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FINAL PARTICLES IN STANDARD CANTONESE:
SEMANTIC EXTENSION AND PRAGMATIC INference

Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
2000

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ABSTRACT

Standard Cantonese has a particularly rich inventory of final particles. Final particles are bound morphemes situated at clause or sentence final position. They are traditionally regarded as obligatory elements in utterances and their use in speech makes an utterance sound more lively and vivid. It is difficult to describe their meaning precisely since they usually exhibit a bewildering array of senses of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic uses. Furthermore, standard Cantonese has a large number of phonologically similar particles with related meanings. These particles are interchangeable in some contexts but not in others. To capture the nuances among them is particularly challenging. Motivated by the limitations of previous studies, this thesis attempts to explore the underlying context-independent semantic system of FPs and account for their surface contextual meanings.

The current study examines the uses of twenty-five final particles based on a spoken Cantonese corpus. Particles that share the same initial are proposed to be conditioned manifestations belonging to the same particle family. Three particle
families are analyzed, labeled here as Z-, L- and G-. This thesis first characterizes the core semantic feature associated with each of the particle family. The core feature for each particle family is shared by all the members, namely [+restrictive] for Z-, [+realization of state] for L-, and [+situation given, +focus, +deictic] for G-. The study then demonstrates how these context-independent meanings give rise to previously random-looking senses through semantic extension and pragmatic inference among various linguistic domains, such as sentential, propositional, discourse, epistemic, speech act, de re and de dicto domains. By constructing minimal pairs, co-occurrence restriction tests and felicity tests, the thesis proceeds to suggest a bundle of distinctive, functional primes that can distinguish a given manifestation from those of other members.

This thesis provides, for the first time, a systematic account of a subset of final particles in modern standard Cantonese. It is believed the methodology developed in this thesis, with whatever further refinements and changes, can be extended to study the other FPs on the dialect in the future.
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FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: East Asian Languages and Literatures
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. GOALS, SCOPE AND ORGANIZATION

The present study aims to present a systematic analysis of the synchronic meanings of a number of final particles (hereafter FPs) in Standard Cantonese. A few words on Standard Cantonese (hereafter SCAN) are in order.

SCAN is the standard language of the Yue dialect group, which is spoken in Guangzhou (Canton City), Hong Kong, and Macao. The Cantonese spoken in these three places are totally mutually intelligible; there are only some minor differences in vocabulary items and tonal variants. Similar to other dialects, Cantonese is essentially a spoken language (see Matthews & Yip 1994) and does not have a standard written form. Written Cantonese is found mainly in informal communication; many colloquial vocabulary items are represented informally using vernacular characters that are not found in the standard set of Chinese characters. Other colloquial lexical items simply
“borrow” standard characters for their sound value. FPs are bound morphemes appended to the end of utterances that convey a variety of semantic, syntactic and pragmatic functions. They are traditionally referred to as 語氣詞 yuqici ‘modal words.’ Except for one or two FPs that change statements to yes-no questions, FPs are conventionally regarded as optional elements. Their inclusion is typically viewed as making the utterance more ‘lively and vivid’ (生動傳神 shengdong-chuanshen).

This study is motivated by the limitations of early works in characterizing the semantics of FPs. The limitations come mainly from the complexity of FPs in meaning and in inventory. Firstly, a FP usually conveys a bewildering variety of meanings. For instance, the meanings of the particle zeI [tse55] / zekI [tsek5] are reported as marking persuasion, interrogation, assertion, affection, coquettishness, impatience, contempt, pride and jealousy. These meanings are so varied that they may seem contradictory. Nonetheless, the long list of functions identified in the literature is often found to be inadequate to explain all its attested uses. Secondly, SCAN has a large inventory of FPs compared to Modern Standard Chinese (hereafter MSC) and various dialects of Chinese. Some works identify over 30 basic monosyllabic forms (e.g. Kwok 1984, Ouyang 1990) and some give as many as 90 (such as Leung 1992). To further complicate matters, there is a large number of phonologically similar particles in the dialect. They may differ only in tone, such as laaI [la55] with high-level tone ~ laa3 [la33] with mid-level tone ~ laa4 [la21] with low-falling tone; and ge3 [ke33] with mid-level tone ~ ge2 [ke35] with high-rising tone (using Yuen Ren Chao’s system of tone
numbers, where ‘1’ through ‘5’ represent ascending pitch height). Alternatively, they may differ with respect to segmentals, such as a contrast between open and closed syllables, such as \textit{zel} [tse55] ~ \textit{zekl} [tsek5]; or a contrast in the main vowel, as in the minimal set, \textit{laa3} [la33] ~ \textit{lo3} [lo55] ~ \textit{lu3} [lu33] ~ \textit{le3} [le33]. These phonologically similar particles are also semantically related. They may be intersubstitutable in some contexts but are totally exclusive in others. To capture the nuances between them has proved extremely difficult; and this is despite native speakers’ strong intuition on which variant to use in specific contexts.

This seemingly chaotic situation notwithstanding, I am strongly convinced that FPs constitute a set of linguistic elements that can be systematically defined. The bewildering senses of FPs discussed in early studies mostly involve analyses of pragmatic uses that are inferred from contextual information. The core context-independent semantics of most FPs have yet to be discovered. The present study attempts to explore the underlying semantic system of FPs and account for their various surface meanings. Instead of relying strictly on impressionistic intuition, this corpus-based study, supplemented by native-speaker intuition and introspection, analyzes the FPs by constructing minimal pairs, co-occurrence restriction tests, and felicitous tests to identify the linguistic features of a coherent subset of the FPs in SCAN.

From the rich array of FPs in SCAN, this thesis selects a subset of twenty-five FPs. These are not randomly-chosen FPs. The current work proposes that they are in fact manifestations of three underlying particles, particle families. This study first characterizes the core semantic features of each particle family that are shared by all
their members and demonstrates how these context-independent meanings give rise to various seemingly paradoxical and unmotivated senses through semantic extension and pragmatic inference. The study then proceeds to identify all the functional primes that can be used to distinguish a given manifestation from those of other members. This study aims to present, for the first time, a systematic account of the complex FP system in SCAN. The methodology developed in this thesis, with whatever further refinements and changes, can be extended to study the other FPs on the dialect in the future.

Particles that are discussed in the present work include: \textit{zel} [tse55], \textit{ze4} [tse21], \textit{zekl} [tsek5], \textit{zaa3} [tsa33], \textit{zaa4} [tsa21]; \textit{zaa5} [tsa13]; \textit{zaakl} [tsak5]; \textit{lei4} [lai4] [lei21/lai21] \textit{laal} [la55], \textit{laa3} [la33]; \textit{laa4} [la21], \textit{laak3} [lak3], \textit{lo4} [lo55], \textit{lo3} [lo33], \textit{lo4} [lo21], \textit{lok3} [lok3], \textit{le3} [le33], \textit{le4} [le21], \textit{le5} [le13]; \textit{ge2} [ke35], \textit{ge3} [ke33]; \textit{gaa3} [ka33], \textit{gaa2} [ka35], \textit{gaa4} [ka421] and \textit{gaaak3} [kak3]. I hypothesize that these particles are manifestations of three base particles, labeled here as \textit{Z-}, \textit{L-} and \textit{G-}. The core semantics of \textit{Z-} is [+restrictive]; \textit{L-} is [+realization of state]; and \textit{G-} is [+situation given, +focus, +deictic]. To keep this study manageable in scope, I restrict myself to monosyllabic particles only. Particle clusters are discussed as needed but do not receive comprehensive study.

The dissertation is organized as follows. In the remaining part of this chapter, I describe the contributions and limitations in previous studies and then present an overview of several theoretical frameworks that are adopted in this work. In Chapter 2,
I turn to the discussion of the Z-family, Chapter 3 the L-family, and Chapter 4 the G-family. Concluding remarks are given in Chapter 5.

1.2. PREVIOUS STUDIES AND THEIR LIMITATIONS

1.2.1. THE SEMANTICS OF FINAL PARTICLES

Early studies on the semantics of Cantonese FPs are most readily found in textbooks and dictionaries written by missionaries and native speakers such as Ball (1883/1924), Wisner (1906), Chao (1947), Huang (1970), Qiao (1966), Boyle (1970), Lau (1968/1972, 1977), and Gao (1980). Their descriptions of FPs tend to be brief, sketchy, and unsystematic. The meanings of a FP often allude to idiomatic usage without further explanation. For instance, Yuan (1960:231) states that \textit{zekl} is often used by native speakers indiscriminately. He simply describes the sense of the particle illustrated in (1), for example, as an idiomatic use of the particle without offering any grammatical or lexical meaning.  

\begin{equation}
\text{Dimgaai nei sengjat mong-zyu ngo zekl? (Yuan 1960:231)}
\end{equation}

\begin{verbatim}
why you whole-day stare-Asp me FP
‘Why do you keep staring at me?’
\end{verbatim}

In recent years, more works have been published that are devoted specifically to FPs in SCAN, where the FPs are analyzed with a higher degree of linguistic sophistication. Such studies include Gibbons (1980), Kwok (1984), Bourgerie (1987), Luke (1990), and Leung (1992). These studies adopt various contemporary linguistic
approaches, such as speech act theory, discourse analysis, socio-linguistic study, and language acquisition research. However, these researchers are easily tempted to include as part of some specific FPs all sorts of meanings that are conveyed by other linguistic or paralinguistic elements. This can be illustrated by citing some examples from Leung (1992), given in (2) through (5) below, where ‘Asp’ indicates an aspect marker, and ‘Cl’ a classifier/measure word.

(2) 佢咁動力唔會唔返學 [ge3], 或者病咗 laal。(Leung 1992: 102)  
Keoi gam kanlik m-wui m-faanhok ge3, he such industrious not-will not-go-to-school FP  
waakze baang-zo laal.  
maybe sick-Asp FP  
‘He won’t skip school since he is so industrious, maybe he’s sick.’

(3) 都話買咗 lok3, 乜你咁長氣 gaa3? (Leung 1992: 111)  
Dou waa maai-zo lok3, mat lei gam zoenghei gaa3?  
already said buy-Asp FP why you so long-winded FP  
‘I already told you I’ve bought it, why are you so long-winded?’

(4) 呢啲係佢唔略 bo3, 你點解唔要佢賠償 zek1? (Leung 1992: 101)  
Ni di hai keoi m-ngaam bo3, lei dimkai m-jiu keoi puisoeng zek1?  
this Cl is he not-right FP you why not-require he compensate FP  
‘This is his fault, why don’t you ask for compensation?’

(5) 嘻，又唔記得帶鎖匙 laa3。 (Leung 1992: 104)  
Laa, jaau m-geidak daai sosi laa3.  
see again not-remember bring key FP  
‘See, (you) forgot to bring your keys again.’

In (2), Leung (1992) proposes that the particle laal encodes possibility. However, he also points out that in order to perform this function, the particle has to co-occur with one of the modal adverbs 或者 waak ze ‘perhaps,’大概 daai koi ‘presumably,’ or 大約 daai joek ‘probably.’ The possibility sense is conveyed by those modal adverbs and not
by the particle per se; hence, not surprisingly, sentence (2) does not convey possibility when the modal adverb 或者 wak ze 'perhaps' is omitted. Similar arguments can also be applied to (3). Leung proposes that lok3 has the function of reiterating a previous claim to mark the irrevocability of a situation. However, this use of the particle must necessarily be accompanied by the phrase, 都話 dou waa 'already said.' It is transparent that the reiterating function is conveyed by the phrase dou waa instead of the FP lok3. In (4) the particle zekl is described as indicating strong negation towards the proposition. In fact, the negation is a case of the pragmatic use of the wh-question when presented with strong emotion rather than some intrinsic property of zekl per se. Leung also claims that a frequent function of the particle laa3, as illustrated in (5), is to rebuke someone contemptuously or to pick at someone’s faults. However, it should be noted that the meaning given in (5) is highly context-dependent and is conveyed mainly by the discourse marker laa 'see', the intensifying adverb 又 yau 'again', and the speaker’s tone of voice. As I will illustrate in Chapter 3, the core function of the particle laa3 is to inform the hearer of the existence of a certain state.

The above examples show that the task of separating out the semantic meaning conveyed by a FP from the meaning expressed by the whole utterance containing the FP is a highly challenging one. The distinction between word meaning and utterance meaning underlies the distinction between semantics and pragmatics. Thus, in order to lay a solid basis for analyzing the meanings of FPs, a clear distinction between semantic meaning and pragmatic meaning is drawn in this study.
1.2.2. THE PHONOLOGY OF FINAL PARTICLES

1.2.2.1. FINAL PARTICLES AND INTONATION

Apart from semantics, the large inventory of FPs is another salient and problematic aspect in the study of FPs in SCAN. Yau (1980) and Cheung (1986) propose that the rich inventory of FPs is a means of compensation for the scarcity of intonation patterns in SCAN. According to them, FPs perform more or less the same function as intonation in non-tonal languages, where intonation is one of the important means for conveying modality. They further observe that intonation in SCAN is restricted and is localized to sentence final position. As Cheung (1986:250) notes, “Cantonese exploits both height and orientation for tonal contrasts, leaving little room for the intonational manipulation of pitch.” Based on the above observations, he hypothesizes that (a) the intrinsic pitch shape of FP is not tonal but intonational; (b) the sentence final syllable and the FP together are subject to contraction; and (c) the tones identified with FPs are the result of coercion. His hypotheses provide one potential account of the rich tonal and segmental manifestations of FPs in SCAN and of the phenomena that the tonal pattern of some FPs in authentic communication may not be identified with the prototypical tonal pattern of any of the six phonemic tones in the dialect.
1.2.2.2. PARTICLE CLUSTERING AND PHONETIC FUSION

As mentioned in section 1.1, there has been no consensus on the number of FPs in SCAN. The total number ranges from 30 to 90. To make matters more complicated, these basic forms can cluster up to 7 in total, as shown in (6), resulting in two or more FPs combined together to form over a hundred different combinations of particle clusters, including fused forms.

(6) A: 如果要拖，最多拖多個零月 tim1 gaa3 zaa3 bo3.
   Yugwo jiu to, zeoi do to do go-leng jyut tim1 gaa3
   if want delay most many delay more Cl-odd month FP FP
   zaa3 bo3. (Leung 1992: 2)
   'If (you) want to delay, (you can) delay for one-odd month at most.'
   [Total of 6 FPs: tim1 + ge3 + aa3 + ze1 + aa3 + bo3]

B: 你話最多拖多個零月 tim1 gaa3 zaa3 aalma5? 阿陳就已經拖咗
    成半年 laak3. (Leung 1992: 2)
   Nei waa zeoi do to do go-leng jyut tim1 gaa3 zaa3 aal ma5?
   you say most many delay more Cl-odd month FP FP FP FP
   Aa-Can zau jiging to-zo seng bun nin laak3.
   Aa-Can then already delay-Asp whole half year FP
   'You said (I can) delay for one or more months at most, right?' Aa-Can
   has already delayed for a whole half year!
   [Total of 7 FPs: tim1 + ge3 + aa3 + ze1 + aa3 + aal ma3 + aa5]

As shown above, during clustering, phonetic fusion may occur in some combinations rather than concatenation. For instance, as illustrated in (7), the FP \(aa3\) has a strong tendency to fuse with a preceding FP to form a new FP.

(7) \(ge3 + aa3 \rightarrow gaa3\)
    \(ze1 + aa3 \rightarrow zaa3\)
Semantically, *aa3* is considered a softener, in making an utterance sound less abrupt (Kwok 1984, Leung 1990). However, there is not much discussion on the semantic differences between the source and the surface form of the fused clusters.

