The Emergence of the Evaluative Adverb ho2ded4 (好得) in Taiwan Hakka: An Integrated Approach of Grammaticalization and Lexicalization

Chiou-shing Yeh & Huei-ling Lai
National Chengchi University

Taking an integrated approach of grammaticalization and lexicalization, the study investigates the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic development of ho2ded4 ‘fortunately; thankfully’ in NCCU Hakka corpus. As illustrated from (a) to (c), the combination of ho2 and ded4 can be grammaticalized from a verb to a modal adverb via metonymization, giving rise to three different linguistic manifestations. The sequence ho2 and ded4 can be either a verb and a modal verb or a lexicalized modal adverb. In (a), ho2 functions as a stative verb meaning ‘to get well’ and ded4, a modal verb meaning ‘can’. In (b), ho2 functions as a modal verb meaning ‘can’ and ded4, a verb meaning ‘to obtain’. In (c), ho2ded4 is lexicalized into an evaluative modal adverb denoting the meaning of ‘fortunately; thankfully’. While ho2ded4 in (c) is a lexicalized simplex, ho2 and ded4 in (a) and (b) are sequentially next to each other but do not form a syntactic unit.

With regard to the observations, we claim that ho2ded4 has grammaticalized into a modal meaning ‘fortunately; thankfully’, following Traugott’s view of grammaticalization as a reanalysis of morphosyntactic strings. While examples (a) and (b) profile the subjects of the sentences as piang33ngin5 ‘patient’ in piang33ngin5 ho2 ded4 mo5 and gi5 ‘he’ in gi5 rhiu1 vang5coi5 ho2 ded4, it is the speaker instead that is profiled in case (c) ho2ded4 gi5 cied4 rhiu3rhiu3er5. In other words, ho2ded4 has changed from coding an observable objective state of affairs to coding a speaker’s belief or attitude towards what is said. What is depicted accords with Nuyts’ (2005) proposal of subjectivity, in which subjective evaluation is defined as the issuer presenting a state of affairs as being strictly his/her own responsibility. As an evaluative modal adverb, ho2ded4 expresses a speaker’s attitude toward the proposition of the sentence (Quirk et al.1995). In (c), the premise zhu1ngiug4 ngi1ng2 an2 ngiun7 ‘how can the pork be so tough’ lays out the speaker’s judgment of the situational background, leading to two possible inferable propositions: one negative ‘the children were not able to chew’, and the other positive, ‘the children were able to chew’. However, the further expressed conditional proposition ho2ded4 gi5 cied4 rhiu3rhiu3er5 ‘thankfully, he minced the pork into small pieces’ excludes the negative proposition, and consequently the positive proposition can be successfully obtained as the discourse unfolded.

Demonstrating a case of integration of grammaticalization and lexicalization, the analysis of ho2ded4 presents its evolutinal path, semantic change, and pragmatic functions in actual usages. The intriguing grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic functions are plausibly teased out through the account of the interaction of syntactic constructions, semantic meanings, and pragmatic presuppositions.

Examples:
(a) M5  di1  gai5  gai3  piang7ngin5  ho2    ded4  mo5.
   NEG    know that    CL    patient    get-well can    PART
   ‘It not sure whether that patient can get well or not.’

(b) Son3miang7    sin1sang1  son3  gi5  gong2 (gi5) rhiu1  vang5coi5  ho2  ded4.
   fortune-telling master    tell    he    say    (he) have    windfall    can    get
   ‘A fortune teller told him that he could get a windfall.’

(c) Zhu1ngiug4  ngi1ng2  an2  ngiun7,  ho2ded4  gi5  cied4  rhiu3rhiu3er5,
   pork    how    so    tough    thankfully    he    mince    finely
   se3ngin5er5  zhang3  ngau1-e4-log8.
   children-SF    only-then    chew-PM-fall
   ‘How could the pork be so tough! Thankfully, he minced the pork into small pieces; the children were only then able to chew.’