) the epistemic one of the speaker's attention to the presumed attitudes of the addressee toward the content of communication and (ii) the social one of paying attention to the face needs of the addressee. This approach is somewhat closer to the definition adopted here.

2 The term “stance” refers to the social construction of meaning, including the expression of the viewpoints, commitment and beliefs of interlocutors. It is a term frequently used in research analyzing discourse data, spoken and written.

structurally distinguished, for example, through the grammatical patterns which code the four basic, prototype moods of the declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamative. In this paper, terms such as “imperative mood” are thus used to refer to entire syntactic configurations in Sinitic languages which serve to express this kind of constructional meaning. In contrast to this, the term “modality” refers more broadly to any linguistic mechanism used to code semantic and pragmatic values, the three main types being epistemic, deontic and dynamic.

The expression of modality consequently encompasses a large number of grammatical categories including modal auxiliary verbs (*can, must*), sentential adverbs (*apparently, of course*), ossified phrases from which parentheticals develop (*I think, you know*), clause-final particles that function as discourse markers and even special prosodies such as a final high rising question intonation on declaratives in certain varieties of English. Although not the only ones, mood and modality are hence important vehicles through which subjectivity and intersubjectivity are manifested.

1.3. A note on Sinitic languages in China

The most prominent member of the Sinitic languages (Sino-Tibetan) is undoubtedly Mandarin or Standard Chinese, known as *pǔtōnghuà* 普通話 ‘the common language’ in China. Notwithstanding this, the present analysis is principally concerned with the development of a discourse marker in a Sinitic language which is not a variety of Mandarin, specifically, the variety of Southern Min spoken in Taiwan. Southern Min dialects may be more familiar to westerners under the appellation of “Hokkien”. They are not mutually intelligible with Standard Mandarin in their oral register.³

2. Clause-final uses of ‘say’ verbs as discourse markers in Sinitic

In an earlier study of the reanalysis of ‘say’ verbs as complementizers in Sinitic serial verb constructions (Chappell 2008), I argued that the colloquial varieties of Taiwanese Southern Min and Beijing Mandarin have already reached an advanced stage of grammaticalization. I also argued that several different

3 Taiwanese Southern Min is closely related to the Xiamen 厦门话, Quanzhou 泉州话 and Zhangzhou 漳州话 dialects of Southern Min spoken just across the Taiwan Strait in Fujian Province on the mainland of China. The relationship is due to migration from these areas in Southern Fujian, which began in the late Ming dynasty (1368–1644).

outcomes of grammaticalization can be identified for ‘say’ verbs, including hearsay evidential markers, topic and conditional markers, in addition to the formation of other kinds of composite conjunctions expressing purpose, consequence and concession.

Discourse markers, generally known under the name of *yǔqìcí* 語氣詞 ‘rhetorical/sentence-final particles’ in Chinese linguistics, serve to express the illocutionary force associated with different kinds of speech acts including admonitions, orders, suggestions, threats, compliments and warnings.⁴ In Sinitic languages, they are principally found in clause-initial and clause-final position, that is, on the left and right periphery of the clause, in preference to the clause-medial position (see Huang 2000 for Chinese languages; Traugott 2007 on cross-linguistic correlates). They serve as major markers of mood and modality to build questions, warnings, directives and hortatives, not to mention even more subtle functions that have not always been recognized as solid modal types – coded by miratives, counter-expectation and hearsay markers.

In this analysis, the focus is on clause-final discourse markers that are the outcome of grammaticalization, subjectification and intersubjectification of verbs of saying. In the present section, I provide a brief overview of ‘say’ verbs in several Sinitic languages which have grammaticalized into clause-final discourse markers, illustrating this phenomenon with both historical and contemporary data from Hakka, Hong Kong Cantonese and Shanghai Wu. While the most highly grammaticalized and generalized sentence-final particles are well-described for Standard Mandarin and other major Chinese languages, little is known about those derived from ‘say’ verbs in Sinitic. In the subsequent sections, I focus on clause-final *kong*¹ 講 in Southern Min, which is used to express assertions, as well as suggestions, warnings and rebuttals in different syntactic constructions.

In Sinitic languages, there is a variety of different construction types formed by the use of a clause-final discourse marker derived from a ‘say’ verb, which determines the modality of the entire construction. Once grammaticalized, the discourse marker takes scope over a new construction which may code evidentiality or epistemic modality, form an echo question prompting the addressee to repeat earlier information or code a mirative meaning in

4 The notion of “illocutionary force” is subsumed under the broader notion of “modality” in the framework used in this paper. The terms may sometimes be used interchangeably in the present article, but only where this does not lead to any ambiguity. Illocutionary force, needless to say, is irrevocably linked with speech act theory, specifically, the speaker’s intention in pronouncing an utterance, whereas modality is a more general term, referring to a semantic subfield of the wider domain of qualificational categories and is on a par with tense and aspect (see Nuyts, *forthc.*).

combination with other elements of the clause. Several illustrative examples are provided below from a variety of Sinitic languages.⁵

In (1), from Sin-on Hakka, the speaker warns the addressee of the possibility that someone might take revenge on them if they engage in the act of mocking, overall a kind of epistemic modality. In (2), the Meixian Hakka example shows a hearsay evidential use of a ‘say’ DM, coding that it would be unwise to eat a certain kind of food.

(1) Sin-on dialect of Hakka

你唔好給佢,佢嚟報口仇話...

ngi²m¹ hau³ thoi⁴ ki², ki² woi⁴ pau⁴ nya¹ šu²
 2SG NEG.IMP mock 3SG 3SG will take 2.POSS revenge
wa⁴...

PRT_{WRNG<SAY}

‘Don’t mock him, or else he might revenge himself on you...’

(Chappell and Lamarre 2005: 132)

(2) Meixian dialect of Hakka

食裏嚟頭哪痛話.

chĩt ê voé t’eoûnâ t’oung và
 eat PRT.NOM will head ache PRT_{EVD<SAY}

‘Apparently, eating it gives you a headache.’