The segment \(-k\) is another element that is frequently found to be attached to other FPs, as shown in (8).

\[(8) \quad \text{aa3 + -k } \rightarrow \text{ aak3}
\naa3 + -k \rightarrow \text{ laak3}
gaa3 + -k \rightarrow \text{ gaak3}
lo3 + -k \rightarrow \text{ lok3}\]

The direction of the derivation is uncontroversial since every Cantonese FP ending in \(-k\) has an open syllable counterpart but not vice versa. Most linguistic discussions recognize two generalizations concerning checked particles (i.e., those closed by a \(-k\) coda). First of all, phonologically, checked particles are not followed by other FPs to form particle clusters, unlike their non-checked counterparts, as illustrated in (9) and (10).

\[(9) \quad \text{a. zel maa3 (}^\ast\text{zek1 maa3)\n}\nb. zel gwaa3 (}^\ast\text{zek1 gwaa3)\n\nc. zel bo3 (}^\ast\text{zek1 bo3)\n\n(10) \quad \text{a. laa3 bo3 (}^\ast\text{laak3 bo3)\n}\nb. laa3 gwaa3 (}^\ast\text{laak3 gwaa3)\n\nAnd secondly, semantically, the checked form usually encodes a stronger force than the corresponding non-checked form. However, the status of \(-k\) is quite controversial; Leung (1990), for instance, considers \(-k\) a non-syllabic FP.
1.2.2.3. FINAL PARTICLES AND AUTOSEGMENTAL THEORY

In addition to particle clusters, there is a large number of FPs that share the same phonetic shape but have different tonal patterns. However, tonal variants of FPs have generally been neglected in the literature. An exception is Law (1990), who attempts to relate particles of similar meanings and pronunciations with the same underlying form in a systematic manner. In her work, she makes the following generalizations: (a) FPs with the mid-level tone, i.e. Tone 3, is relatively neutral; (b) the ones with low tone is usually associated with a stronger force of an utterance; while (c) those with high or rising tone generally conveys a weaker force. The particle laa3, for example, conveys a semantic meaning of 'changed situation' and is considered to be the underlying form of laa1 and laa4. According to her, laa1 conveys a sense of indefiniteness or tentativeness, whereas laa4 marks boredom or impatience on the top of 'changed situation.' She further explains the derivation in terms of autosegmental phonology. She proposes that laa1 is formed by attaching a weakener \([H]\) to laa3. \([H]\) is a tonal particle that consists solely of a high tone. Similarly, laa4 is formed by attaching a strengthener \([L]\) to laa3. \([L]\) is a tonal particle that consists only of a low tone. Her proposal is schematized in (11) and (12), where she adopts Yip's (1980) framework, which includes a register feature, \([\text{Upper}]\).
This proposal is presented with considerable formal rigor in systematically relating FPs that have similar phonetic shape but different tonal features. However, our empirical study shows that the design of a weakener and a strengthener is not adequate to account for the semantic and pragmatic differences between the underlying forms and their surface realizations. That is, even though Law (1990) may have developed a formal mechanism to derive the surface realizations of some FPs, the semantic and pragmatic nuances of the tonal variants remain unexplored.
1.2.3. THE SYNTAX OF FINAL PARTICLES

In the past, seldom does one find a discussion of the syntactic properties of FPs. It is taken for granted that FPs are, by and large, optional and hence the presence or absence of FPs should not affect the grammaticality of a sentence. Law (1990) is the first attempt to discuss the syntactic status of FPs under the Chomskyan framework. She argues that FPs occupy specific syntactic positions: question particles occupy the SPEC position of CP; ge3, laa3, laak3 and lo3 occur in the COMP position while timl occurs in VP. Combining the syntactic slots and phonological derivation, she attempts to provide an account for the ordering of particle clusters. Recently, Lee and Yiu (1998a, 1998b, 1999b) put forth a series of attempts on examining the syntactic distributions of FPs in addition to their semantic properties. In general, the study on the syntactic aspects of FPs is still embryonic.

1.2.4. SUMMARY

FPs in SCAN exhibit a complex interplay of semantics, pragmatics, phonology and syntax, thus involving almost every linguistic aspect of human communication. Although FPs are, comparatively speaking, one of the more studied areas in SCAN, we still know so little about them. Given the present situation, I believe that we need to first establish a fuller understanding of the meanings conveyed by FPs.
1.3. THEORETICAL PRELIMINARIES

The present study, in general, adopts a cognitive and functional approach to the study of linguistic issues. In the following subsections, I will highlight some theoretical frameworks that the present study assumes.

1.3.1. MODALITY

As mentioned in section 1.1, Chinese linguists refer to FPs as modal particles, as they are expected to encode modality. But what is modality? There is, to date, no uncontroversial definition of modality. Extensive discussions on the definition of modality can be found in Lyons (1977) and Palmer (1986). This study adopts Palmer's (1986) position that modality is a semantic phenomenon in which the content of an expression reflects the speakers' attitude or state of knowledge about a proposition. Most researchers in the field recognize two types of modality: epistemic and deontic. Epistemic modality, as exemplified in (13a), is concerned with language as information, with the expression of the degree or nature of the speaker's commitment to the truth of the proposition. Deontic modality, as exemplified in (13b), is concerned with language as action, mostly with the expression by the speaker of her attitude towards necessary or possible actions performed by herself or the hearer. (Palmer 1986, Papafragou 1998). A corresponding set of examples from SCAN is given in (14) using FPs. The FP laa1 in (14a) carries epistemic modality; it informs the hearer of a piece of information that is
considered an obvious fact while the \textit{laal} in (14b) conveys deontic modality which proposes a suggestion for the hearer to perform.\footnote{8}

(13)  
\begin{itemize}
  \item a. John must be home already; I see his coat. (Sweetser 1990:49) [epistemic]
  \item b. John must be home by ten; Mother won’t let him stay out any later. (Sweetser 1990:49) [deontic]
\end{itemize}

(14)  
\begin{itemize}
  \item a. \texttt{都七點 laal, 佢重未走 ge2?} [epistemic]
    \begin{itemize}
      \item \texttt{Dou cat dim laal, keoi zung mei zau ge2?}
      \item \texttt{already seven o’clock FP, he still not go FP}
    \end{itemize}
    \begin{itemize}
      \item \texttt{‘It’s already seven o’clock, how come he hasn’t gone yet?’}
    \end{itemize}
  \item b. \texttt{七點 laal, 唔大堂等 laal。} [deontic]
    \begin{itemize}
      \item \texttt{Cat dim laal, hai daaitong deng laal.}
      \item \texttt{seven o’clock FP, at main-lobby wait FP}
    \end{itemize}
    \begin{itemize}
      \item \texttt{‘Let’s say seven o’clock, meet at the main lobby.’}
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

As revealed in (13) and (14), the same lexical item can be used to express both epistemic and deontic modality. The ambiguity is not restricted to English modal verbs and Cantonese FPs only but is attested cross-linguistically. Sweetser (1990), in fact, claims that epistemic modality is a metaphorical extension of deontic modality, and that epistemic modality has evolved from deontic modality historically. The validity of this claim will be explored in the present study.

In some works, epistemic modality is further classified into two sub-categories: judgmental and evidential. Judgmental, as demonstrated by (13a) and (14a), refers to the marking of the subjective status of the speaker’s understanding or knowledge of the proposition based on deductions from facts known to him. Evidential refers to the marking of the source of the knowledge, or ways to acquire the knowledge, such as through the speaker’s sensory system or by hearsay. However, there may not be a clear
distinction between judgmental and evidential in many languages. In fact, Chafe (1986:271) has extended the notion of evidential to cover judgmental modality. In SCAN, most FPs mark judgmental modality. There is only one hearsay particle in the dialect, wo3, which marks pure evidential modality. However, since this particle will not be included in the present study, this dissertation will maintain the traditional classification of epistemic modality, and distinguishes judgmental from evidential.

1.3.2. SEMANTIC MEANING AND PRAGMATIC MEANING

The boundary between semantics and pragmatics has been debated extensively in the literature (see Levinson 1983 and Leech 1983). However, a distinction on semantic meaning and pragmatic meaning needs to be drawn in order to resolve the problems experienced in previous studies on FPs. The distinction in this study is drawn from the perspective of Relevance Theory developed in Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995), Wilson and Sperber (1993), and Blakemore (1992). As elaborated by Carston (1998), the distinction between semantics and pragmatics on the relevance-theoretic view is a distinction between two types of cognitive processes that are used in understanding utterances, namely, decoding and inference. The semantic decoding process is performed by an autonomous linguistic system that, through a series of grammatical computations, generates a semantic representation, or logical form, of a sentence. The pragmatic inference process further integrates the linguistic information provided by the semantic representation with other contextual non-linguistic
information to interpret the speaker's informative intention. To illustrate the decoding process, consider sentences (15) and (16) in Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995: 10).

(15) I'll come tomorrow.
(16) Betsy's gift made her very happy.

In order to interpret these utterances, the hearer has to first decode the semantic representations of the sentences according to the linguistic information stipulated in the grammar of English. For instance, 'I' always refers to the speaker, 'Betsy' refers to a person with this name, 'tomorrow' refers to a day after the utterance. However, the semantic representation only provides a skeletal template of the full proposition that the speaker intended to communicate. The hearer has to further enrich the incomplete representation in the inferential process by determining which persons 'I' and 'Betsy' refer to, which day 'tomorrow' picks out, what sense the ambiguous word 'gift' is to be taken. In normal cases, the hearer should have no difficulty picking out the correct interpretation since only one of them will make sense to the hearer in the context. This is possible because interlocutors usually try to communicate information that is relevant, informative and comprehensible.

The inference process is basically a hypothesis formation and confirmation process constrained and guided by the communicative principle of relevance. This principle licenses the hearer to interpret every utterance under the presumption that the utterance will have adequate relevant contextual information for minimum processing effort in the communicative context. It has to be highlighted that the communicative
context that both the speaker and the hearer are restricted to is a psychological construct, a subset of the communicator's assumptions about the world rather than the actual state of the world. In essence, the relevance principle is built upon a general assumption underlying many cognitive theories in which humans are regarded as rational information processors who not only possess the ability to derive valid conclusions from the premises but also the ability to do that as efficiently as possible. In the Relevance Theory, utterance interpretation is merely a particular form of inferential processing that humans are doing all the time to understand the phenomena in the world.

1.3.3. MULTIPLE LINGUISTIC DOMAINS AND SEMANTIC EXTENSION

In addition to Relevance Theory, the present work is also inspired by the cognitive-semantic studies on polysemy structures (such as Traugott 1982, 1989 and Sweetser 1990). Their works suggest that words do not acquire new senses randomly, but by cognitive structuring. Multiple synchronic senses will normally be related to each other in a motivated manner, and, hence, there should be structured and unified meaning among polysemous lexical items (see Sweetser 1990). Based on these assumptions, some cognitive-semanticists attempt to uncover the motivation behind previously random-looking groupings of meanings by proposing an utterance multiple domain-structures in analyzing its linguistic meanings. Sweetser (1990), for instance, proposes three linguistic domains for an utterance, namely, content (real-world) domain, epistemic domain, and speech act domain. Her proposal is illustrated by the different uses of 'because' in the following sentences given in (Sweetser 1990:77).
According to Sweetser, the two clauses of (17a) are connected by real-word causality, that is to say, his love was the cause of his coming back. (17b), however, does not naturally mean his love causes his coming back in the real word. The causality is most readily interpreted in the epistemic domain: the speaker’s knowledge of ‘John’s return’ (as a premise) causes the conclusion that ‘John loved her.’ (17c) would be totally incomprehensible if the conjunction were understood in the content domain. Rather, the causality should be understood in the speech act domain: I ask what you are doing tonight because I want to suggest that we go to see this good movie. These three sentences clearly demonstrate how the single semantics of ‘because’ extends from the content domain, to the epistemic domain, and finally to the speech act domain.

Along these lines of analysis, the present work makes use of the following linguistic domains to explain the semantic extension of FPs in SCAN, namely, the sentential, propositional, discourse, epistemic and speech act domains. The sentential domain involves individual constituents within the sentence; the propositional domain that of propositional content denoted by the whole sentence; the discourse domain that of the connection between clauses; the epistemic domain that of the interlocutors’ epistemic knowledge towards the propositional content of a sentence; and the speech act domain that of the action conveyed by the sentence. In addition to the above linguistic domains, this study also finds the contrast between de-re and de-dicto domain useful in
analyzing FPs. To put it in a simple way, *de re* domain refers to the domain of the real world while *de dicto* domain refers to the domain of speech (cf. Frajzyngier 1991). The distinction between these two domains are best illustrated by (18) and (19).

(18) That the cabinet is corrupt is very sad.
(19) That the cabinet is corrupt is completely unfounded. (Papafragou 1998)

The ‘that-clause’ in (18) introduces a description of an actual statement of fact. The ‘that-clause’ in (19), on the other hand, introduces an assumption that is put forth as a representation of a hypothesis for the speaker to comment on. Note that the *de re* domain is regarded as the descriptive use of language in Relevance Theory: a propositional form is a description of the state-of-affairs in the real world. The theory considers the *de dicto* domain to involve the interpretive use of language: that is, a propositional form is entertained as a second-order representation of representations.

1.3.4. WORD FAMILIES

The cognitive semantic approach described in the above may shed some light on analyzing the multiple meanings of FPs for the same form. However, the study of FPs in SCAN encounters yet another problem, namely, multiple forms for the same meaning. As introduced in beginning of this chapter, SCAN has a large number of semantically-related FPs that are phonologically similar to each other. They exhibit a high degree of interchangeability and are treated as free variations in some works but as distinct particles in others. The present study adopts the view that “the natural condition of
language is to preserve one form for one meaning, and one meaning for one form” (Bolinger 1977:x) and the view that “total interchangeability between any two linguistic expressions is almost non-existent” (Haiman 1985:21). I propose that those semantically and phonologically FPs are conditioned variants of an underlying particle and that all manifestations are linked to form a word family. The term ‘word family’ is put forth in Karlgren (1934) but the concept of word family itself has a long history in traditional Chinese linguistic studies. Chinese philologists have observed that there are words in Archaic Chinese that are related in meaning and similar in sounds and which can be systemically linked into word families. Take (20) for example. It records three members of a word family that share the same initial *z- and are related in semantic meaning. The reconstructions in (20) are based on Pulleyblank (1973).

(20) 足 *zi ‘succeed, inherit,’
     細 *ziē ‘arrange in order, succession,’
     續 *zuēk ‘continue’

Pulleyblank (1973) further proposes that in ancient Sino-Tibetan languages, the basic meaning of a word was expressed by a single consonant root, which was then extended by additional elements that defined its meaning more precisely. He also notes that this process of morphological derivation is not unique to Sino-Tibetan languages but is found in other unrelated languages as well.
1.3.5. FUNCTIONAL PRIMES

In order to fully understand the system of FPs, we need to further investigate the idiosyncratic meanings of each manifestation within each of the three particle families. The present work attempts to postulate, for each manifestation, a bundle of distinctive functional primes. It should be noted that I will not try to advance a full feature set for each manifestation, and in fact no analyst has ever attempted to provide a full feature analysis for even one word in the study of lexical semantics. What is at issue is the identification of the features that are relevant to the meaning contrast that is found among the multitude of manifestations within each of the particle families. In other words, no more meaning primes than are necessary would be postulated. In some cases, this may mean positing just one difference to distinguish the different manifestations. Moreover, these primes are not privative; that is, they do not form mutually exclusive sets, as in the case of phonetic features. Rather, they are relational whose sole purpose is to keep the manifestations distinct: for a prime to be marked with a '+' or '-' sign means the necessary presence or absence of an element, while those to be unmarked means that the element may or may not be present—it is simply not specified. However, these primes may be suspended; that is, in some environments two FPs may not contrast with each other, and the opposition between them is then neutralized.

Since the difference between the manifestations within a particle family may refer to both semantic and pragmatic notions, the present work has to break some not-so-well defined pragmatic notions into semantic categories. The illocutionary force in directive speech acts is one of those. Directives include questions, commands, requests,
pleas, reminders, suggestions, permission, persuasion, advice, and so forth. Distinction among them usually relies on differences pertaining to not-so-well-defined notions of illocutionary force. Wilson and Sperber (1988), however, propose a new analysis of directives through different semantic worlds: actual, potential and desirable. According to them, a directive is an attempt to get the hearer to perform the action described by the conveyed proposition and, thus, is a description not of the state-of-affairs in the actual world but of one in the potential and desirable world. In other words, the state-of-affairs is envisaged as achievable and desirable by the speaker. However, the semantic representation of the directive is still undetermined. The indeterminacy has to be resolved pragmatically according to optimal relevance and other contextual assumptions, such as the social relationship between the speaker and the hearer. In general, directives fall into two broad pragmatic categories. For requests and commands, the indeterminacy is resolved in favor of the speaker: the state-of-affairs described is desirable from the speaker’s viewpoint, the realization of which will benefit the speaker. For advice and permission, the indeterminacy is resolved in favor of the hearer: the state-of-affairs described is desirable from the hearer’s viewpoint, the realization of which will benefit the hearers. In view of Wilson and Sperber’s proposal, the present work attempts to understand directives through the meaning dimension of desirability, potentiality, and the participation of the interlocutors in the speech acts.

The primes proposed in this work for the twenty-five particles include: propositional, connective, contrastive, concessive, exhortative, epistemic, temporal, perfective, enumerative, doubt, discourse bound, logic bound, H-knowledge (hearer
knowledge towards the proposition is assumed), h-assumption (a higher value in the evaluation scale is assumed), e-assumption (the existence of certain situation is assumed), interrogative, h-potential (the hearer is considered by the speaker to have high potential to perform a speech act), l-potential (the hearer is considered by the speakers to have low potential to perform a speech act), S-desirable (the realization of a speech act is in favor of the speaker), S-participate (the speaker is assumed to participate in performing a speech act), H-participate (the hearer is assumed to participate in performing a speech act).

1.4. THE DATA

The data for the present study are taken from twelve half-hour episodes of a videotaped TV drama series, *Kaleidoscope*, produced by the *Guangdong Television Company* in Guangzhou, People's Republic of China in the latter half of the 1980s. It is a situation comedy reflecting everyday life of a group of ordinary people living in the same neighborhood. The series is the first TV program in the PRC that is filmed in situ and adopts colloquial Cantonese as the language medium. The original scripts of the episodes were written primarily in MSC and some that contained a fair amount of SCAN syntax and vocabulary. As a result, most of the time, performers had to reinterpret the dialogues in the scripts and use their intuition of SCAN in saying their lines in colloquial SCAN. A quick cross-checking of the filmed episodes with the original scripts reveal few SCAN FPs in the original scripts; it is evident that almost all of the FPs are produced by the actors' natural improvisation. Twelve of the full set of
episodes in that TV series have been turned into a multimedia language program, edited by Walker (1994-1997), *Kaleidoscope: A course in intermediate to advanced spoken Cantonese*. These twelve episodes form the main corpus for this thesis. The twelve titles and the coding used in this study are listed in Figure 1.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Chinese Title</th>
<th>English Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>雨過天晴</td>
<td>Sunny sky after the storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>第一印象</td>
<td>First impression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>人情緊過債</td>
<td>To give gifts is more important than to pay debts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>等價交換</td>
<td>Exchange of equal value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>按章辦事</td>
<td>According to the rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>消費者的煩惱</td>
<td>Consumer's worry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>新任經理</td>
<td>The new manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>萬花又迎春</td>
<td>Maahnfa greets the spring again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>短命信箱</td>
<td>The short-lived mailbox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>玉照風波</td>
<td>Fuss over a woman's picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>心知肚明</td>
<td>You know, I know, everybody knows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>無盡的害</td>
<td>Endless harm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.1. Titles of Episodes Used in This Study

In addition to *Kaleidoscope*, the study will also draws examples from previous studies as well as examples based on my own introspection. According to my intuition,
the examples demonstrated in Kaleidoscope do not exhibit any noticeable difference between the use of FPs in Guangzhou Cantonese and Hong Kong Cantonese.

1.5. ROMANIZATION

The phonetic transcription of SCAN adopted in this study is *JyutPing*, based on the romanization system proposed by the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong (LSHK). *Hanyu Pinyin* is the romanization system used for Modern Standard Chinese (MSC) expressions. For typographical convenience in transcribing the SCAN data, tone marks are not given in the examples except for FPs. IPA transcriptions will also be provided for the first occurrence of a FP in the dissertation. It should be noted that transcriptions in other publications have been converted into the LSHK system for ease of comparison. The transcriptions of the corpus are based on actual pronunciations, which may differ from standard pronunciations provided in dictionaries. For example, although authoritative sources distinguish the initials *n* [n] and *l* [l], they are not distinguished for most speakers of the younger generation, and that is reflected in the corpus. The phonological inventory of SCAN, according to the adopted romanization scheme, is given in Figures 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4.
## Initials

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>t [tʰ]</td>
<td>n [n]</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>ng [ŋ]</td>
<td>h [h]</td>
<td>w [w]</td>
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<tr>
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<td>s [s]</td>
<td>j [j]</td>
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</tbody>
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Figure 1.2. The Initials in SCAN

## Rimes

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<td>ik[ik]</td>
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Figure 1.3. The Rimes in SCAN
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone marks</th>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Chao's letter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>high-fall (with a level variant)</td>
<td>53 / 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>high-rise</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>mid-level</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>low-fall (with a level variant)</td>
<td>21/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>low-rise</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>low-level</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.4. The Tones in SCAN

1.6. ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>classifier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asp</td>
<td>aspect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lnk</td>
<td>linking particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nom</td>
<td>nominalizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prt</td>
<td>particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FP</td>
<td>final particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>ungrammatical structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>odd structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>??</td>
<td>very odd structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>grammatical but infelicitous structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTES

1 Yue is one of seven major dialect groups of Modern Chinese (Yuan 1960/1989). The other six are Mandarin, Wu, Xiang, Gan, Kejia, Yue, Min (which is further subdivided into Northern and Southern Min). For some historical background on the Yue dialect group, see Yuan 1960/1989; Hashimoto 1972; etc.)

2 Ze1 and zeik1 have long been treated as two free variants of a FP. In Chapter 2, I will discuss the meaning difference between these two particles.

3 The particle is transcribed as [tse'] in Yuan (1960).

4 Chapter 2 will provide a detailed discussion of the various meanings of this particle.

5 See also Chan (1998) and sources cited therein.

6 Acoustic research to date on intonation in SCAN and on the interaction between FPs and intonation is very limited. See, for example, Wong, Chan and Beckman (forthcoming) and sources cited therein.

7 Palmer (1990) introduces a third type, dynamic modality, whose grounds for introduction is unclear. Some linguists group dynamic and deontic together as root modality.

8 Details of the functions of laai1 will be discussed in Chapter 3.
CHAPTER 2

THE PARTICLES OF RESTRICTION: Z-

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses a particle family whose members all have an unaspirated affricate as their onset. Its manifestations include $z\text{e}1$ [tse\text{55}], $z\text{e}k\text{l}$ [tsek\text{5}], $z\text{e}4$ [tse\text{21}], $z\text{aa}3$ [tsa\text{33}], $z\text{aa}4$ [tsa\text{21}]; $z\text{aa}5$ [tsa\text{13}]; and $z\text{aa}k\text{l}$ [tsak\text{55}]. In the literature, these manifestations have been described as depreciatory particles bearing the meaning of ‘only.’ They have also been associated with a bewildering variety of meanings such as delimiting, reporting, refuting, downplaying, persuading, interrogating, asserting, and the marking of affection, coquettishness, impatience, pride, contempt, jealousy, etc. (see, for example, Ball 1883/1924, Wisner 1906, Light 1982, Kwok 1984 and Leung 1992).

I propose that the numerous manifestations of FPs can be analyzed as having evolved from one core semantic feature — restriction. Restriction further induces scalar and evaluative senses, giving rise to the semantic features of delimitive/diminutive and exclusive. These conceptual features extend from the sentential domain to the
propositional, discourse, speech act, and epistemic domains, deriving various functions of the particle.

Below, I first discuss the semantic extension of the core meaning of Z-, which is schematized in Figure 2.1, and then move on to discuss the distinctive features of each manifestation of this particle family.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applied subjects</th>
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<th>Contextual Functions</th>
<th>FPs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentential elements</td>
<td>restrictive</td>
<td>Delimiting</td>
<td>( zel ) , ( zekl ) , ( zaaz ) , ( zaazn )</td>
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<td>Propositions</td>
<td>diminutive</td>
<td>Downplaying, Showing Contempt</td>
<td>( zel ) , ( zekl )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clauses or Utterances</td>
<td>exclusive</td>
<td>Contrasting</td>
<td>( zel ) , ( zaaz )</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speech acts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Requests</td>
<td>diminutive</td>
<td>Persuading</td>
<td>( zekl )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directives</td>
<td>diminutive</td>
<td>Exhorting</td>
<td>( zel ) , ( zekl )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperatives</td>
<td>exclusive</td>
<td>Marking temporal immediacy</td>
<td>( zaaz ) , ( zaakl )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of propositional knowledge</td>
<td>diminutive</td>
<td>Posing judgment and comments, Commenting</td>
<td>( zel ) , ( ze4 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>exclusive, diminutive</td>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>( zekl )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.1: The Semantic Extension of Z-
2.2. THE SEMANTIC EXTENSION OF THE CORE MEANING OF Z-

I purpose that the core semantic meaning of particle Z- is that of 'restriction.' The Z- particle places restrictions on various constituents of a sentence, such as the object in (1), the subject in (2), and the VP in (3). Z- restricts the alternatives to the value of the focused expression, indicating that none of the alternatives under consideration satisfies the truth condition of the sentence (cf. Köing 1991). Taking (1) as an example, Z- restricts the object of the VP and indicates that besides the 'tangerine plant,' there is no other entity that can serve as an alternative for the object in that particular sentence. In contemporary linguistic theory, restriction is related to focus-marking. A restrictive element marks that part of the proposition to be restricted and focused. The following examples of the uses of some members of this family will suffice to illustrate the restrictive feature and the focus-marking function of Z-.

(1) 
你係唔係盤植 zel，係咪 aa3？(5.07)  
Nei wai-зо  pun gat zel, hai mai aa3?  
you because-of-Asp Cl tangerine FP is not-is FP  
'It’s all just because of one tangerine plant, isn’t it?'

(2) 
唔關你事，係我搞錯咗 zel。(3.01)  
M-gwan nei si, hai ngo gaauco-zo zel.  
not-concern you matter is I mess-up-Asp FP  
'It doesn’t concern you. It’s me who messed (that) up.'

(3) 
我係唔係迎春花展助興 zaa3。(8.01)  
Ngo hai wai-zo Jing Ceon Faazin zohing zaa3.  
I is because-of-Asp welcome spring flower-show celebrate FP  
'I just want to support the Welcoming-the-Spring Flower show.'
2.2.1. DELIMITING SENTENTIAL ELEMENTS

As found cross-linguistically, restrictive particles have a strong tendency to encode evaluation (cf. König, 1991: 43-45). They may induce an order for the value of the focus and the alternatives under consideration. The value of the focus may be ranked as ‘high’ or ‘low’ on some scale of relevant values in a given situation. In SCAN, the particle Z- evaluates the focused value (quantity, time, range, extent, etc.) as a minimal value, conveying a delimiting or diminutive sense. The reason for the induction is straightforward. In the process of restriction, only a small number of entities or a small extent of the event will be singled out from the discourse universe to be included in the proposition, giving rise to delimitative or diminutive features. The delimitative/diminutive sense can co-occur with restrictive adverbs with similar semantic meaning, such as 只係 zi-hai ‘only’ and 只不過 zibatgwo ‘only,’ as in (1’) through (3’). The restrictive adverbs further emphasize the restriction, hence double-marking the restriction, which to some extent may help us to identify the restriction scope of ze1.

(1’) 你只係爲咗盤桔 ze1，係咪呀？(5.07)
Nei zi-hai wai-zo pun gat ze1, hai mai aa3?
you only because-of-Asp Cl tangerine FP is not-is FP
‘It’s all just because of one tangerine plant, isn’t it?’

(2’) 唔關你事，只係我搞錯咗 ze1。(3.01)
M-gwan nei si, zi-hai ngo gaauco-zo ze1.
not-concern you matter only me mess-up-Asp FP
‘It doesn’t concern you. It’s me who messed (that) up.’
2.2.2. DOWNPLAYING THE PROPOSITION CONTENT OF THE WHOLE SENTENCE

The delimitive/diminutive feature of Z- does not apply only to sentential elements. It may range over the whole sentence, delimiting the significance of the propositional content conveyed by the sentence. This sense is often associated with disapproval combined with contempt. In many cases, the downplaying sense and the delimitative/diminutive sense may be difficult to tease apart. However, when we proceed to examine examples (4) through (6), we find that the FP conveys merely a sense of downplaying. Since the FPs in the sentences do not restrict any specific constituent at the sentential level, it is impossible to identify the scope of restriction of Z- by inserting a restrictive adverb in the sentences. For instance, when we insert zihai ‘only’ in various positions in (4), we get the ungrammatical sentences in (4’).

(4) 最多將明仔接番番嚟 zei, 唆得未？(12.09)
Zeoido zoeng Mingzai zipfaan faanlei zei, gam dak mei?
most Prt Mingzai receive come-back FP then okay yet
‘At worst, (we) get Mingzai home, is that okay?’
(5) 噢，我就唔係要啲多嘅 ze1，攞個意頭 ze1 maa3，八盤 laa1！(5.10)
Oh, I don’t want that much, (it’s) just a symbol for good luck, let’s make it “eight.”

(6) 媽，你真係論盡嘅 zek1!(6.07)
Mom, you’re so clumsy (careless, dumb)!

(4') a. *只係最多將明仔接番嘅 ze1，噹得未？
   *Zihai zeoido zoeng Mingzai zipfaan faanlei zel, gam dak mei?
   only most Prt Mingzai receive come-back then okay yet

b. 最多只係將明仔接番嘅 ze1，噹得未？
   Zeoido zihai zoeng Mingzai zipfaan faanlei zel, gam dak mei?

c. *最多將明仔只係接番嘅 ze1，噹得未？
   * Zeoido zoeng Mingzai zihai zipfaan faanlei zel, gam dak mei?

2.2.3. CONTRASTING TWO CLAUSES OR UTTERANCES

Some manifestations of Z- are not found only at the sentence final position, which is the typical position for FPs. Instead, Z- can also occur at clause final position to conjoin two clauses in a complex sentence. Consider the following explanations

(7) 唱两句流行曲我就唔掂 ze1，唔通唱兩句粵曲我都唔得咩？(8.05)
I can’t sing popular songs, (but surely) won’t I be able to sing Cantonese opera?
In each of the above complex sentences, there are two premises that are placed side by side with an implied contrast. In (7), the truth of the first premise ‘I can’t sing pop songs’ is admitted, but the second premise ‘I am able to sing Cantonese opera’ is asserted. In (8), the first premise ‘I look idle’ is stated, the second premise – that it is really tough to be idle and is no fun – presents the speaker’s reservation on the first premise. In (9), the Z- particle contrasts the first premise, ‘this side of the road has just gotten paved over’, with the second premise, ‘the other side of the road is being dug up.’ The contrastive sense of Z- gives rise to the pragmatic function of refuting one premise and defining the other.

Semantically, for Z- the contrastive sense is not unmotivated. Note that restriction necessarily entails exclusivity. During restriction, only a limited number of entities are included in a proposition; the majority are excluded or negated. For Z-, the exclusive feature mainly acts in the discourse domain; it asserts the premise presented
by one clause while negating the premise presented by the other clause, thereby producing a contrastive meaning.

The occurrences of the contrastive Z- are not restricted to the first clause; Z- may also be appended to the second clause, as in (10): the first premise deals with ‘to gain in this part’ and the second premise, which is appended by Z, deals with ‘to lose in the other.’

(10) 哎，份份都想撈，點知呢頭賺，就嚟頭蝕 ze1。(10.03)
Hng, fanfan dou seong lou, dim zi ni tau zaan, zau go tau sit ze1.  
well CI-CI all want do how know this head gain then that head loseFP  
‘Well, (you) want to succeed in every field. Who knows (you’ll) gain in this part but lose in the other.’