(Rey 1988 [1926]: xxvii)⁶

In the Cantonese example in (3), an echo question is formed by the discourse marker *wa⁵ < wa⁶* 話 ‘say’ found in the clause-final position of speaker V’s turn. Speaker V asks the interlocutor to repeat information she has missed regarding the price of a barbecue grill, which was however stated earlier in the conversation (discussion and more examples can be found in Chui 1994, Matthews and Yip 2011: 367–369 and Kwok 1984).

(3) Hong Kong Cantonese

K: *yiga jikhai giu nei lo BBQ yatbak man jeK.*
 now that.is ask 2SG pay BBQ 100 dollar PRT

5 Unless indicated otherwise, the examples in this paper are from Southern Min. Examples without any details on the source have been taken from my own set of data. Apart from Lien (1988), all other examples have been glossed, translated and in some cases, transcribed, by the present author.

6 The discourse markers *và* and *wa⁴* represent the pronunciation of ‘say’ using different transcription systems. They refer nonetheless to the same clause-final discourse marker in Hakka.

‘That is, (we’re) now asking you to pay one hundred dollars for the BBQ.’

[59 turn takings later]

V: Winnie a go BBQ geido chin wa⁵?
Winnie PRT that BBQ how.much money PRT_{ECHO<SAY}
‘Winnie, how much (should I pay for) that BBQ, as you said?’
(Chui 1994: 5–6)

Two further clause-final markers in Hong Kong Cantonese code, respectively, reported speech and surprise. The first marker, *wóh* 嘢 (low rising tone), can be used to signal reported speech and acts as a device for disclaiming responsibility (Kwok 1984: 67–69, 104–105). In (4), the speaker reports that a certain film is worth seeing. The second marker, *wo* (mid-level tone), which functions as a mirative (Matthews 1998; Wang 2013), is illustrated in (5): a TV interviewer shows surprise at how tealeaves quickly change color after being soaked in hot water.

(4) Hong Kong Cantonese

幾好睇嘅嘢。

gēi hóu tái ge wóh.
quite good see PRT.ASST PRT_{EVD<SAY}
‘(I’m) told it’s quite good.’
(Kwok 1984: 67)

(5) Hong Kong Cantonese

同埋啲顏色唔同嘅嘢。

Tùhng-màaih dī ngàahnsīk m̀h t̀hng-jó wo.
and CL.PL color NEG same-PFV PRT_{MIR<SAY}
‘And the colors are not the same!’

(Line 132, *The Art of Tea Appreciation*, author’s recording and transcription of interview broadcast on TVB Jade, Hong Kong)

These two discourse markers, *wo* and *wóh*, possibly derive from a combination of the verb *wáh* 話 (= *wa⁶*) ‘say’ in Cantonese with the sentence-final particle *a¹* 啊 (Chao 1947: 121), again with tone sandhi taking place on what are its more grammaticalized uses.

The Meixian Hakka imperative usage in (6) appears to share, with Cantonese echo questions as in (3), the semantic feature of repetition of an utterance. However, unlike Hakka *và* 話 < ‘say’, Cantonese *wa⁵* is only found in information questions, and not in imperatives (Chui 1994). The Hakka imperative in (6) acts as a prompt, as in the context of a doctor’s surgery.

(6) Meixian Hakka

舌麻拉出來話。

chăt mâ lâ tch'out lô vâ.
tongue NOM pull out come PRT_{SAY}
'Just stick out your tongue (I said).'
(Rey 1988 [1926]: xxvii)

In a study on mirativity in southeastern Sinitic languages, Wang (2013) discusses a variety of 'say' verbs for the Wu dialect group, including *jiào* 叫, *huà* 话, *dào* 道 or *jiǎng* 讲, which form composite discourse markers.⁷ These develop from reported speech and hearsay markers into miratives expressing surprise. Most markers can occur freely in either clause-initial or clause-final position as well as between the subject and predicate. Nonetheless, overall, clause-final position appears to be the position most clearly favored for the grammaticalized mirative use. For example, in the Shanghai Wu dialect, for *ɦi*⁵²-*kã*²¹ 伊讲 < '3SG speak', only the clause-final position is available for this function. In (7), the first occurrence of this phrase in clause-initial position expresses the original lexical meaning, and the clause-final occurrence the mirative meaning. These uses are further distinguished by tone sandhi, which occurs only on the more grammaticalized mirative form with respect to the third person singular pronoun: *ɦi*¹³ > *ɦi*⁵².

(7) Shanghai Wu

伊讲伊戇伊讲!

*ɦi*¹³ *kã*⁴⁴ *ɦi*¹³ *gã*¹³ *ɦi*⁵²-*kã*²¹!
3SG say 3SG stupid PRT_{MIR<3SG SAY}
'S/he even said he's really stupid!' (Wang 2013: 114)

Hence, the construction type determines which modality or, more precisely, which illocutionary force is coded by these clause-final discourse markers derived from 'say' verbs: a warning, a hearsay evidential, a request to repeat information, a prompt, or a mirative meaning.

Similarly, in Taiwanese Southern Min, several constructions can be distinguished which use a clause-final discourse marker *kong*¹ 講, based on the main verb of saying. I will propose that *kong*¹ 講 is a truncated version of the postposed quotative index, '1SG say', and that it has undergone semantic and

7 For the convenience of quoting, the Mandarin romanization is given here for these 'say' verbs, lacking in many cases the IPA transcription in the article by Wang (2013).

pragmatic change from a quotative index to a discourse marker coding at least four different modalities, according to the construction type in which it occurs. In Section 3, I examine and discuss data from Taiwanese Southern Min and attempt to account for the semantic, pragmatic and discourse features of *kong^l* 講. In Section 4, its development is examined. Section 5 presents the conclusion.