Regardless of its location in the sentence, the contrastive sense of Z- remains explicit in the above attested examples since the two premises involved are overtly present. However, the contrastive sense of Z- becomes less explicit in some cases, as in (11), when the first premise is presented by a rhetorical question, ‘I took it?’ which actually implies ‘I didn’t take it.’ in reference to a sum of money. The following utterance explains how the speaker came into possession of that money.

(11) 我撿嘅咩？佢畀我嘅 ze1。(10.07)
Ngo lo ge3 me1? Keoi bei ngo ge3 ze1.  
FP take FP he FP give me FP  FP  
‘I took it? He gave it to me.’

In the following examples, the contrast sense of Z- becomes very implicit as there is only one premise present in each sentence.
Obviously, Z- does not conjoin two clauses in a complex sentence. Instead, it becomes clear that Z- conjoins two utterances in a dialogue pair when we extend our investigation to a larger discourse unit. In other words, the utterance in a previous exchange conveys the first premise while the utterance in the current exchange, which is appended by Z-, conveys the second premise. To illustrate these points, let us turn to sentence (13) above, and provide the utterance that preceded it as well (13'). The dialogue takes place between FG and his wife BJ. FG expresses his objection to purchasing some speakers from Aa-Kwan, BJ’s cousin, while BJ uses (13), given above, to refute his opinion.
(13') FG: 吳得，呢啲擴音機 aa3, 未曾經過檢驗 gaal maa3, 點知佢係唔係流嘅嘚 zek1?
M-dak, ni di kwongiamgei aa3, mei-cang ginggwo gimjim not-possible this Cl speaker FP not-yet through inspection gaal maa3, dim zi keoi hai-m-hai lauje lei4 ge3 zek1?
FP FP how know they is-not-is defective FP FP FP ‘No can do, these speakers have not been inspected, how (can I) know if they are not defective?’

BJ: 嗨系係連阿昆都信唔過嘚 ze1! (7.02)
Gam zik-hai lin Aa-Kwan dou seon-m-gwo ge3 ze1!
so that-is even Aa-Kwan even trust-not-Asp FP FP ‘That means even Aa-Kwan can’t be trusted!’

Similarly, sentence (14) is expanded in (14’) to give the dialogue between WF, one of BJ’s neighbors, and AK, BJ’s cousin. AK mentions that he has been quite busy recently since it has become difficult to make a living. WF then uses (14) to bring out the other side of the story: being busy implies having good business and enjoying a prosperous life.

(14’) WF: 阿昆，呢輪好少見你出嘚探你嘅阿冰姐嘅 wo3。
Aa-Kwan, nei lun housiu gin nei ceotlei taam neidei Aa-Kwan this Cl seldom see you come-out visit your Aa-Bingze wo3.
Aa-Bingze FP ‘Kwan, these days I seldom see you come to visit Bingze.’

AK: 去過嘚啦，去過嘚啦，呢一輪呢，搵食艱難啊。
Heoi-gwo gaa3 laa3, heoi-gwo gaa3 laa3. Nei jat lun nei1, wan-sik go-Asp FP FP go-Aso FP FP this one Cl FP find-eat gaannaan aa3. Panpan-pokpok, mai jau hai wai loeng caan. difficult FP hurried-hasty not-is again is find two Cl ‘I did, I did. Working is tough these days. Busy all the time. It’s all for the sake of earning a living.’

40
Note that the premise to be juxtaposed may even be totally absent in the dialogues since the premise may be a concept that has not been linguistically communicated in the dialogues. Now, imagine a woman dropping in to a discount store to shop for budget items and utters (15) to begin a conversation with her friend.

(15) 啱啱唔平 zel.  
Di je m-peng zel.  
CI thing not-cheap FP  
‘It’s not cheap.’

Her utterance is not juxtaposed with any overt linguistic elements but it conveys her refutation of the belief and expectation that discount stores should have bargains.

2.2.4. PERSUADING

Up until now, I have shown that the semantic feature of Z- has extended from the syntactic and propositional domains to the discourse domain. The semantic extension of Z- does not stop here. The restrictive feature of Z- extends further to the pragmatic domain, ranging over speech acts conveyed by the utterances. This function can best be illustrated by the following famous examples of zekl that are frequently cited in the literature.
In the above utterances, the use of the FP *zekl* has long been described as conveying coyness and a strong coquettish air. In fact, the function of *zekl* is still a manifestation of the core semantic feature of restriction. The restrictive feature of Z- diminishes a directive $D$ conveyed by the utterance. With $D$ as a request, Z- downplays the difficulty in performing $D$, implying that the request is not a big deal and that the hearer should have no problem fulfilling it. The speaker then uses the utterance as a means of persuasion.

2.2.5. EXHORTING

In addition to request, $D$ may also be a question, as in the following utterances. Z- is appended to A-not-A structures as in (18); VP-Neg structures as in (19); and Wh-structures as in (20).
In the literature, these examples are often used to support the claim that Z- bears the questioning function. However, we have to make it clear that the questioning function is performed by the interrogative structures/elements in the utterances, not the FP. Z- does not change the sentence from a statement to a question. Rather, the restrictive feature of Z- downplays the question, implying that the D is just a simple question and the hearer should have no problem providing a prompt response. For information-seeking questions, Z- marks the urgency for a response from the hearer. For rhetorical questions, Z- restates the presupposition. In both cases Z- conveys an exhortative sense when appended to a question. Exhortative sense refers to the encouraging, admonishing, or urging of some course of action, and these cases involve urging that an answer be given to the question posed.
2.2.6. MARKING TEMPORAL IMMEDIACY

In addition to requests and questions, \( \Phi \) may also include imperatives, as in the following utterances. Different from the aforementioned senses, we find that \( Z \)-contributes a temporal restriction to the utterances—it points out that \( \Phi \) deserves top priority for implementation.

\[(21)\] 咪咁開心 zaa5. (Kwok 1984: 83)
Mai gam hoisam zaa5.
don’t so happy FP
‘Don’t get excited so soon!’

\[(22)\] 等我睇下 zaak1.
Dang ngo taihaa zaak1
let me look-a-bit FP.
‘Let me take a look.’

The exclusive feature of \( Z \)- excludes all other actions in the temporal domain, implying that only the action denoted by \( \Phi \) should be realized at speech time.

2.2.7. POSING JUDGMENT AND COMMENT

The last two senses of \( Z \)- that I am going to discuss are related to a highly abstract domain—state of epistemic knowledge. Let us start with the first set of data in the following.

\[(23)\] 你梗係態度唔好 ze1! (2.03)
Nei gang hai taidou m-hou ze1!
you must is attitude not-good FP
‘It must be that your attitude is bad!’
These examples present great challenge to linguists in characterizing the meaning of Z-. First, it is inappropriate to claim that the above sentences instantiate the delimitive use of Z-, since they all fail the restrictive adverb insertion test. Second, the downplaying sense may not be a possible solution either, since the contexts that Z- occurs in do not suggest such an intention on the part of the speaker. This point is best illustrated by (26) and (27). These sentences convey approval and positive attitudes of the speaker and are incompatible with the downplaying sense, which has a strong affinity to disapproval and negative attitudes. Third, extended discourse contexts in which these utterances occur have been examined and no evidence has been found to ascribe a contrastive use.
Upon closer scrutiny, all the above sentences involve the presenting of conclusions based on some obvious fact or straightforward reasoning. For instance, sentence (23) is a conclusion deduced from the following context: the hearer wants to get a soft drink, but his ruined bank note is rejected by the storekeeper. However, when the speaker, his sister, takes the same bank note to the same store, she has no problem getting the drink. The speaker concludes that their different treatment from the same storekeeper must be due to the hearer’s impolite attitude. Thus, she utters (23) as a response to the hearer’s puzzlement. The speaker of (27) sells clothing. By chance, she models for a fashion magazine. Friends who have seen her photos in the magazine predicted that her clothing business would be prosperous, due to the publicity she gained. Sentence (27) is a report on this straightforward deduction by her friends. In light of these observations, I propose that Z- in these sentences conveys the speaker’s confidence towards the truth of the proposition. The speaker considers that the presented conclusions are deduced through very obvious facts combined with straightforward reasoning. Hence, the restrictive feature of Z- diminishes the epistemic level of the propositional knowledge, implying that the proposition should not be difficult to acquire.

2.2.8. REPORTING A PIECE OF NEWS

In addition to the epistemic level of the propositional knowledge, the diminutive feature and the exclusive feature of Z- may also apply with respect to the number of persons who may possess the knowledge of the proposition. In (28) and (29), the
speakers report excitedly and proudly to their hearers a piece of news that was confidential. The speakers' pride comes from the assumption that only a limited number of people know the news, and the speakers are among those privileged ones.

(28) 我今朝撞見張院長 zek1! (Guo 1980:196)
Ngo gamziu zonggin Zoeng jyunzoeng zek!
I today ran-into Zoeng director FP
‘(You know what) I ran into Director Zoeng this morning!’

(29) 阿妹收到信 zek1, 後日 ‘in1(interview)’ aa3. (Leung 1992:56)
Aa-mui saudou seonzekl, haujat
Aa-younger-sister receive-successful letter FP day-after-tomorrow
‘in’ aa3.
interview FP
‘(Our) sister received the letter, (she has) an interview the day after tomorrow.’

As shown in the above discussion, the semantic features of Z- have extended from the sentential domain to a large number of linguistic domains, giving rise to various pragmatic meanings. In the next section, I am going to discuss how these meanings are expressed among the multitude of variations of the surface form of Z-.

2.3. THE MANIFESTATIONS

There are in total of 7 forms in the manifestations of Z-. They are ze1, ze4, zek1, zaa3, zaa4, zaa5 and zaak1. As shown in Figure 2.1, no one manifestation of Z- is able to convey all the senses of Z-. Although some senses of Z-, such as delimiting, may be realized by more than one manifestation, each manifestation bears its own unique characteristics that may not be totally interchangeable with other manifestations. In the
following sections, I provide a systematic account of the major functions and idiosyncratic properties of each of the manifestation of Z-.

2.3.1. ZE1

Our discussion starts with ze1, the most complicated manifestation of Z-. As shown in Figure 2.1, the semantic features of ze1 cover all the linguistic domains being identified for Z-. It conveys a broad range of senses, such as delimiting, downplaying, contrasting, exhorting and presenting judgment. Since ze1 can convey a wide range of senses, ambiguity between various senses is unsurprising. For instance, there will be four possible readings associated with the following utterance, which is a conversation opener during a visit to a new flat in Hong Kong.

(30) 間屋好大 ze1。
    Gaan nguk hou daai ze1.
    CI house very big FP
    ‘The flat is very big.’

First, the speaker may have heard some comments made by the hearer, or by someone known to the interlocutors, about the small size of the flat; she uses (30) to refute that comment or misperception. In this case, ze1 is used as a discourse connective with the first premise posed by another speaker some time ago. Second, it is widely known that Hong Kong is densely populated and most flats are comparatively small in size. The speaker finds this house to be bigger than the norm, and hence he uses this utterance to refute that misconception. The second use of ze1 can also be ascribed to a refuting
connective, but what the speaker refutes is a non-linguistic item. Third, the speaker utters this sentence with a negative emotional attitude, such as contempt. The speaker is jealous of the big size of the flat. He uses *zel* to downplay the propositional content conveyed by the utterance to convey an outward show of contempt in order to hide his envy. Fourth, the speaker utters the sentence in a neutral tone without any special emotion. The speaker simply reports a fact that he regards as very obvious: every person who has normal vision would be able to see that the flat is large. The particle *zel* downplays the epistemic status of the propositional content. Thus, the utterance ‘the flat is quite big’ is entertained as a second order representation, which is an interpretative use of the sentence in Relevance Theory. This sense of *zel* has seldom been reported in the literature, but has become widely used by Hong Kong teenagers in recent years. This usage is given in the following examples.3

(31) 條裙好靚 *zel*。
    *Tiu hwan hou leng *zel*.
   'The dress is very pretty.'

(32) 啞啞好好食 *zel*。
    *Di je houhou sik *zel*.
   'The food is very delicious.'

Initially, this usage may sound odd to the older generation since the attitude of approval, as in (31) and (32), is incompatible with the contempt sense usually marked by the particle.
2.3.2. ZEKl

In the literature, the differences between zekl and zel are not crystal clear. There is no consent on whether they are phonetic variants of one single particle or whether they are two distinct particles. According to the detailed literature review in Chan (1996), a number of works identify zekl as a feminine-marked particle with high affective value. They claim that zekl is used mostly by females and children to convey a sense of intimacy with a coquettish and coaxing air. It also sounds more polite and less assertive than zel due to its gender-marked nature (see, for example, Cheung 1972 and Ouyang 1990).

Below, I am going to show that zekl and zel are two distinct particles, each of which has its own unique characteristics. I begin the discussion with the overlapping senses: delimiting, downplaying and exhorting, followed by the unique senses: persuading and reporting.

2.3.1. DELIMITING

As shown below, the delimitative use of zekl and zel are mostly interchangeable. It is generally accepted that the zekl utterances convey a stronger emotional force than their zel counterpart. For example, the speaker of (33) uses zekl to complain to the hearer, her husband, about her dissatisfaction with needing to take care of all the visitors after the hearer had been promoted in the civil service.
Unlike (33) and (34), in cases such as (35), the utterance may convey different meanings after replacing zekl with zel and vice versa. First, the zekl utterance conveys stronger emotion than zel. The checked FP, zekl, reflects the speaker's pride and contentment in getting a really good deal on a pair of shoes at a large department store. Second, and more importantly, the zekl utterance conveys an assumption of the target price of the shoes that is different from zel. Zekl assumes a higher price but the price turns out to be lower and the speaker is happy about this. Zel assumes a lower price but
the price turns out to be higher. However, the speaker still finds the price acceptable. The proposed difference is well illustrated by (36). In the sentence, the first clause admits that the focused value ‘thirteen bucks’ is more expensive than expected. The second clause points out that even so, the sum is still acceptable. Thus, the particle zekl cannot be used in the utterance, since it is incompatible with the assumption made.

2.3.2. DOWNPLAYING

In this category, not all the tokens of zekl are replaceable by zel. The interchangeability depends on the compatibility of the extent of emotion expressed. For instance, zekl can be replaced by zel in (37), but irreplaceable in (38) to (40), where zekl marks a strong sense of contempt. The strong disapproval attitude in these utterances are marked by the intensifying adverb 真係 zanhai ‘truly’ in (38) and (39) and a reduplicated adjective 橫細細 waangbaangbaang ‘extremely unreasonable’ in (40). The reduplicated adjective is the more vivid, emphasized form of the bare adjective. It seems that the emotional force of zel is not strong enough to match the intensified predicates included in the sentences.

(37) 錢之嘛，容乜易 zekl/ze 1 ! (7/03)
Cin zil maa3, jung-mat-ji zekl/ze 1 !
money FP very-easy FP
‘(It’s) just money, no big deal!’

(38) 我 aa3，真係唔忍得你敲詐勒索 zekl/*ze 1 ! (10.06)
Ngo aa3, zan-hai m-jandak nei hauzaa-laaksok zekl/*ze 1 !
FP really-is not-stand-able you blackmail FP
‘I really can’t stand your blackmailing!’

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2.3.2.3. EXHORTING

Over 85% of zekl found in the corpus perform the function of exhortation. Most of them are associated with a strong sense of impatience, exasperation, and dismay on the part of speaker. If zekl is replaced with zel in the following utterances, the utterances are emotionally incompatible.

(41) 哎呀，乜你咁唔講道理嘅 zekl/?zei? (6.05)
Aijaa, mat nei gam m-gong doulei ge3 zekl/*zei?
oh why you so not-talk reason FP FP/FP
‘Oh, how can you be so unreasonable?’

(42) 輝呀，你講少兩句得唔得 zekl/?zei? (7.13)
Fai aa3, nei gongsiu loeng keoi dak-m-dak zekl/*zei?
Fai FP you say-less two sentence okay-not-kay FP/FP
‘Fai, can’t you just shut up?’