3. Semantic, pragmatic and discourse features of clause-final *kong^l* in Taiwanese Southern Min

The discourse marker *kong^l* is found at the end of an intonation group in clause-final position with the polysemous function of expressing assertions, warnings, suggestions or rebuttals.⁸

The frequency of *kong^l* as a clause-final discourse marker tends to be low in the various colloquial databases consulted,⁹ even though it is well illustrated and described in several earlier studies on this and other markers in Southern Min. These include Lien (1988: 226–227), Cheng (1997 [1991]), Liu (1996), Hwang (1998), Chang (1998) and Tseng (2008), who all treat *kong^l* as belonging to the paradigm of sentence-final modal particles in Southern Min.

In this study, I refer principally to examples from the computerized database of contemporary Southern Min materials (National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan) as well as from several smaller corpora of conversational data including those assembled in Liu (1996), Chang (1998), Tseng (2008) and my own. These extracts from spoken data are indispensable for discussing the semantic and pragmatic features of *kong^l*, given their clearly defined discourse contexts.

8 The clause-final discourse marker *kong^l* 講 is invariably used in its tone sandhi form. This tonal change from high falling to high level is discussed in Chappell (2008) as an important phonological correlate of the grammaticalization process.

9 For example, just two were found in my corpus of Southern Min oral texts totaling 58:17 minutes. The low frequency in my sample of texts may be due to the fact that two of the transcriptions contained narratives with long monologic passages, apart from occasional questions and interpolations from the interviewer and other family members who were present. The third, though a lively family conversation, was directed at a family member, not present at the recording, for whom they were taping their news. As such, it did not contain the kind of interaction or confrontation that might have provoked the use of assertions, imperatives and rebuttals, or the context appropriate for newsworthy assertions between two speakers. Just a handful of examples was found by the author in the National Tsing Hua University database of contemporary Southern Min materials. For similar data in Taiwanese Mandarin, concerning the clause-final discourse marker *shuō* 說, Su (2004) found zero examples in the Sinica database (0/1992 instances of *shuō* 說) and just two in her spoken corpus (2/1536).

In two studies of the clause-final use of *kong^l* in Southern Min, Lien (1988) proposes that this polysemous discourse marker has two main uses, namely, a directive and an assertive one. Liu (1996) adds a third, interrogative category (*yíwèn* 疑問). In a study based on conversational discourse data, Chang (1998) proposes to explain the clause-final usage in terms of counter-expectations, while more recently Wang (2013) treats it as a mirative usage. In the present paper, I propose and argue for four main syntactic constructions that contain the clause-final discourse marker *kong^l*, each associated with a different modality determined by the type of subjectivity and intersubjectivity at play. These are:

- (i) declaratives, coding assertions in which the speaker challenges a presupposition from the surrounding context;
- (ii) imperatives in the first or second person, coding suggestions;
- (iii) imperatives in the second person, coding warnings – accompanied by a different intonation than (ii);
- (iv) *wh*-questions, coding rebuttals in the form of a rhetorical question.

The pragmatic and semantic features of each type of modality will now be discussed for each of these four construction types.

3.1. Assertions in declarative form: NP_{SUBJ} – Verb – (X) – *kong^l*

In declarative constructions, clause-final *kong^l* is used to make an assertion that contradicts a presupposition, inherent in the speech context. Its use involves, more specifically, a semantic component of counter-expectation. The presupposition could be: (i) a commonly held opinion; (ii) the viewpoint implied or overtly expressed in the prior conversational turn of the other interlocutor; or (iii) something implicit in the external speech situation. This presupposition is then contradicted in the speaker's reply, using assertive *kong^l* in a declarative syntactic form.

In the first example of the assertive modality, (8), the speaker has just upbraided the addressee in the immediately preceding context for not listening properly to his account about the strange odor in the area, possibly due to the presence of a corpse. The addressee initially misunderstood the situation, thinking that Fuzhou Bo wanted him to go to find out in person where the odor was coming from, to which Fuzhou Bo replies (8).

- (8) [Immediately preceding context: I didn't mean that at all. You should listen more carefully. I was saying that the American soldier has a strange smell. Didn't you notice?]
牽一只軍用狗去共鼻出來，就係是叫你去鼻講，你敢是狗？

Khan¹ chit⁸ chiah⁴ kun¹-iong⁷ kau² khi³ ka⁷ phinn⁷-chhut⁸-lai⁵,
 lead one CL military dog go OM.3SG sniff-out-come.DIR
chiu⁷ m⁷ si³ kio³ li² khi³ phinn⁷ kong¹,
 then NEG be CAUS 2SG go sniff DM_{SAY}
li² kam² si³ kau².
 2SG how be dog

‘Why don’t you bring a military dog along to sniff it out? *After all, it isn’t up to you to go and find out by sniffing* (at what is on the ground) [*kong¹*]. You’re not a dog, are you?’

(Line 14437, *Hou Shan Wan Zhao* 後山晚照, Tsing Hua database)

[Illocutionary force: I’m saying that I know this is true (i.e. you do not have to go and search) and that what you thought is not true (i.e. that you have to do it)]

In (9), the speaker, Granny Qin (秦婆婆), tries to allay any fears about her health, explaining that quite a few people are keeping an eye on her. Furthermore, she points out that the addressee’s uncle was very relieved to see her in a good state of health during a recent visit, contrary to expectations.

- (9) [Immediately preceding context: A: How have you been lately? – Granny Qin: I’m well. You don’t need to worry about me.]

恁阿舅呼頂個月嘛來，啊佇遮住三工啊，伊看了嘛足放心的講。

Lin² A¹-ku⁷ honnh¹ ting² ko³ gueh⁸ ma⁷ lai⁵,
 2PL uncle PRT last CL month also come

a¹ ti⁷ chia¹ tua³ sann¹ kang¹ a¹.
 PRT at here stay three day PRT

yi¹ khuann³-liau³ ma⁷ chiok⁴ hong³sim¹ e⁵ kong¹.
 3SG see-finish also very relieved PRT DM_{SAY}

‘Your uncle came last month and stayed for three days here. After he’d seen (me), *he was extremely relieved* [*kong¹*].’