There are only 2 tokens in our corpus that are found to be related to the frequently-mentioned coquettish mood and these are not interchangeable with zel.
2.3.2.4. REPORTING

Zekl is the only manifestation of Z- that is used to report a piece of news to the hearer that the speaker treats as confidential and considers to be known by only a limited number of people. Usually, the particle is accompanied by excitement and pride on the part of the speaker on being an insider. And this may explain why other manifestations in that Z-particle family that do not have a strong affective value cannot perform this function.

(45) 我聽到個消息 zekl/*zel! (11.04)
Ngo tengdou go siusik zekl/*zel!
‘(Let me tell you) I heard some news!’

(46) 我擒晚嘅街處見到你 zekl/*zel! (Cheung 1972:181)
Ngo kam-maan hai gaai syu gindou nei zekl/*zel!
‘I saw you on the street last night.’
2.3.2.5. PERSUADING

Some of the coquettish *zekl* cited in the literature are in fact performing the persuading function. For instance, the speaker of (47) tries to persuade the hearer to get her some candies.

(47) 我好恨食糖 zekl/*ze1! (Cheung 1972:181)
    Ngo hou han sik tong zekl/*ze1!
    'I very love eat candy.'

However, it is found in contemporary SCAN that coyness and coquettish may no longer be the prototypical mood of the persuasive *zekl*. This FP may be associated more with dismay and impatience, as in (48), or with a firm tone of voice, as in (49).

(48) 食晒佢 zekl/*ze1, 唔好益佢啲。
    Siksaai keoi zekl/*ze1, m-hou jik keoidei.
    'Eat it up, don’t let (it) benefit them.'

(49) 去 zekl, 我喺一定會支持你 ge3。
    Heoi zekl, ngodei jatding wui zici nei ge3.
    'Go, go! We will definitely support you!'
In other cases, both zel and zekl are seemingly acceptable, as in (51) and (52).

(51) 間屋好大 zel/zekl。
Gaan nguk hou daai zel/zekl.
Cl house very big FP/FP
‘The flat is very big.’

(52) 對鞋好靚 zel/zekl。
Deoi haai hou leng zel/zekl.
Pair shoes very pretty FP/FP
‘That pair of shoes looks very pretty.’

However, upon closer scrutiny, the zekl utterances do not comment on a fact as obvious or self-evident. Instead, it reports on a piece of news that is considered by the speaker to be known only by a limited number of people, as glossed in (51’) and (52’). Unlike the zel utterances, which may not be colored by any special emotion, the zekl utterances are usually accompanied by a sense of pride and excitement. In other words, zekl conveys the reporting sense in the above utterances and cannot carry the judgment sense.

(51’) (You know what), the flat is very big.
(52’) (You know what), that pair of shoes looks very pretty.4

In addition to epistemic judgment, zekl seems to be more discourse final and cannot connect two clauses to form a contrastive, complex sentence as zel can.
2.3.2.7. THE UNIQUE FEATURE OF ZEK1

As revealed in the above discussions, zekl distinguishes itself from zel by its high affective value. However, the affection value conveyed by the particle seems to have undergone change over time. In contemporary usage, the stereotypical coquettish usage has declined greatly. In its place, the emotion of impatience and dismay is more readily found. The directive containing zekl sounds direct and demanding rather than indirect and polite, as reported in the literature. The pejorative emotion conveyed by zekl is not an isolated case. The same phenomenon is also found in other cases of linguistic means of marking the diminutive, such as the r-suffixation in MSC and the changed tone in SCAN. R-suffixation is a process of appending a suffix [r], which evolved from the lexical item 兒 [er] ‘son,’ to some noun phrases. The changed tone phenomenon involves the raising of the regular tone of a morpheme to a high rising
tong in colloquial SCAN. Both means mainly mark affection, playfulness and intimacy.

However, they are also associated with contempt and disparagement. Consider,

(55) R-suffixation in Mandarin
For affection: 小孩兒 xiaohair ‘little child’
For contempt: 小偷兒 xiaotour ‘thief’

(56) The changed-tone diminutive in Cantonese
For affection: 女女 neoi4 neoi2 (4→2) ‘girl’
For contempt: 後門 hau6 mun2 (4→2) ‘backdoor’

The shift is quite plausible according to everyday life experience. Human beings, on the one hand, will develop affection for intimate animate and inanimate objects that are small in size; on the other hand, such emotions may evolve to that of disparagement and even contempt for those objects due to familiarity (and perhaps due to their small size also). The shift from affection conveyed by zel should be noted, and the particle should no longer be stereotyped as gender-marked for coquettishness.

2.3.3. Zaa3

The number of zaas utterances in the corpus is much smaller than that of zel. Moreover, senses conveyed by zaas are less varied than zel and are confined to the delimitative and contrastive senses.
2.3.3.1. DELIMITING

Most tokens of zaa3 found in the corpus are performing delimiting function. For example,

(57) 能家下先至年初十 zaa3。(5.18) [object focus]
Gam gaahaa sinzi nin-co-sap zaa3.
so now only year-begin-ten FP
‘Well, it’s now only the tenth day of the New Year.’

(58) 我係為咗迎春花展助興 zaa3。(8.01) [VP focus]
Ngo hai wai-zo Jing-Ceon Faazin zohing zaa3.
I is because-Asp welcome-the-Spring flower-show add-happiness FP
‘My sole purpose is to support the Welcoming-the-Spring Flower show.’

(59) 淨係kap1 嚇幾廿個章 zaa3，就夠煩 laa1。(12.09) [VP focus]
Zinghaikap go gei jaa go zeong zaa3, zau gau faan laa1.
only stamp Cl several twenty Cl stamp FP then enough trouble FP
‘Just to get that large number of stamps is troublesome enough.’

(60) 而家就話好 zaa3。(Kwok 1984:51) [subject focus]
Jigaa zau waa hou zaa3.
now then say good FP
‘It’s quite good at this moment only.’

Although both zel and zaa3 have delimiting and contrasting functions, they are not always interchangeable. Consider the following utterances that are used to describe the price of an item.

(61) a. 一百蚊 zaa3。
    Jatbaak man zaa3.
one-hundred buck FP
    ‘It’s only ten dollars, (much cheaper than I expected.)’
b. 一百蚊 ze1.
   Jatbaak man ze1.
   one-hundred buck FP
   ‘It’s only ten dollars, (not too excessive.)’

As reflected by their translations, these two utterances convey different expectations of the speakers. As Kwok (1984:51) points out, zaa3 conveys the idea of insufficiency while ze1 the idea of not excessive. In other words, the speaker of (61a) assumed the price to be higher than one hundred dollars and it turns out to be lower. In contrast, the speaker of (61b) assumed the price to be lower than one hundred dollars, but it turns out to be higher than the assumption. The particle ze1 then tries to downplay the outcome and reassures the hearer that the amount is not too excessive, and is still reasonable or affordable. The difference in assumption can be shown by the (un)grammaticality of (62) and (63). These are then contrasted with (64).

(62) 吻使三百蚊咁多，一百蚊 zaa3/*ze1。
M-sai saambaak man gam do, jatbaak man zaa3/*ze1.
not-need three-hundred buck that much one-hundred buck FP/FP
‘(It) doesn’t cost three-hundred bucks. It’s one hundred bucks only.

(63) 佢邊有讀書 aa1, 成日瞓度玩 zaa3/*ze1。
Keoi bin jau duk-syu aa1, seng jat haidou waan zaa3/*ze1.
he where has study-book FP whole day at-place play FP/FP
‘When has he studied, (he spent) the whole day just playing.’

(64) 貴係貴些嘅，不過都係一百蚊 ze1/*zaa。
Gwai hai gwai-zo di, batgwo dou hai jatbaak man ze1/*zaa.
expensive is expensive-Asp a-bit but all is one-hundred buck FP/FP
‘(True,) it’s a bit expensive. Even so, it’s just one hundred bucks only.’
In (62), the first clause spells out the assumption that the amount is three hundred dollars. The second clause states that in reality it is only one hundred dollars, and hence is lower than the hearer had assumed. Hence, *zaa3* is grammatical for the utterance due to semantic compatibility while *zel* is not. In (63), the first clause conveys the speaker’s expectation that the person in question should have been studying, but in fact he has been playing all day. The outcome ranks much ‘lower’ than the desirable situation, which is the assumption. Hence, *zaa3* is good for the utterance but not *zel*. In (64), the first clause admits that the focused value ‘one hundred bucks’ is more expensive than expected. The second clause points out that the sum is still acceptable and reasonable. Thus, the particle *zel* instead of *zaa3* can be used in the utterance.

Recall that restrictive particles tend to induce scalar and evaluative senses (Köing 1991). *Zaa3* and *zel* are no exception but they have different assumptions in their evaluation scale of a given situation: *zaa3* assumes a higher value while *zel* assumes a lower value on the scale.

2.3.3.2. CONTRASTING

Similar to *zel*, *zaa3* can also connect two clauses in a complex sentence, as shown in (65) through (67). The connection induces a contrastive reading by juxtaposing two contradictory premises side by side.
(65) 呢邊唔闋砌好 zaa3, 唑邊又挖開喺整水管 wo3。(3.01)
Ni bin ngaamngaam pouhou zaa3, go bin jau waathoi lei zing
this side just pave-over FP that side again dug-up to fix
seeoi gun wo3.
water-pipe FP
‘This side has just gotten paved over, (now) that side is dug up to fix the
pipe.’

(66) 我一話告佢 zaa3, 點知佢重話畀我打聽埋咩訴訟程序 wo4。(10.12)
Ngo jat waa gou keoi zaa3, dim zi keoi zung bang ngo
I once say sue him FP how know he even help me
dating-maai me souzung cingzeoi wo4.
check-all what legal procedure FP
‘No sooner than I said that I’m going to sue him, who would have thought
that he would (immediately) say that he’d check the legal procedures for
me.’

(67) 好彩睇得早 zaa3, 唔係變成人係當肺炎係重牙煙 laa1。(12.11)
Houcoi taai-dak zou zaa3, m-hai binsing faijim m-hai zung
lucky see-Prt early FP not-is become pneumonia not-is even
ngaajin laa1.
dangerous FP
‘Good thing (he) saw (the doctor) early, otherwise (it’ll be) worse (when it)
turns into pneumonia.’

Although zaa3 can be replaced by zel in the above utterances, there is a subtle
difference between the connective zel and the connective zaa3. Consider the pair
below.

(68) a. 呢邊整好咗 zel, 唑邊重未 gaa3。
Ni bin zinghou-zo zel, go bin zung mei gaa3.
this side fix-good-Asp FP that side still yet FP
‘This side has been fixed, (but) that side not yet.’
2.3.3.3. SENSES THAT ZAA3 DOES NOT CONVEY

Zaa3 does not carry the downplaying function. There is a difference in assumption on the evaluation scale of a given situation between zaa3 and zel: zaa3 assumes a higher value while zel assumes a lower value. This difference may also explain why zel, but not zaa3, has the downplaying function, as illustrated in the following examples.
The speaker of (69a) considers getting Mingzai back home as worse on the scale of their ideal expectations. However, that is still a possible solution and an acceptable one. Hence, even the worst-case scenario, ‘to take Mingzai home’, is not too bad, and there would be nothing to worry about. Zei downplays the undesirability of the situation in the utterances. The ungrammaticality of zaai in (69a) indicates that the FP does not convey the downplaying function. On the other hand, zaai in (69b) conveys the sense that the utmost that can be done is ‘to take Mingzai home,’ which ranks lower than expectation, but there is nothing better that the speaker can do about it. Hence, zei is not grammatical in this utterance.

2.3.3.3.2. JUDGING

Thus far, we have seen that the restrictive feature of zaai seems to be confined to the sentential and textual domain; it does not extend to the epistemic status of the proposition content as zei does. This is illustrated in (70) and (71).
The intensified adjectival phrase in the above utterances are semantically incompatible with the 'delimitative/diminutive' meaning of zel and zaa3. However, the zel utterances are grammatical since the diminutive feature of the particle applies to the predicates of the sentences, but at the epistemic level of the propositions. Zel indicates that the sentences present the speaker's judgment based on obvious facts or simple reasoning. On the other hand, the diminutive feature of zaa3 does not extend over the whole propositional content, or the epistemic level of the propositions, but is confined to the sentential level. The semantic contradiction between 'diminutive' and 'intensifying' contributes to the ungrammaticality of the utterances. Our hypothesis can be tested by contrasting (72a) and (72b).

(70) 對鞋幾靚 zel/*zaa3。
Deoi haa gi leng zel/*zaa3.
pair shoe quite pretty FP/FP
'The shoes are quite pretty.'

(71) 件事好麻煩 zel/*zaa3。
Gin si hou maafaan zel/*zaa3
Cl matter very troublesome FP/FP
'The matter is quite troublesome.'

(72) a. 但淨係態度唔好 zel/zaa3。
Koei zinghai taaidou m-hou zel/zaa3.
he only attitude not-good FP/FP
'(His only fault is that) his attitude isn't good.'

b. 但梗係態度唔好 zel/*zaa3。
Koei ganghai taaidou m-hou zel/*zaa3.
he definitely attitude not-good FP/FP
'It must be that his attitude isn't good.'
Being restrictive particles, both *zei* and *zaa3* may co-occur with the restrictive adverb *zinghai* 'only' in (72a) due to semantic compatibility. However, the epistemic adverb *ganghai* 'must be' in (72b) introduces a judgmental reading and thus is not compatible with *zaa3*, which cannot convey judgment.

2.3.4. ZAA4

The *zaa4* particle performs only one function, namely, turning a statement into a yes-no question, which questions the small quantity of an entity or the limited extent of a state. Consider the following examples.

(73) 十蚊 wars zaa4?
Sap man zaa4?
ten buck FP
‘Ten dollars only?’

(74) 得咁多 zaa4?
Dak gam do zaa4?
have this much FP
‘Just got this much?’

(75) 淨係講對唔住 zaa4?
Zinghai kong deoi-m-zyu zaa4?
only say sorry FP
‘Just say sorry, (that’s all)’

The questions reflect the assumption of a larger quantity of some entities or a greater extent of a state held by the speaker. The question is posed because of the difference between the reality and the assumption.
According to Law (1990), question particles do not co-occur with other wh-elements. *Zaa4* does exhibit such co-occurrence restrictions, as shown in the following examples.

(76) 明解得十蚊 *zaa3/*zaa4?* [wh-word]
Dimgaaiai dak sap man *zaa3/*zaa4?
why have ten buck FP/FP
‘How come, there is only ten dollars?’

(77) 係唔係得十蚊 *zaa3/*zaa4?* [A-not-A]
Hai-mhai dak sap man *zaa3/*zaa4?
is-not-is have ten buck FP/FP
‘Is it just ten dollars only?’

2.3.5. ZAA5

*Zaa5* is rather unproductive in contemporary SCAN. It occurs only in imperatives, such as prohibition in (78), suggestion in (79) and (80), to convey exhortation.

(78) 吖嘈住 *zaa5*. (Kwok 1984: 82)
Mai cou-zyu *zaa5.*
don’t make-noise-Asp FP
‘Do not make any protesting noise yet (until you have heard my explanation).’

(79) 煮落飯先 *zaa5*. (Kwok 1984: 82)
Zyulok faan sin *zaa5.*
cook-Asp rice first FP
‘Let me put the rice in the pot and have it cooking first (before I do anything else).’
Dang ngo lamhaa zaa5.
let me think-Asp FP
‘Let me think about this for a little while first.’

(78) requests the hearer to observe the prohibition conveyed by the proposition, while
(79) and (80) request the hearer to allow the speaker to perform the action conveyed by
the proposition. In each case, the exclusive feature of zaa5 has been applied to an
imperative speech act, imposing a sense of temporal immediacy or priority and
suggesting that the speech act it is appended to should take place before anything else.

2.3.6. ZAAKI

Similar to zaa5, zaak1 also marks temporal immediacy on exhortation and is
also unproductive in contemporary SCAN. It occurs in highly specific imperatives—
the speaker suggests to himself to attempt to perform certain actions (Leung 1992). As
shown in the (b) sentences below, the hearer will definitely not participate in
performing the action described by the sentences.

(81) a. 等我睇下 zaak1。
Dang ngo taihaa zaak1.
let me see-Asp FP
‘Let me take a look.’

b. *你睇下 zaak1。
*Nei taihaa zaak1.
you see-Asp FP
‘Why don’t you take a look?’
2.3.7. **ZE4**

Ze4 is another infrequently-used FP in the contemporary speech community. It conveys one sole function, that of bringing up an event that the speaker assumes the hearer should know in order to remind the hearer of another, related event that had happened in the past (à la Leung 1992:100). In (83), the speaker wants to remind the hearer that she has visited his house before. She tries to describe a should-be-unforgettable event, that is, 'the hearer forgot to bring his keys,' to refresh the hearer’s memory.

(83) a. 我去過你屋企 aa3, 瞑次你唔記得帶鎖匙 ze4。(Leung 1992:100)
    Ngo heoi-gwo nei ngukkei aa3, go ci nei zung m-geidak daai
    I go-Asp your home FP that Cl you even not-remember bring
    sosi ze4
    key FP
    ‘I have been to your house (before), that time you forgot to bring your
    keys, (don’t you remember?)’

b. *我去過你屋企 aa3, 瞑次你唔記得帶鎖匙 ze4。
   *Ngo heoi-gwo nei ngukkei aa3, go ci nei m-geidak daai
   I go-Asp your house FP that Cl you not-remember bring
   sosi ze4
   key FP
This particle has one syntactic restriction and one semantic one. Syntactically, it has to co-occur with the adverb *Jung* ‘even’, as illustrated by the above sentences. Semantically, the speaker has to assume that the knowledge of the event appended by *ze4* is shared by the hearer. Consider the contrast in the following pair.

(85) a. *你都唔知，佢重唔記得帶鑰匙 ze4。*
   *Lei dou m-zi, keoi zung m-geidak daai sosi ze4.*
   You all not-know he even not-remember bring key FP
   ‘You don’t know that, he even forgot to bring the keys,’

b. 你都唔知，佢重唔記得帶鑰匙 aa3。
   Lei dou m-zi, keoi zung m-geidak daai sosi aa3.
   You all not-know he even not-remember bring key FP
   ‘You don’t know that, he even forgot to bring the keys,’

The particle *ze4* is used when an event is memorable and should be easily recalled by the hearer. As a result, it is not compatible with the first clause in (85a). No such
assumption is expected in the case of particle \textit{aa3} in (85b) and hence the sentence is grammatical.

2.4. SUMMARY

In the first half of this chapter, I proposed that [restrictive] is the core semantic feature of \textit{Z-} and described how the delimitative/diminutive feature and the exclusive feature are derived from that core semantic feature. I then outlined how the core semantic meaning of restriction and its associated features extend from the sentential domain to the propositional, discourse, speech act and epistemic domains, giving rise systemically to what previously have appeared to be random set of pragmatic meanings.

In the second half of the chapter, I discussed the functions and the characteristics of the seven manifestations of \textit{Z-}. The discussion is summarized in Figure 2.2 using the functional primes I introduced in Chapter 1. In the figure, the manifestations are arranged in an order that reflects their phonological resemblance. Also, note that [+H-participate] stands for ‘the hearer to participate in performance of the speech act;’ and [+h-assumption] stands for ‘assumption of a higher value on the evaluation scale’ respectively.
Figure 2.2. The Functional Primes of the Manifestations of Z-
NOTES

1 In fact, the predicative demonstrative gam ‘that’ in (12)-(14) has a referring-back function, signaling to the hearer to refer back to previously-mentioned elements.

2 Without the particle, these utterances may have different intonation modification in order to perform questioning.

3 The utterances usually contain intensifying adverbs, such as 好 hou ‘quite,’ and 好好 hou hou ‘very.’

4 The utterances can also be used by the speaker to persuade the hearer to get her that pair of pretty shoes.

5 Studies on SCAN has generally adopted the hypothesis that the changed-tone diminutive in Cantonese also originated from the morpheme 兒 ‘child, son’ (Bauer & Benedict 1997, and sources cited therein).

6 Tang (1998:45-46) claims that the restriction of zaa3 exhibits some locality effects: the subject and any adverbs preceding the subject are always excluded from focalization of zaa3. However, this claim is invalidated by the example given by Kwok (1984:51).

7 The following sentence seems to be a contradiction to our claim.

(1) 好快 zaa3。
    Hou faai zaa3.
    ‘It’s quick.’

However, it should be noted that the adverbial phrase ‘very quick’ does not denote movement, but refers to a short duration of time. Compare (2a) and (2b):

(2) a. *架車開得好快 zaa3。
    *Gaa ce hoi dak hou faai zaa3.
    ‘The car is moving fast.’

b. 好快 zaa3, 都唔使三分鐘。
    Hou faai zaa3, dou m-sai saam fan zung.
    ‘Very fast. It took less than three minutes.’

The speaker of (2b) expresses the sentiment that the time required turned out to be less than expected.
3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses a family of L- particles, which uniformly has the lateral approximant as onset. Its manifestations include: lei4 [lei21/lei21], laa1 [la55], laa3 [la33], laa4 [la21], laak3 [lak33], lo1 [lo55], lo3 [lo33], lo4 [lo21], lok3 [lok33], le3 [le33], le4 [le21], and le5 [le12].

In the literature (e.g., Kwok 1984, Leung 1992), the manifestations have been described as marking current relevance, indicating change of state, marking aspectual reference, asserting, giving a suggestion, a piece of advice, or a command, and so forth. I propose that all the described senses are derived from one core semantic feature, that of the realization of state-of-affairs. All other senses, including the ones that encode deontic modality, can be inferred from the core semantic meaning combined with contextual information. The core feature of L- has an explicit relation with temporal or aspectual reference. It has often been noted (e.g., Palmer 1986/1991) that in languages
of the world, a clear distinction between the modal system and the temporal system is difficult to draw. That difficulty aside, the derivation of the surface meanings of each manifestation from the core meaning of L- is fairly straightforward. What is not so simple and straightforward about L- is its large number of manifestations. L- has been realized in a great variety of phonetic forms. Moreover, the differences among some forms are very subtle and difficult to characterize. Thus, to identify the idiosyncrasies of each manifestation of L- becomes an especially challenging task and is the main focus of this chapter. In the following, I first identify the core feature of L- and discuss how it extends to different domains that give rise to various meanings, which is schematized in Figure 3.1. Then, I proceed to the discussion of the idiosyncrasies of each manifestation of L-.
Figure 3.1. The Semantic Extension of L-

* Details of this function are discussed in sections 3.3.5 and 3.3.9.
3.2. THE SEMANTIC EXTENSION OF THE CORE MEANING OF L-

3.2.1. MARKING PERFECTIVE

The core semantic feature of L- is to signal the occurrence of a temporal activity at some point in the temporal domain, as in (1). In this sense, L- indicates the activity denoted by the predicate as perfective. Thus, sentence with L- is grammatical in (2a), which has a time word that serves as an explicit temporal marker of past time with respect to time of speech. The sentence with L- is ungrammatical in (2b) precisely because it has an explicit marker of futurity.

(1) 我去美國 lei4。
   Ngo heoi Meigwok lei4.
   I go America FP
   ‘I went to America.’ (i.e., I’ve been there.)

(2) a. 舊年，我去美國 lei4。
    Gau-nin, ngo heoi Meigwok lei4.
    last-year I go America FP
    ‘Last year, I went to America.’ (i.e., I’ve been there.)

    b. 出年，我去美國 lei4。
       *Zeot-nin, ngo heoi Meigwok lei4.
       next-year I go America FP
       ‘Next year, I will go to America.’

3.2.2. MARKING THE REALIZATION OF A PHYSICAL STATE

The aspectual sense of L-, as depicted in the above subsection, is restricted to the elements in the predicate in the syntactic domain only. However, the aspectual feature can be extended to the propositional domain to range over the whole sentence. It
imposes a stative reading on the entire sentence, indicating that the state conveyed by the entire sentence has been realized. To illustrate this point, consider (3).

(3)  

a. 我去美國 laa3。  
    Ngo heoi Meigwok laa3.  
    I go America FP  
    ‘I am going to the U.S.’

b. 我要去美國 laa3。  
    Ngo jiu heoi Meigwok laa3.  
    I need go America FP  
    ‘I have to go to the U.S.’

The predicate of (3a) involves an action verb. However, the aspectual reference of L- does not mark that action as perfective. As illustrated by (3b), the auxiliary verb 要 jiu ‘will, want, hope’ signals that the action has not occurred yet. Rather than perfectivity, L- indicates that the state conveyed by the whole sentence has been realized at speech time. Since the realization of the state implies that the state had not existed before, a change of state must be involved, at least from non-existence to existence. For instance, in (3a), there is a change from ‘my being in the state of not going to America’ (i.e. I wasn’t going or hadn’t intended to go) to ‘my being in the state of going to America.’

The claim that the aspectual reference of L- does not apply to the predicate of the sentence can be shown by the fact that L- can be appended to predicates of different aspectual implications. They include predicates indicating state, as in (4), activity as in (5), and accomplishment as in (6).
(4) 天黑 laa3。 [state]  
Tin haak laa3.  
sky dark FP  
‘It has become dark (now).’ (i.e., It wasn’t before.)

(5) a. 去去去 laa3。 [activity]  
Keoi heoi-zo laa3.  
he go-Asp FP  
‘He’s gone.’ (i.e., He was still here earlier.)

b. 去去去 laa3。 [activity]  
Keoi heoi-gan laa3.  
he go-Asp FP  
‘He’s on the way (now).’ (i.e., He wasn’t earlier.)

c. 去去去 laa3。 [activity]  
Keoi heoi-guo laa3.  
he go-Asp FP  
‘He’s been (there) (before).’ (i.e., Earlier he hadn’t.)

(6) 做起功课 laa3。 [accomplishment]  
Keoi zouhei gungfo laa3.  
he do-finish homework FP  
‘He has finished his homework (now).’ (i.e., He hadn’t earlier.)

3.2.3. MARKING THE REALIZATION OF AN EPISTEMIC STATE

Above, we have seen how L- marks the realization of a physical state in the real world. But the feature of L- can extend from the real world to the epistemic world. Consider the following:

(7) 哎呀，今日廿五號 laa3。(3.2)  
Aijaa, gamjat jaa-ng hou laa3.  
oh today twenty-five number FP  
‘Oh, today is (already) 25th of the month.’
(8)  個天要落雨 laa1。
    Go tin jiu lokyu laa1.
    Cl sky need go-down-rain FP
    ‘It’s going to rain.’

(9)  佢細個仔 aa3, 三十幾歲 laa3。(4.14)
    Keoi go go zai aa3, saamsap gei seoi laa3.
    he that Cl son FP thirty odd year FP
    ‘That son of his is (already) over thirty.’

In (7), the speaker expresses her sudden awareness of the day at the moment of speech. The state of ‘the day being the 25th of the month’ may not be new in the real world, but it did not exist in the speaker’s epistemic world prior to that realization. Hence, it is presented as a piece of new information to the hearers, and in this case, the hearers include the speaker herself. In (8), the speaker expresses his awareness of the likelihood of its going to rain. Although the physical state of raining has not been realized yet, the speaker’s epistemic state of being aware of the likelihood of the physical state has been realized. In (9), according to the situation given in previous exchanges in the episode, both the speaker and the hearer know very well that the person being discussed was over thirty. In the actual world, this information is not new to either of them. However, the speaker portrays the information as new to the hearer in order to remind her to attend to this fact. All these uses of L- exhibit the psychological aspect of human communication that I have put forth in chapter 1. That is the communicative context that both the speaker and the hearer are restricted to that does not necessarily reflect the actual state of the world, only the communicator’s assumptions about the world.
The examples shown in the above subsections are clear-cut cases of marking the realization of states. Nevertheless, the proposed core function of L- does not seem to have straightforward applicability to the majority of uses of the particles found in the corpus. Some of them are listed below.

(10) Singbaak, nei aa3 saaimeng laa3. ‘Uncle Sing, you’re showing off.’

(11) Ngo tai ni dou zeoi waa-dak-si le1, dou hai Aa-Coeng tungmaai Giu-mother FP ‘I think the most authoritative among us are Aa-Coeng and Giumaa.’

(12) So laa1, gong dou mou jan seon laa1. ‘Don’t be silly, (even if you) say it, nobody will believe it.’

(13) Zou-gwo mai bei-gwo cin lo1. ‘If (he) wants to redo (it), (he’ll just) have to pay again.’

(14) Ni go hai dinsikei lei4, (m-hai dinlou aa3). ‘This is a TV set, (not a computer).’

If we extend the psychological view on L- proposed in the above subsection further to these utterances, the meanings of L- conveyed in these utterances are no different from some other means of marking the realization of a state. What distinguishes them from
other examples is their higher degree of subjectivity. These utterances are conclusions or speculations posed by the speaker and are portrayed by the speaker as information that the hearers are totally ignorant of. Thus, the particle brings out a sense of ‘according to me,’ ‘in my opinion,’ or ‘I’m telling you that.’

3.2.5. MARKING DIRECTIVES

In addition to aspectual reference and epistemic modality, L- also encodes deontic modality in marking directives, as illustrated in the following utterances.

(15) 坐好 lei4! (Li et al. 1985) [Command]
Cohou lei4!
sit-well FP
‘Sit properly!’

(16) 阿偉，同我落街買包煙 le3! (Leung 1992) [Request]
Aa-Wai, tung ngo lokgaai maai baau jin le3!
Aa-Wai for me go-down-street buy Cl cigarette FP
‘A-Wai, could you go down (to the street) and get a pack of cigarettes for me?’

(17) 你信我 laal. (10.7) [Persuasion]
Nei seon ngo laal.
you believe me FP
‘Do believe me.’

(18) 我嚟去睇戲 lo3. [Suggestion]
Ngodei heoi taihei lo3
we go see-movie FP
‘Let’s go to the movies.’

Obviously, the deontic modality of L- is derived from the core meaning of [+realization]. In these speech acts, the speakers do not declare the realization of state-
of-affairs in the real world; instead, they envisage the realization of the state-of-affairs in the potential world. The speakers consider the hearers to have the potential to let the state-of-affair be realized. The hearers are commanded, requested, persuaded, advised, or given the suggestion, to bring the state into reality. The hearers will understand the utterances as directives based on contextual inferences, the social status of the speakers, etc. In order to account for different types of directives that L- marks, we have to rely on the notions of achievability, desirability, and the participation of the speakers, as introduced in Chapter 1.

3.3. THE MANIFESTATIONS

There are totally 12 manifestations in the family. They are: lei4, laa1, laa4, laa3, laak3; lo1, lo3, lo4, lok3; and le3, le4, le5. Not every manifestation encodes all the semantic features of L-. The manifestations can be divided into three categories according to the modality they encoded. FPs that encode pure epistemic modality (including aspectual reference) include laa3, laa4, laak3, lo1, lo4, lok3, le5. FPs that encode pure deontic modality include le3 and le4. FPs that encode both epistemic (aspectual reference) and deontic modality include lei4, laa1 and lo3.

3.3.1. LEI4

3.3.1.1. MARKING PERFECTIVE

The first manifestation of L- that we are going to discuss is lei4.1 It distinguishes itself with its explicit aspectual reference in the family. The aspectual sense of lei4 has
been described in details in Lee and Yiu (1998). I basically adopt their analysis for the aspectual \textit{lei4} in this section. According to them, the aspectual \textit{lei4} signals an event that took place at some point in the past, as in (19). In order to be modified by this particle, the predicate in question must be able to recur. Sentences (20-22) are ungrammatical since the events denoted by the predicate are normally understood as one-time occurrences.

(19) 我去街 lei4。
   Ngo heoi gaai lei4.
   I go street FP
   ‘I went out (earlier).