(Line 11608, *Si Chong Zou* 四重奏, Tsing Hua database)

Example (10) is extracted from a narrative concerning the history of Japan and the rise of General Toyotomi. Here, the newsworthy value lies in the fact that a manservant has been promoted to the position of chief foreman in the army. This goes against the usual presupposition that it would have been hard to change one’s position in life in Medieval Japan.

- (10) 彼共儂^拿^拿^拿 *su-li-pa_J* 的 hoⁿ, \ 喔 = ^提升起來講, -做^總 - 總工頭呢!

hit⁴ kang⁵ theh⁸ theh⁸ theh⁸ su-li-pa_J e⁵ hoⁿ,

that for.people fetch fetch fetch slippers NOM PRT
oh the⁵-seng¹ khi²-lai⁵ kong¹,
 PRT promoted INCH DM_{SAY}
cho³ chong² chong²-kang¹-thau⁵ ne.
 do chief chief-foreman PRT
 ‘The one who fetched – fetched slippers (for the general) – oh – turned
 out to get promoted [kong¹] to chief – chief foreman.’
 (Lines 1128-1130, *Japanese History*, author’s recording and
 transcription)

The corpus of conversational data assembled by Chang (1998) contains several revealing examples of this counter-expectation use of clause-final *kong¹*, one of which is reproduced here as (11). As Chang (1998) similarly claimed, the discourse marker *kong¹* corrects a previously held opinion or presupposition. In (11), Speaker A gives praise for someone’s fluency in Japanese. Speaker B retorts that the person in question has just returned from living in Japan and so obviously, it follows that they should have a good level of Japanese, a view which thus challenges the implicit presupposition.

- (11) A: 伊日語講甲真好。
i² jit⁸gi² kong² kah⁴ chin¹ ho⁴.
 3SG Japanese speak EXT very good
 ‘He speaks Japanese really well.’
 B: 伊對日本回來的講。
i² ui³ Jit⁸pun² tng³ai⁵ e⁵ kong¹.
 3SG from Japan return PRT DM_{SAY}
 ‘Well, he’s just returned from Japan [kong¹].’
 (Chang 1998: 621)

Below is a final example of the assertive use of *kong¹*, showing that it is also used in monologues. Lien (1988) describes a context where what appears to be a nail on the wall to a near-sighted speaker moves all of a sudden, whereupon the speaker realizes that it is an insect, as it flies away:

- (12) A (goân-lâi) sī hōu-sîn kong.
 INTERJ (ADV) be fly PRT
 ‘It was a fly after all.’
 (Lien 1988: 226)

This modal construction with assertive *kong¹* is the best described of the four types under discussion for Southern Min. Moreover, there appears to be a general consensus that this discourse marker is used to express the meaning of counter-

expectation (see, inter alia, Liu 1996; Chang 1998; Lien 1988) We can further elaborate on these insightful studies by formulating *kong^l*'s use in terms of the two parameters of subjectivity and intersubjectivity.

The assertive *kong^l* construction is clearly subjective in its expression of the speaker's viewpoint on the current conversational topic: the speaker challenges a presupposition by asserting his or her own belief ("I'm saying that I know this is true"). It is also intersubjective in having attributed an incorrect presupposition to the addressee ("I'm saying that what you thought is not true"). In (8), for example, the false presupposition at this point of the conversation is the belief that the addressee has to go and search out the source of a strange odor. Having projected this viewpoint onto the addressee, the speaker, Fuzhou Bo, then disagrees with it, stating that this is not the case and that a military dog should do the work. This holds even in the case of a supposed monologue, as in (12), where the speaker realizes that his own presupposition about the black spot on the wall was incorrect. Since he is talking to himself, he in fact acts assumes both roles of speaker and addressee.

3.2. Suggestions in imperative form: (NP_{SUBJ}) –Verb – (X) – *kong^l*

Clause-final *kong^l* can in Southern Min also be used in imperative constructions with the prototypical second person addressee, either overt or understood, as shown in the syntactic configuration (NP_{SUBJ}) –Verb – (X) – *kong^l*.¹⁰

The construction does not, however, have the illocutionary force typically associated with the imperative, i.e. a directive speech act such as a command, a prohibition or an order (Wierzbicka 1987: 37–49). It codes instead a suggestion and, as such, is perfectly compatible with an amicable, non-hierarchical relationship between speaker and addressee, one of its pragmatic conditions of use.

(13) Suggestion to addressee to leave

去講.

Khi³ kong^l.

go DM_{SAY}

'How about you go.'

[Illocutionary force: I'm saying that I think it's a good idea for you to do it]

(Source)

¹⁰ Note that there is no morphological marking on the verb for the imperative mood, as observed in Section 1.2.

In (13), the speaker is encouraging the addressee to think about leaving. Hence, one presupposition compatible with the pragmatic meaning is that the addressee might have been hesitating to do so. The speaker is, however, of the opinion that it would be good for the addressee to undertake this action, for example, to leave at the given point in time so that they will not be late (see Wierzbicka 1987: 187 on English suggestions for a similar feature of pragmatic meaning).

This construction is equally well suited to the imperative form with a first person plural inclusive addressee, ‘let’s X’. The speaker utters (14) to show agreement with a prior suggestion to leave. In addition, he or she simultaneously implies readiness to leave, as opposed to what the addressee may have believed (see also Lien 1988: 226).

(14) Suggestion to addressee to leave together

去講!

(*Lai*⁵) *khi*³ ***kong***¹!

(come.PURP) go DM_{SAY}

‘Let’s go then!’

[Illocutionary force: I’m saying this to you: I think it’s a good idea for us to go]

(Source)

The brusqueness of the pure imperative with its bare verb form *khi*³ 去 ‘leave!’, denuded of any softening discourse markers, basically results in a somewhat rude and impolite way of addressing another person. The imperative form does not take the addressee’s “face” into consideration at all. This is because directive speech acts, including orders, commands and instructions, have roughly the following illocutionary force: “I’m telling you: do it!”. Directives are evidently associated with an unequal status between interlocutors, where one person is obliged, for reasons of social or political convention, to do what the other has asked.

The same contrast is found for the minimal pair of a suggestion in (15) and an order in (16).

(15) Suggestion

緊做講!

*Kin*² *cho*³ ***kong***¹!

quickly do DM_{SAY}

‘How about you do it quickly?’

(Source)

(16) Order

緊做!

*Kin*² *cho*³!

quickly do
'Hurry up and do it!'
(Source)

Example (15) may be used in a context where the speaker believes that the addressee has a tendency to be rather slow to get his or her work done. Hence, it would be a positive event, if he or she could do it more quickly. The use of the discourse marker *kong^l* softens an order into a suggestion and can thus be felicitously translated as an English whimperative, as in (13), (15) and (17).

- (17) 無你四點半來講。
Bo⁵ li² si³ tiam² puann³ lai⁵ kong^l.
NEG 2SG four o'clock half come DM_{SAY}
'Why not come at 4.30 pm then?'
(Liu 1996: 12)¹¹

The presupposition in (17) is that the meeting had originally been planned for another time, which is no longer possible. As with (15) and (16), if the discourse marker *kong^l* is omitted, then (17) is far less polite and does not respect the addressee's face needs.

In examples discussed by Tseng (2008), we find *kong^l* in a complex conditional clause, where it is nonetheless being used as a suggestion, as in (18).

- (18) 你若卜食,我就分你食講。
Li² na⁷ beh⁷ chiah⁸, gua² chiu⁷ pun¹ li² chiah⁸ kong^l.
2SG if want eat 1SG then share 2SG eat DM_{SAY}
'If you want to eat it, then how about I share it with you?'
(*ho²-ko¹-po⁵* 虎姑婆, *Tiger Aunty*) (Tseng 2008: 45)

This example is from the rather gruesome story of Tiger Aunty, a tiger demon that disguises itself as an elderly woman to gain entry into a house and snare the children, who are on their own. Its plan is to eat them up, a prerequisite for becoming fully human. While the tiger demon is eating the younger sister, the brother looks for her. He wonders what it is that the "aunty" is actually eating. The aunty, feasting away, then offers to share her food with him, which is somewhat

11 Both Frajzyngier (1991: 227) and Hopper and Traugott (1993: 14) point out that *say* or *let's say* can be used as a conditional formant in English to introduce the hypothetical mood. Example (17) could also be translated more literally as 'say couldn't you come at 4.30 pm?', i.e. not as a directive but as a suggestion in the form of a proposal to the addressee (in both the Southern Min original and in the English translation).

surprising in the circumstances. Pragmatically, this has the illocutionary force of a suggestion, albeit sinister in nature: “say I share it with you (against all expectations)?”

The final example of this type, in (19), is from the narrative *Jesse’s stories*: the speaker talks about the time when he was a young boy, penniless, and was offered summer work. He humorously relates his decision to take up this otherwise rather poorly remunerated part-time waiting job, giving two reasons in its favor: first, free meals were provided and, second, the work was not at all unpleasant. The utterance is thus a suggestion aimed at the speaker himself in this case, on the basis of his reasoning, and clearly contrary to expectations in the given context.

(19) 彼陣仔着去! 去講嘢!

*hit*⁸ *chun*^{1-a} *toh*⁸ *khi*³!

that time then go

‘So then I went!’

*khi*³ *kong*¹ *oh*!

go DM_{SAY} PRT

Why not go?!

(Lines 187–188, *Jesse’s stories*, author’s recording and transcription)

[Illocutionary force: I’m saying: I think it is a good idea for me to do this]

Importantly, this imperative-form construction is polysemous. With a different prosody and context, it can also be construed as a warning, as in (20), a salient feature that has also been observed by Lien (1988: 227) and Liu (1996).

3.3. Warnings in imperative form: (NP_{2P-SUBJ}) – Verb – (X) – *kong*¹

A third use of clause-final *kong*¹ is in warnings. This pragmatic function is found in contexts where the speaker does not want the addressee to perform a certain action, and indirectly forbids it by the use of *kong*¹. Example (20), which is structurally identical to (19), could be felicitously interpreted as a warning when used in a different context from (19) and pronounced with a different, threatening intonation.

(20) 去講!

*Khi*³ *kong*¹!

go DM_{SAY}

‘Just you dare go!’

[Illocutionary force: I say: If you go, you’ll find out the consequences! (I think you know that I don’t want you to go. If you do go, something bad could happen to you)]

Note that, in the suggestion in (13), the speaker actually wants the addressee to consider leaving in the belief that it would be good for him or her to do so. In contrast, in the warning in (20), the speaker does not want the addressee to go at all, since this action could lead to some kind of undesirable or unfortunate situation for him/her. The speaker thus means the opposite of what he or she says literally. Hence, a rhetorical effect is produced which leads to the construal of a warning. It seems that ‘say’-derived discourse markers invite a hypothetical inference which could be paraphrased as follows: (i) condition: if you do it (action of the verb, e.g. ‘you go’); (ii) implied (unspoken) consequence: it could be bad for you.

Example (21) similarly has two possible interpretations and could be understood as either a suggestion or a challenge in the form of a warning.

(21) 試看覓講.

Chhi³ khuann³ mai³ kong¹.

try see TENT DM_{SAY}

‘Let’s give it a try and see! (Don’t be afraid.)’ [suggestion]

‘Just you try it and see!!’ [warning]

On the one hand, in the suggestion interpretation, a possible context could be the lifting of a dauntingly heavy object. This situation would be accompanied by a presupposition on the speaker’s part that the addressee might not be able to do it, and is possibly even afraid to try. On the other hand, a possible context for the warning construal could be the case of two adversaries, one of whom has already issued a challenge to the other by stating or implying that he or she is weak and lacks the courage to fight. A possible response could be to use (21) with clause-final *kong¹* from which it can be inferred that the speaker refutes any such presupposition of weakness in issuing the challenge. This reading could be felicitously used in a context where the speaker wants to imply that he or she may turn out to be surprisingly stronger than the addressee believes.