(20) *前年，妹妹出世 lei4。
     *Cinnin, muimui ceotsai lei4.
     year-before-last-year younger-sister born FP
     ‘The year before last, my sister was born.’

(21) *去年，哥哥結婚 lei4。
     *Gaunin, gogo gitfan lei4.
     last-year elder-brother marry FP
     ‘Last year, my brother got married.’

(22) *今年，爸爸死 lei4。
     *Gamnin, baabaa sei-zo lei4.
     this-year father die-Asp FP
     ‘This year, my father died.’

The recurrence requirement can be further demonstrated by the contrast between (23) and (24). Sentence (23) is grammatical since ‘cooking rice’ is a routine, a recurring activity, in Cantonese culture, whereas to prepare a specific pot of rice, as in (24), is not.$^2$
The aspectual lei4 usually has implication of discontinuity between the event and the point of reference, as exemplified in (25).

Mary heoi Meigwok lei4.
Mary go America FP
'Mary went to America (but is no longer there).'</n
Due to similarity in semantics between lei4 and the experiential aspect marker,過 gwo, they frequently co-occur, as shown in the examples below.

(26) 我去美國 lei4。
Ngo heoi Meigwok lei4.
I go America FP
'I went to America. (and am now back home).'</n
(27) 我去過美國 lei4。
Ngo heoi-gwo Meigwok lei4.
I go-Asp America FP
'I’ve been to America. (and am now back home).'</
(28) ??我去咗美國 lei4。
??Ngo heoi-zo Meigwok lei4.
I go-Asp America FP
‘I went to America.’
*‘I’ve gone to the America (and should therefore still be there) (and am now
back home).’ – incompatible.

In addition to actions, lei4 can also quantify states, provided that the state is
reversible. For instance:

(29) 上個禮拜，佢病 lei4。 (Lee & Yiu 1998) [reversible state]
Soeng go laibaai, keoi baang lei4.
las 3 Cl week he sick FP
‘Last week, he was sick.’

(30) 早排佢好忙 lei4。 (Lee & Yiu 1998) [reversible state]
Zoupaai keoi hou mong lei4.
earlier he very busy FP
‘Earlier, he was very busy.’

(31) 嘅菜好貴 lei4，(而家平番)。3 (Lee & Yiu 1998) [reversible state]
Di coi hou gwai lei4, (jigaa paang-faan).
Cl vegetable very expensive FP (now cheap-return)
‘The vegetables were very expensive (earlier), but they’ve become cheaper
now/again.’

(32) 佢幾靚下 lei4。 [reversible state]
Keoi gei leng-haa lei4.
she quite pretty-Asp FP
‘She was quite pretty (before/earlier).’

(33) *我都後生 lei4。
*Ngo dou hausaang lei4.
1 also young FP
‘I was young before.’
3.3.1.2. ASSERTING THE INNATE PROPERTIES OF AN OBJECT

The function of lei4 is not restricted to aspectual marking for verbal predicates but also extended to non-temporal activities/states. It is appended to various kinds of nominal predicates, as in the example below. In the corpus, the use of lei4 is frequently followed by the FP gaa3, as in (35-39).

(35) 呢個係電視機 lei4。
    Ni go hai dinsikei lei4.
    this Cl is TV FP
    ‘This is a TV set.’

(36) 佢係我舊同學 lei4。
    Keoi hai ngo gau tunghok lei4.
    he is my old classmate FP
    ‘He was my classmate.’

(37) 呢啲係出口啲 lei4 gaa3。 (6.3)
    Ni di hai ceothau je lei4 gaa4.
    this Cl is export thing FP FP
    ‘These are exports.’

(38) 悲 lo3, 我部新車 lei4 gaa3。 (1.3)
    Caam lo3, ngo bou san ce lei4 gaa3.
    tragic FP my Cl new bike FP FP
    ‘Oh, no! That’s my new bike!’

(39) 你手唔度掂住啲啲 lei4 gaa3? (10.4)
    Nei sau go dou zaa-zyu di matje lei4 gaa3?
    you hand that place hold-Asp Cl what FP FP
    ‘What are you holding in your hands?’
In the literature, this sense of *lei* has been described as introducing emphasis, focus, and assertion of the validity of the attribute represented by the NP in the predicate (cf. Ouyang 1990, Leung 1992, Lee & Yiu 1998). However, we observe that not all nominal predicates can be readily emphasized or focused by *lei*. Personal names and quantified noun phrases are two kinds of nominal predicates that do not co-occur readily with *lei*. For instance, sentence (40), which includes a personal name, sounds odd compared to (41), which does not contain a personal name.

(40) ??我係成龍 lei4.
??Ngo hai Singlung lei4.
I is Jacky-Chan FP
‘I’m Jacky Chan.’

(41) 我係呢度嘅負責人 lei4.
Ngo hai ni dou ge fuzaak jan lei4.
I is this place Lnk in-charge people FP
‘I’m the person-in-charge here.’

When introducing someone to new friends, (42) will also be odd, as compared with (43), even though the speaker in (42) wants to emphasize that the person being introduced is a celebrity. (44) is fine in a situation in which speaker A does not recognize the celebrity and uses speaker B’s response to match up the name and the person.

(42) *(等我嚟介紹)，但係成龍 lei4。
*(Dang ngo lei gaaisiu), keoi hai Singlung lei4.
(let me come introduce) he is Jacky-Chan FP
‘(During introduction) This is Jacky Chan.’
(43) (等我嚟介紹), 佢係成龍嘅得力助手 lei4.
(Dang ngo lei gaaai4u), keoi hai Singlung ge daklik
(let me come introduce) he is Jacky-Chan Link capable
zosau lei4.
assistant FP
‘(During introduction) This is Jacky Chan’s capable assistant.’

(44) A: 嘢個係好面善。
Go go jan hou minsin.
that Cl people very familiar
‘That guy looks familiar.’

B: 嘢個係成龍 lei4。
Go go hai Singlung lei4.
that Cl is Jacky-Chan FP
‘That guy is Jacky Chan.’

Similarly, a speaker will not utter (45) if the television set is a typical-looking television
set. The particle will be used if the TV has some odd shape, or strange color, and is not
easily identifiable as a television set.

(45) 呢個係電視機 lei4, (唔係電腦 aa3)。
Ni go hai dinsikei lei4, (m-hai dinlou aa3).
this Cl is TV FP (not-is TV FP)
‘This is a TV set, (not a computer).’

Based on the above, the proposal here is that the particle lei4 is usually used to rectify a
mismatch of name and object, rather than that of focus-marking, as proposed in
previous studies.

There is also the assertive use of lei4 that seems to be totally unrelated to its core
aspectual meaning. However, I am going to argue that the assertive sense of lei4 is
indeed derived from the same aspectual feature. What distinguishes the assertive sense from the prototypical aspectual sense is the abstract domain—the epistemic domain—it is applied to. Recall that aspectual lei⁴ marks an activity denoted by the predicate as an event that has taken place some time in the past but which is discontinued at speech time. Parallel to this function in the syntactic domain, assertive lei⁴ in the epistemic domain indicates that the innate properties of the nominal have long been associated with the object, but the knowledge of that is opaque to the hearer at speech time. In other words, the hearer no longer possesses the described knowledge, resulting in a mismatch of name and object. This explains why the particle is used to point out and pragmatically rectify the mismatch.

In the above, I have shown that personal names can occur in the predicate with lei⁴ in highly restricted and specific contexts. Quantified NPs in predicates, on the other hand, without exception, cannot co-occur with the particle. Consider the following sentences:

(46)  *阿媽八十八歳 lei⁴。
*Aa-maa baatsap-baat seoi lei⁴.
Mother eighty-eight year FP
‘Mom is eighty-eight.’

(47)  a. *今年嘅標準用量係十五公升 lei⁴。
*Gamnin ge biuzeon jungloeng hai sapng gungsing lei⁴.
this-year Link standard consumption is fifteen liter FP
‘This year’s standard consumption is fifteen liters.’

b. 十五公升係今年嘅標準用量 lei⁴。
Sapng gungsing hai gamnin ge biuzeon jungloeng lei⁴.
fifteen liter is this-year Link standard consumption FP
‘Fifteen liters is this year’s standard consumption.’
The contrast between (47a) and (47b) illustrates clearly the ungrammaticality of a quantified NP with lei4. However, this claim seems to be challenged by the following utterances in which a quantified NP can be appended with lei4.

(48) 佢係三百磅 lei4。
Keoi hai saam-baak bong lei4.
he is three-hundred pound FP
a. *He is 300 lbs.
b. He has been 300 lbs.

(49) 我哋公司嘅資產淨值係十三億 lei4。
Ngodei gungsi ge zicaan zingzik hai sapsaam jik lei4.
our company LnK asset net-value is thirteen ten-million FP
a. *The market value of our company is 130 million.
b. The market value of our company has been 130 million.

Upon closer examination, what one finds is that the particle lei4 must adopt an aspectual reading rather than an assertive reading in these sentences. This phenomenon exhibits nicely the semantico-syntactic distribution of lei4 as well as the peculiar syntactic nature of quantified NPs in Chinese. Although quantified NPs are nominals, they are verb-like linguistic expressions. A strong argument for this characteristics is motivated by the fact that quantified nominals can be modified by such adverbs as 先sin ‘just/only,’ as in (50a), and 唔唔 ngaamngamm ‘just, ‘ as in (50b), whereas other nominals cannot, as in (50c).
Once the syntactic status of nominal predicates is clear, it becomes obvious why nominal predicates can only have the aspectual reading. Our discussions have shown that verbal and adjectival predicates license the aspectual sense; whereas nominal predicates license the assertive sense of lei４. Furthermore, these two senses are motivated and structured by adopting the multiple-domain perspective towards an utterance as set forth in the beginning of the chapter.

3.3.1.3. MARKING EXHORTATIVE

The final sense of lei４ to be discussed concerns its deontic modality usage. In the following utterances, lei４ is appended to imperatives, requesting the hearer to bring the state conveyed by the proposition into reality. This sense of lei４ is not very productive in contemporary SCAN and occurs only in imperatives that demand the hearer to maintain certain body postures.
(51) 坐好 lei4！(Li et al. 1985)
Zohou lei4!
sit-well FP
‘Sit properly!’

(52) 企度 lei4！(Li et al. 1985)
Kei dou lei4!
stand place FP
‘Stand still!’

(53) 眨埋眼 lei4！(Li et al. 1985)
Meimaai ngaan lei4!
close-Asp eye FP
‘Close your eyes!’

The deontic lei4 indicates that the speaker assumes that the hearer has high potential for maintaining the body posture described by the sentence and the outcome of the action is in the speaker’s favor.

3.3.2. LAA3

Laa3 encodes only epistemic modality, marking the realization of a state, as in (54). Although laa3 can mark the realization in both the real-world and the epistemic world, the majority of instances of laa3 in our corpus presents a piece of information that is psychologically assumed to be new to the hearers, as in (55)-(56).

(54) 佢走咗 laa3。
Keei zau-zo laa3.
he go-Asp FP
‘He’s already gone.’
(55) 人喺喺掘掘頭掃把拍你就怪 laa3。 (1.8)
Jandei m-wan gwat tau soubaa paak nei zau gwaaai laa3.
others not-find flat head broom slap you then odd FP
‘What would be odd is if they don’t use a flat-headed broom to drive you out.’

(56) 呢個就叫做作案動機 laa3。 (1.11)
Ni go zau giuzou zokon dunggei laa3.
this CI then call commit-crime motivation FP
‘This is what is called the motivation for committing the crime.’

The FP is also found in some ritualistic expressions such as the following:

(57) A：早晨，王醫生。
Zousan, Wong jisang.
good morning Wong doctor
‘Good morning, Dr. Wong.’

B：早晨 laa3。 (4.9) [greeting]
Zousan laa3.
good morning FP
‘Good morning.’

(58) 真係唔好意思 laa3。 (1.18) [apology]
Zan-hai m-hou-jisi laa3.
really-is sorry FP
‘(I’m) really sorry,’

(59) 真係唔係晒你 laa3。 (4.12) [appreciation]
Zan-hai m-goi-saai nei laa3.
really-is thank-Asp you FP
‘(I) truly thank you.’

(60) Hai yaa3, 真係出奇 laa3。 (4.2) [exclamation]
Haiyaa, zan-hai ceotkei laa3.
oh really-is unusual FP
‘Oh, really unusual.’
The meaning of laa3 here is to inform the hearers that the greeting (as in (57)), the apology (as in (58)), the appreciation (as in (59)), and the exclamation (as in (60)), have taken place. The particle simply assures the hearers that the utterance is true and sincere. Thus, the intensifying adverb 真係 zan-hai ‘really, truly’ is frequently found in these phrases.

As mentioned in the beginning of this subsection, we claim that laa3 conveys only epistemic modality. However, it is frequently mentioned in the literature (see Leung 1992, Matthews & Yip 1994) that laa3 can mark a suggestion, as in the following utterances.

(61) 去 laa3, 去 laa3. (8.22)
Heoi laa3, heoi laa3.
go FP go FP
‘Get going.’

(62) 落車 laa3.
Lok ce laa3.
go-down car FP
‘(Get) out of the car.’

However, I find the alleged speech act sense to be only weakly induced from the specific context. For instance, (61) can be interpreted as the speaker’s reporting that he is going somewhere, and not necessarily that of suggesting that the speaker and hearer perform the action, as given in the gloss. In fact, that subject-less/pro-drop sentence has the possibility of referring only to the speaker, only to the hearer, and to both speaker and hearer. The particle does not convey any special function different from its core function of indicating realization of a state.
3.3.3. **Laa1**

In the literature, it is frequently claimed that *laa1* indicates tentativeness, a lack of finality, and a lack of forcefulness as compared with *l aa3* (e.g. Kwok 1984). Luke (1990) adopts the conversation analysis approach and proposes that *l aa1* establishes common grounds and marks obviousness in a conversation. Below, I am going to show that the differences between *l aa1* and *l aa3* and propose that they can be better accounted for from the perspective of level of knowledge assumed by the speaker.

3.3.3.1. **THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF KNOWLEDGE ASSUMED TOWARDS THE PROPOSITION**

Apparently, *l aa1* and *l aa3* can occur in the same context, as shown in (63). In the past, not much effort has been spent on characterizing the differences between (63a) and (63b).

\[(63)\]

a. 他去 KNOW
     Keoi pau-zo laa3.
     he go-Asp FP
     ‘He’s gone.’

b. 他去 KNOW
     Keoi pau-zo laa1.
     he go-Asp FP
     ‘He’s gone.’

According to my intuition, there is a difference in knowledge assumption between (63a) and (63b). In (63a), the speaker assumes that the event of ‘his leaving’ is not known by the hearer. *Laa3* indicates the occurrence of this event and portrays the event as a piece
of new information to the hearer. In (63b), however, the speaker assumes that the hearer should hold the knowledge of the event of ‘his leaving.’ The difference becomes clearer in the following contexts.

(64)  
a. 嬷媽, 你唔知 gaa3 laa3。(1.1)  
Giumaa, nei m-zi gaa3 laa3.  
Giu-mother you not-know FP FP  
‘Giu Maa, you don’t understand.’

   b. *嬷媽, 你唔知 gaa3 laal。  
   *Giumaa, nei m-zi gaa3 laal.  
   Giu-mother you not-know FP FP  
   ‘Giu Maa, you don’t understand.’

In (64a), the speaker assumes that the hearer, Giu Maa, should have no knowledge of some specific state-of-affairs. This assumption is explicitly marked by the phrase 你唔知 nei m-zi ‘you don’t know that.’ (64b) is ungrammatical because this assumption contradicts the meaning of laal which marks the assumption of the knowledge of the state-of-affairs in question on the part of the hearer. By the same token, the discourse starter ‘you know’ in SCAN can occur with laal but not laa3, as illustrated in (65).