Consequently, the same component of intersubjectivity is arguably present in the warning *kong¹* construction as the one that we claimed is present in declarative form assertions with *kong¹*: the speaker challenges the presupposition he or she believes that the addressee holds, from which the opposite viewpoint can be inferred. A final example of this category shows the same opposition between speaker’s and addressee’s points of view:

(22) 好胆你就去講.

Hao² tann² li² tioh⁴ khi³ kong¹.

good courage 2SG then go DM_{SAY}

‘If you’re brave enough, then go and do it.’

(Chang 1998: 621)

As in the previous examples, contrary to the literal reading of the utterance, the speaker does not in fact want the addressee to undertake the action. Moreover, the consequences of such an action are in the unspoken implication that it could be dangerous in some way for the addressee to do so.

The use of *kong¹* in warnings also appears to be semantically closely related to the use of *kong¹* in *wh*-questions coding rebuttals, in that a presupposition is similarly overturned. Rebuttals are discussed in the following section.

3.4. Rebuttals in *wh*-interrogative form: NP_{SUBJ} – *wh*-pronoun – Verb – (X) – *kong¹*

Liu (1996: 12) points out that *wh*-interrogative questions may take clause-final *kong¹* to produce utterances that express scorn or contempt and can be used to mock the addressee. They are interpreted, however, as rhetorical questions, not as literal ones. This has the end-effect of coding a rebuttal to the preceding assertion made by the other interlocutor.¹²

Example (23), taken from Liu (1996), contains a *wh*-question formed with *kui²* 幾 ‘how many’. In this example, A is mocking B for apparently obtaining a low grade in the exams, despite an enormous revision input. B retorts with a question challenging the very presupposition upon which A’s utterance rests, namely, A’s evaluation of B’s exam result as poor. B simply turns the tables on A by asking her about her own performance.

- (23) A: 你讀暝讀日才考 60 分喔!
Li² thak⁸ mi⁵ thak⁸ jit⁸ chiah⁴ kho² lak⁴ chap⁸ hun¹ o!
 2SG study night study day only test 60 point PRT
 ‘You were studying night and day, but only got 60 in your exams!’
 [= P1]
- B: 你考幾分講?
Li² kho² kui² hun¹ kong¹.
 2SG test how.many point DM_{SAY}
 ‘(So don’t make fun of me:) How high a grade did you get then?’ [= P2]

(Liu 1996: 12)

[Illocutionary force: if you say this (P1) to say something bad about me, then I can ask you the same in return (P2). I think it will be difficult for you to answer]

¹² By interrogatives, the type that uses *wh*-pronouns is intended (and not the alternative or A-not-A polar question types).

The second example, in (24), carries the presupposition that A is on a strict diet and cannot eat treats such as chocolate. The offer therefore challenges the actual state of affairs, i.e. A's determination to stick to her diet, whence the rebuttal in the form of a rhetorical question:¹³

- (24) CM: 你慾愛_M巧克力_M無?
Li² beh⁴ ai³ mqiǎokèlì_M bo⁵?
 2SG want like chocolate Q<NEG
 'Would you like some chocolate?'
 A: 無在瘡講。
bo⁵ teh⁴ siao² kong¹!
 NEG PROG crazy DM_{SAY}
 'You think I'm crazy!'
 (Chang 1998: 620)

A final example involves the rebuttal, in this case, of any sympathy in (25), in which a tall person hits his or her head on a doorway. The rhetorical question with *siang⁵* 誰 'who' implies that it is the fault of the victim for growing so tall.

- (25) 誰叫你生彼高講?
Siang⁵ kio³ li² sing¹ hiah⁴ kuainn⁵ kong¹?
 who make 2SG be.born so tall DM_{SAY}
 'Well, who told you to grow so tall?'

In a similar manner to assertions and warnings with *kong¹*, rebuttals allow for the expression of the speaker's viewpoint (the parameter of subjectivity), more precisely, they allow for the denial of the addressee's point of view. They also allow for the rhetorically reconstructed viewpoint of the addressee (intersubjectivity) to be deduced – in other words, the presupposition which has been challenged: for example, the view that someone must be a poor scholar in (23) or that it is acceptable to eat chocolate in (24) or even the situation where someone has been "unwise" enough to grow too tall in (25).

3.5. Interim summary

Taiwanese Southern Min possesses four different construction types formed with clause-final *kong¹*. It is used to code the different modalities of assertions,

13 Note that the clause-initial negator *bo⁵* means 'otherwise' or 'it's not the case that' here and together with *kong¹* transposes the clause into a rhetorical question.

suggestions, warnings and rebuttals, which are distinguished by the syntactic construction in which they occur, by the appropriate intonation for suggestions and warnings and by the form of the presupposition.

Chang (1998) provides an interesting discussion of this clause-final usage and sets out to treat all types — regardless of their different illocutionary forces — as examples of the use of *kong^l* as a counter-expectation marker, as do Lien (1988) and Liu (1996). Yet, this one label does not and cannot possibly account for all the relevant semantic and pragmatic features that we have described.

I would therefore like to suggest that all four clause-final uses of *kong^l* specifically involve the correction of a presupposition attributed to the other interlocutor. It is this correction of a presupposition which is shared by all four constructions and not the vaguer notion of counter-expectations. Further, all these discourse uses are clearly based on the meaning of *kong^l* as a ‘say’ verb and its lexical use to introduce a proposition, even as a kind of hypothetical in the case of suggestions and warnings: “Say you go now ...”. These usages of *kong^l* are cases of intersubjectivity *par excellence*, through which the speaker rhetorically reconstructs the subjectivity of the addressee (or his or her stance/ perspective) and then goes on to refute this point of view, the presupposition which initially triggers the use of *kong^l*.

4. Development of clause-final *kong^l* in Taiwanese Southern Min

4.1. Syntactic features, grammaticalization and (inter)subjectivity

In this section, I discuss six features of clause-final *kong^l* that are connected with its syntax, syntactic reanalysis and grammaticalization.

First, in terms of syntactic features, what is striking about this function of *kong^l* is that it displays its sandhi (or changed) tone [55] rather than its citation tone [51]. The sandhi tone is typically used in a non-final position within a tone group and is aptly described as its “context” or “combination” tone. When *kong^l* occurs at the end of the clause, we would thus expect the citation or isolation tone in this position, i.e. high falling [51]. I suggest that there is a discourse reason for this: if tone sandhi applies, then this normally indicates that there is more speech to come, such as a quotation or a reported clause (i.e. indirect speech) introduced by the quotative marker *kong^l*. In the wake of the grammaticalization and subjectification of the quotative verb *kong^l* into a discourse marker with metalinguistic value, the sandhi tone maintains its function to indicate that there is more speech to come. In this case, however, it signals the omitted speech, whose value and import the interlocutors need to infer. The change described here can be represented as the shift from (i) to (ii):

- (i) clause₁ — *gua*⁵¹ — *kong*⁵⁵ ‘I say’_[QUOTATIVE INDEX] >
(ii) clause₁ — Ø — *kong*⁵⁵_{DM} ... (inferred context)

If this suprasegmental feature becomes invariant with the use of the discourse marker, as it appears to be doing, it reflects the erosion which is typically associated with grammaticalization, realized in this case as a phonological reduction and “obligatorification” of tonal possibilities (see Heine 2002 and Hopper and Traugott 1993 on obligatorification).¹⁴

Second, *kong*^l's ability to refer to the immediately preceding context gives it a clause-linking function: it anaphorically evokes the prior clause(s) and its associated context and presuppositions. This points to the development of a metalinguistic textual function, as defined in Traugott (1995) and Traugott and Dasher (2002). The discourse marker *kong*^l does not describe a real world event of speaking but serves to link parts of the discourse and set up the coding of an intersubjective meaning, as argued in Section 3.

Third, there is a category change from a quotative verb (“X said:” + quotation) to a discourse marker at the periphery of the clause. In this new function, *kong*^l has completely lost all its verbal functions, being unable to take aspect, be negated or form questions.

Fourth, the use of *kong*^l as a discourse marker does not seem to be entirely optional: when *kong*^l is omitted, the constructional meaning changes completely, as is particularly clear in the case of suggestions versus orders (see Section 3.2). Compare also *lai*⁵-*khi*³ *kong*^l 來去講 ‘come-go DM_{SAY}’ with *lai*⁵-*khi*³ *la*^l ‘come-go PRT’ 來去啦 ‘let’s go!’. While both have the same denotation, the first utterance is used when the speaker is ready to leave, taking up the suggestion of his or her interlocutor (see example (14) as well). The second utterance could be suitably used when the addressee is reluctant to go, as the particle or discourse marker *la*^l 啦 has the function to insist and to cajole (Lien 1988: 214).

Fifth, the discourse marker *kong*^l can be used in a monologue. Two examples of lone speakers have been presented above in (12) and (19), where the speaker is reasoning with him- or herself and thus assumes the role of the addressee as well.

Sixth, none of the four constructions may be used in a polar A-not-A question form, as (26) shows.

- (26) *阿張是不是台北人講?
**A*^l *Tiong*^l *si*³-*m*⁷-*si*³ *Tai*⁵*pak*⁴ *lang*⁵ *kong*^l?
A-Tiong be-NEG-be Taipei person DM_{SAY}
‘Is A-Tiong from Taipei?’ (Hwang 1998:7)

¹⁴ This phenomenon is pointed out as early as in the seminal work of Cheng (1997) on complementizers in Southern Min, and it is also discussed in Simpson and Wu (2003) and Tseng (2008), among others.

This points to the semantic incompatibility of an interrogative form, which requires either a yes or a no answer, with clause-final *kong^l*. They are at semantic cross-purposes: *kong^l* builds a modally marked construction involving a different presupposition to that in a polar question. This restriction on co-occurrence helps demonstrate that *kong^l* has scope over the entire utterance – it is not merely a tag at the end of the clause. This brings us back to where we started: the constructions with clause-final *kong^l* rhetorically reconstruct the addressee’s viewpoint, in particular, an incorrect presupposition, which is then challenged, “corrected” and overturned by the speaker. This applies to all four syntactic constructions which *kong^l* builds: assertions, suggestions, warnings and rebuttals.

4.2. Grammaticalization pathway for clause-final *kong^l*

Grammaticalized outcomes of the lexical verb *kong²* 講 ‘say’ point to a case of complex polyfunctionality. At least three separate grammaticalization chains would be required to account for all its synchronic uses in Southern Min: (i) a complementizer arising from an earlier serial verb construction where the quotative sense of ‘say’ is coded by V_2 in a verb complex: $\text{say}_{\text{quotative}} > V_{1\text{speech act}} - V_2\text{say}_{\text{quotative}} > V_1(\text{host expansion})$ – complementizer (see Chappell 2008 for details); (ii) a topic marker and conditional conjunction in clause-initial position from the transitive use of ‘say’ which means ‘talk about (X)’: $\text{say}_{\text{talk about X}} > \text{say}_{\text{topic marker}} + \text{clause 1} > \text{say}_{\text{conditional marker}} + \text{clause 1} (= \text{protasis})$ (see also Haiman 1978) and (iii) the discourse marking function in clause-final position discussed in this paper.¹⁵

I have suggested that the development of the discourse marker is intimately associated with the reduction of a complex sentence to a simplex clause, in which the first clause containing a quotation is embedded under a following quotative clause: *gua² kong²* 我講 ‘I say’. The reduction first involves truncation and reanalysis of the original postposed clause in the complex sentence. Through ellipsis of the subject pronoun in *gua² kong²* 我講 ‘I say’, this postposed quotative clause is truncated to just the bare ‘say’ verb form (see Güldemann 2008: 397–439 for a detailed discussion of this phenomenon) and appended to the remaining clause which, in its turn, is subsequently reanalyzed as the main clause. The discourse marker derived from the verb ‘say’ is now in clause-final position, and evidently no longer codes its literal, propositional meaning but rather has a metalinguistic function, challenging a presupposition of the interlocutor. This new

¹⁵ These three pathways evidently do not account for how clause-initial discourse markers developed, nor for several other compound conjunctions formed with ‘say’ verbs. For this more research is needed.

metalinguistic function results from the (inter)subjectification which has accompanied the grammaticalization process for *kong^l* from (i) to (ii):

- (i) complex sentence incorporating a matrix quotative clause:
[clause₁]_{QUOTATION} + clause₂[*gua² kong^l* 我講 ‘I say’]_{QUOTATIVE INDEX}
- (ii) reanalysis as a simplex clause via truncation of the first person singular subject pronoun: [clause₁] + [*kong^l* 講]_{DM<SAY}

The syntactic reanalysis in stage (ii) is accompanied by semantic and pragmatic changes which involve generalization of the clause type to any kind of proposition. The concomitant invariable use of the tone sandhi value for *kong^l* represents a type of phonological reduction or “erosion” in terms of Heine (2002). The specific semantic and pragmatic values grammatically coded by each of the four main constructions have been described in the main part of this article.

At this stage, the account of the proposed stages for grammaticalization and inter/subjectification is a mere hypothesis for the development of this clause-final discourse marker. Unfortunately, we do not have the necessary diachronic data needed to support such a hypothesis. Further cross-linguistic research is needed to verify whether such a hypothesis may be upheld.

5. Conclusion

I have argued that the grammaticalization of *kong^l* from a verb of saying into a clause-final discourse marker has led to the formation of four distinct constructions, each with its own structure and modality. Furthermore, it has been argued that all four construction types associated with *kong^l* show subjectivization and grammaticalization of the verb ‘say’ upon its development into a discourse marker and the coding of a particular dimension of intersubjectivity: they all involve expression of the speaker’s viewpoint or attitude toward the current conversational topic as well as the speaker’s “rhetorical reconstruction” of a presupposition made by the addressee (intersubjectivity).

More specifically, the modal meanings of the four new constructions can no longer be linked with the basic lexical use of the verb ‘say’, which originally denotes an event in the external world, i.e. the act of speaking. The case of *kong^l* presents a clear illustration of Traugott and Dasher’s (2002) notion of the capacity of subjectification to pre-empt material in the speech event for the

speaker's own uses – in this case, from the lexical form associated with a 'say' verb to a metalinguistic discourse marker.

Furthermore, in building modally marked constructions in which it has scope over the entire utterance, *kong*¹ is clearly a fully integrated constituent used to form these four modal constructions. It is not a mere "optional tag" at the end of the clause, shown clearly by loss of pragmatic meaning, that is, the particular intersubjective value, upon its omission. At this simple level of comparison, the semantic contrast is evident in the difference between suggestions formed with *kong*¹ and "bare verb" orders that do not use this discourse marker in Southern Min. At a more elaborate level of comparison, *kong*¹ is closely connected with the denial of certain presuppositions which trigger its use. The grammaticalization and (inter)subjectification of *kong*¹ in clause-final position thus leads to new metalinguistic functions, forming constructions which can code assertions and suggestions, or express warnings and rebuttals in Southern Min.

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Abbreviations

1/2/3	first/second/third person
ADV	adverb
ASST	assertive
CAUS	causative verb
CL	classifier
COMPR	comparative marker
COND	conditional marker
CRS	currently relevant state
DEM	demonstrative
DIMN	diminutive
DIR	directional
DM	discourse marker
ECHO	echo question
EVD	evidential
EXT	extent 'so X that'
IMP	imperative
INCH	inchoative
INTERJ	interjection
J	Japanese
LIG	marker of ligature,
LOC	locative
M	Mandarin
MIR	mirative
NEG	negative
NOM	nominalizer
OM	object marker
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
PROG	progressive
PRT	particle
PURP	purpose
Q	question marker
SG	singular
SUBJ	subject
TENT	tentative aspect
WRNG	warning

Appendix: Southern Min transcription conventions

The modified Church Romanization is used in all the transcriptions of the Taiwanese Southern Min data with tone numbers, unless I am quoting from an article where tone diacritics have been used. The modifications of the Church Romanization devised by Carstairs Douglas (1990 [1873]) are as follows: the symbols *ts* and *ts^h* are not used since they represent sounds which are no longer phonemically distinct from the sounds represented by *ch* and *chh* respectively in modern Southern Min; open *o* and closed *o* are represented as *ou* and *o*; vocalic nasalization is indicated by a double *n*; an empty box □ is used where the Chinese character is not known, which is not infrequent in the case of the special Southern Min lexemes.

For the convenience of the reader, the tones are represented by tone numbers in the transcription known as the modified Church Romanization, as indicated in Table 1. The tone sandhi values are given in italic numbers below the citation values in the table, and, in general, will not be given in the transcription of examples used in the present description.

Table 1. Tone inventory of Southern Min

	Level tone 平聲	Ascending tone 上聲	Departing tone 去聲	Entering tone 入聲
Upper register	Tone 1	Tone 2	Tone 3	Tone 4
	High level 55 33	High falling 51 55	Low falling 21 51	Low checked <u>2</u> <u>5</u>
Lower register	Tone 5		Tone 7	Tone 8
	Mid rising 25 21/33		Low level 33 21	High checked <u>5</u> <u>2</u>

The transcription of my recordings in Southern Min follows the system devised for natural conversation and oral narratives by Du Bois and colleagues at the University of California at Santa Barbara (see Du Bois et al. 1993) for the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English. The intonation unit is treated as the basic unit of conversation, a unit of discourse with prosodic, syntactic and cognitive ramifications.

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