(65)  
你知 laal/*laa3, ......  
Nei zi laal/*laa3, ......  
you know FP/ FP  
‘You know what?……’

Having identified the core semantic property of laal, the different distribution of laal and laa3 becomes transparent in (66).
In (66a), the speaker assumes that the hearer would know that the hospital has had a housing allocation before and would therefore have filed an application. He just queries why the hearer, who is fully qualified, has failed to get an allocation. When laal is replaced by laa3 in the first clause of the sentence, as in (66b), the speaker assumes that the hearer does not know that there was a housing allocation before. The second clause, however, presupposes that the hearer knew about the event and had already filed an application. Hence, (66b) is not good, given the incompatibility of the first and second clause. In (66c), the second clause conveys the speaker’s concern that the hearer may have had missed the application period. This concern is compatible with his assumption
that the hearer may have been ignorant of the housing allocation, stated in the first clause. Thus, (66c) is grammatical.

One may query why the speaker would still present the proposition as a new piece of information to the hearer if he assumes that the speaker has already possessed the knowledge of the proposition. To answer this question, the psychological aspect of human communication should be reiterated. Although the speaker assumes the hearer's knowledge of the proposition, it does not entail that (a) the hearer really possesses the knowledge; nor (b) the speaker do not know that the hearer do not possess the knowledge. Rather, the speaker may have intentionally used laal to impose the assumption on the hearer in order to make the proposition sounds more obvious and certain, as in (67), or to make his subjective conclusion conveyed by the proposition sound more justifiable, as in (68).

(67) 傻 laal, 講都有人信 laal。(1.9)
    So laal, gong dou mou jan seon laal.
    silly FP say even no people believe FP
    'Don't be silly, (even if you) say it, nobody will believe it.'

(68) 只要輝哥識做，彩電冰箱唔使憂 laal。(7.4)
    Zijiu Faigo sikzou, coidin bingsoeng m-sai jau laal.
    as-long-as Faigo know-do color-TV fridge no-need worry FP
    'As long as Faigo co-operates, you don't have to worry about color TV, fridge, etc.'
3.3.3.2. ENUMERATING

Leaving the epistemic domain of the particle, let us examine the enumeration function of laa1. In the following two examples, laa1 for enumeration is juxtaposed with laa3.

(69) 聽我又發請帖 laa1/*laa3, 又出海報 laa1/*laa3。 (8.19)
    Ting ngo jau faat cengtip laa1, jau ceot hoibou laa1/*laa3.
    let me again issue invitation-card FP again publish posters FP
    ‘I even sent out invitation cards and put up posters’

(70) 又要跳 laa1/*laa3, 又要摺 laa1/*laa3。 (8.11)
    Jau jiu tiu laa1, jau jiu lau laa1/*laa3.
    again need dance FP again need twist FP
    ‘(they have) to dance and twist.’

Most previous studies have identified enumeration as a major function of laa1. However, if we omit the laa1 in the above utterances, enumeration is still clearly conveyed. It should be noted that enumeration comes from the utterance containing parallel constructions rather than from the FP per se. The particle laa1 in these constructions performs its usual function, that of indicating that every state conveyed in the proposition has been realized. Nonetheless, when we replace laa1 with laa3 in the above parallel structures, the utterances become ungrammatical. That means we still have to answer the question of why laa1 is compatible with enumeration while laa3 is not. It seems that the high tonality of laa1 somehow facilitates the enumeration function. High tone is regarded as a listing tone signaling incompleteness and non-finality. In English, for instance, rising tone is considered a listing intonation:
(71) Do you like coffee (rising) or tea (falling)?

The rising intonation or a high tone signals incompleteness of the message for the hearer to await further information.

3.3.3.3. MARKING DIRECTIVES

As noted earlier in this chapter, laa3 basically does not encode deontic modality. Laal, on the contrary, can convey deontic modality by turning a declarative into a directive. The difference can be illustrated by appending the two particles to a bare NP. A pair of examples is given in (72) and (73) to illustrate. While (72) simply reports to the hearer that the state of ‘being three o’clock’ has taken place, the most ready reading of (73) is the suggestion of making an appointment at three o’clock. Of course, under more specific contexts, such as that of adding an adverb, as in (74), the utterance points out the obvious fact that it’s already three o’clock.

(72) 三點 laa3。
Saam-dim laa3
three-o’clock FP
‘It’s 3 o’clock.’

(73) 三點 laal。
Saam-dim laal
three-o’clock FP
‘Let’s make it at 3 o’clock’

(74) 都三點 laa1, (仍重未嘅 ge2?)
Dou saam-dim laa1, (keoi zung mei lei ge2?).
already three-o’clock FP he still not-yet come FP
‘It’s already 3 o’clock, (how come he still hasn’t come yet?)’
In fact, deontic *lao* occurs far more frequently than does epistemic *lao* in our corpus.

Some of the actual different uses of *lao* are given below.

(75) 食 *lao*, 而家胡太緊張。 (3.7)  [Command/S-desirable]
Sik lao, jigaa Wu taai hing-gan
eat Fp now Wu mrs. angry-Asp
'Go (ahead and just) eat! Mrs. Wu is still angry at the moment.'

(76) *Lao*, 界面 *lao*, 飲番兩杯 *lao*。 (3.14)  [Request/S-desirable]
Lao, beimin lao, jam-faan loeng bui lao.
now give-face FP drink-Asp two cups FP
'Give me some face, do (come and) have a few drinks (to celebrate with me).'

(77) 你信我 *lao*。 (10.7)  [Persuasion/S-desirable]
Nei seon ngo lao.
you believe me FP
'Do believe me.'

(78) 八八八 *lao*, 擺番個好意頭。 (10.14)  [Suggestion/S-desirable]
Baat baat baat lao, lo-faan go hou jita.
eight eight eight FP get-Asp Cl good omen
'(Let’s say) eight hundred and eighty-eight, a lucky number.'

(79) 自己搵啲豉油 *lao*。 (1.13)  [Advice/H-desirable]
Zigei lo di sijau lao.
self get Cl soy-source FP
'Get some soy source on your own!'

(80) 師伯， 可以學人孵養白鴿渡日晨 *lao*。 (1.2)  [Advice/H-desirable]
Singbaak, hoji hok jandei joeng baakgaap dou jatsan lao.
Sing-uncle can learn others raise pigeon pass time FP
'Uncle Sing, you can try raising pigeons to pass the time.'

*lao* can mark a great variety of imperatives, all of which are considered by the speaker
to be highly achievable. What is at issue is whether the action conveyed is in favor of
the speaker or in favor of the hearer. This information, however, is semantically
undetermined and has to be inferred pragmatically from the context. One last issue related to the deontic laal pertains to speaker emotion and attitude. Cheung (1972) and Kwok (1984) analyze laal as lacking forcefulness and hence as a marker of polite request. However, in our corpus, laal-appended imperatives can be very direct and forceful. Hence, it seems that laal does not necessarily register a particular emotion or attitude, which is conveyed instead primarily by the speaker’s tone of voice, demeanor, gesture, and so forth.

3.3.4. LAA4

The sole function of laa4 is to form interrogatives to question or double-check the existence of an event. This is exemplified in (81). It can be used ritualistically, as in (81a), as an opener with the speaker confirming that the addressee has returned. A speaker cannot do likewise asking himself using laa4, as in (81b). The interrogative is not to elicit new information but to confirm the speaker’s presumption of the existence of the state denoted by the sentence without the particle. This is further illustrated in (81c).

(81)  a. 王醫長，你番嘅 laa4? (10.12)
Wong jisang, nei faanlei laa4?
Wong doctor you back FP
‘Dr. Wong, you’re back?’

b. 王醫生，我番嘅 laa3/*laa4。
Wong jisang, ngo faanlei laa3.
Wong doctor I back FP
‘Dr. Wong, I’m back./I’m back?’
c. 王醫生番咗嘅 laa4?
   Wong jisang faan-zo-lei laa4?
   Wong doctor come-Asp-back FP
   ‘Dr. Wong’s back?’ (e.g., from lunch, vacation, etc.)

As an interrogative element, laa4 cannot co-occur with other wh-elements or A-not-A constructions in SCAN, as shown below.5

(82) *幾時番咗 laa4? [Wh-word]
    *Geisi faanlei laa4?
    when come-back FP
    ‘When (are you) back?’

(83) *番唔番咗 laa4? [A-not-A structure]
    *Faan-m-faanlei laa4?
    come-not-come-back FP
    ‘Come back or not?’

(84) *番咗未 laa4? [VP-Neg structure]
    Faanlei mei laa4.
    come-back yet FP
    ‘Have been back yet?’

3.3.5. LAAK3

Previous studies (e.g., Kwok 1984) generally treat laak3 and laa3 as having similar distribution with laak3 conveying a greater sense of finality than laa3.6 In the corpus, there are far fewer instances of laak3 than laa3, and typically occur in utterances that convey smugness, as exemplified in (85) and (86), with the contexts provided for reference.
(85) Context: An investigator from a hospital is looking for the hearer who is suspected of being involved in a medicare fraud. The speaker learns the story from the investigator and helps him to locate the hearer. The utterance reveals his great pleasure at seeing that the hearer has gotten into trouble.

Laa, 就係呢位同志搵你 laak3。 (11.11)
Laa, zau-hai nei wai tungzi wan nei laak3.
‘There, this is the comrade who is looking for you.’

(86) Context: The speaker, who is regarded as a quiet and polite young lady, has just uttered some dirty words to the hearer. The hearer made a comment on the mismatch of the speaker’s behavior and goodwill. The speaker then responds to this comment smugly with the following utterance.

哈，呢啲 aa3，叫做物極必反 laak3。 (10.2)
Haa, nei di aa3, giu-zou mat-gik-bit-faan laak3．
‘This is called “things will develop in the opposite direction when they reach their extreme.”’

The corpus also reveals an interesting phenomenon: laak3 is found in non-utterance-final position that is not felicitous for laa3. To the best of my knowledge, this phenomenon has never been reported in the literature before. It is illustrated in (87)-(89).

(87) Laa, 你今日偷一陣間雞 laak3/??laa3, 同我去醫院攞藥一齊番嘅。 (11.2)
Laa, nei gamjat tau-jat-zan-gaan-gai laak3/??laa3, tung ngo now you today steal-one-Cl-moment-chicken FP/FP with me heoi jijyun lo joek jatcai faanlei.
go hospital get medication together come-back
‘Now (listen), sneak away (from work) for a while today and go to the hospital with me to get some medication, then we come home together.’

(88) 咦夜 laak3/??laa3, 重有人嚟 gaa4? (4.8)
Gam je laak/??laa3, zung jau yan lei gaa4?
so late FP/FP still have people come FP
‘It’s (already) so late and there are still people coming?’
According to my own intuition, the utterances may sound odd after replacing *laak3* with *laa3*. As mentioned in Chapter 1, FPs with the \(-k\) ending cannot be followed by another particle in clustering. However, *laak3* and other \(-k\) ending manifestations in this particle family, such as *lok3*, have a tendency to occur in non-discourse-final position, serving to conjoin two clauses. The nature of this conjoining will be studied in more detail in section 3.3.9 where a comparison is drawn with *lok3*.

3.3.6. **LO3**

3.3.6.1. THE INTENSIFYING FUNCTION

*Lo3* may also be pronounced as *lu3*. The *lu3* form alone conveys a more jesting, relaxed and carefree attitude than *lo3* (cf. Leung 1992). In the corpus, the *lu3* form is more readily found in the particle cluster *lu3 wo3*, probably due to assimilation with the initial of the following FP. Most of the tokens of *laa3* are interchangeable with *lo3*. The nuance that *lo3* conveys has long puzzled linguists. Kwok (1984) claims that *lo3* has an intensifying function when compared with *laa3*. And *lo3* stresses more on the irrevocability of things that have taken place. Leung (1992) observes that *lo3* conveys stronger emotion than *laa3* in some tokens.
It seems that the notion of irrevocability may not be an appropriate one to characterize the meaning of \textit{lo3}. Taking (90) as an example, if ‘his leaving’ is undesirable and regretful, \textit{lo3} may convey a stronger sense of irrevocability than \textit{lau3}. But, irrevocability is not found in a situation wherein that person was very unwelcome and whose leaving was thus long awaited. In that case, \textit{lo3} conveys stronger relief and keener pleasure than \textit{lau3}.

However, the notion of intensifying function claimed by Kwok (1984) and Leung (1992) seems to be supported by our intuition and the examples found in the corpus. Consider the following question-answer pair:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{(91) A: 你住邊 gaa3?}
    \textit{Nei zyu bin gaa3?} \hspace{1cm} \textit{you live where FP}
    \textit{Where do you live?}
  \item \textbf{B: 遠 lo3. /*遠 lau3. /*遠 lo4. /*遠 lo1.}
    \textit{Jyun lo3. /*jyun lau3. /*jyun lo4. /*jyun lo1.}
    \textit{far-away FP far-away FP far-away FP far-away FP}
    \textit{‘(Oh), it’s (very) far away.’}
\end{itemize}

Speaker B does not directly answer the question but expresses, instead, an exclamation that she lives very far away. The meaning cannot be properly conveyed by a bare adjective without any adverbial intensifier nor without the FP. Among the four particles,
only \textit{lo3} can be used in the utterance to intensify the degree of the adjective to convey the meaning of ‘very far.’ In addition to my intuition, tokens of \textit{lo3} with that function can also be found in our corpus, as illustrated in the following.

(92) Ai2, 都係等我單位起好宿舍之後，唔，我搬好過 \textit{lo3}. (12.14)
    Ai, dou hai dang ngo daanwai heihou sukses zihau, m, 
    Well all is wait my unit build-finish quarters afterwards um 
    ngo bun hougwo lo3.
    I move better FP 
    ‘Well, it’s better for me to move out, um, once the quarters built by our 
    work unit are ready.’

(93) Haa1, haa3, 等阿大嬌同佢講好 \textit{lo3}. (10.9)
    Haa, haa, dang Aa-Daaigiu tung keoi gongdim laa3, ngo jatjuu dou 
    oh oh let Aa-Daaigiu with him talk-okay FP I definitely all 
    m-lei gaam do \textit{lo3}. 
    not-involve so much FP 
    ‘Oh, (I’d better) let Daai Giu settle (the matter) with him, I definitely won’t 
    get involved.’

The speaker in (92) is suffering from noise pollution produced by a factory in his neighborhood. Their local community has tried all sorts of ways to lobby the moving of the factory out of the residential area. Unfortunately, the probability of the moving is extremely slim. The speaker tells his wife in exasperation that the only alternative seems to be his moving out of the neighborhood. In (93), the speaker, who has been wronged by \textit{Daai Giu}, has just figured out that the mischief was caused by his friend and decided to let \textit{Daai Giu} confront his friend directly. Utterance (93) conveys his relief of getting out of his dilemma.
3.3.6.2. MARKING DIRECTIVES

The proposed intensifying function of \( lo3 \) becomes more prominent in directives. Recall that \( laa3 \) does not encode deontic modality. In the case of \( lo3 \), it has the illocutionary force to mark a suggestion. As shown in (94a), the utterance mainly reports the occurrence of the event of ‘going to the movie.’ It only licenses an exclusive reading for the pronoun 我們 \( ngo \) \( dei \) ‘we,’ as illustrated in (94b). In (95), on the other hand, the utterance is most readily interpreted as a suggestion. An exclusive reading is impossible, as shown in (95b).

(94) a. 我們去睇戲 laa3
   Ngodei heoi taihei laa3.
   we go see-movie FP
   ‘We (excluding the hearer) are going to see a movie.’
   ?‘Let’s go see a movie.’

b. 我們去睇戲 laa3，拜拜！
   Ngodei heoi taihei laa3, baaibaai!
   we go see-movie FP goodbye
   ‘We (excluding the hearer) are going to see a movie, bye!’

(95) a. 我們去睇戲 lo3。
   Ngodei heoi taihei lo3.
   we go see-movie FP
   ‘Let’s go see a movie.’
   * ‘We (excluding the hearer) are going to see a movie.’

b. *我們去睇戲 lo3，拜拜！
   Ngodei heoi taihei lo3, baaibaai!
   we go see-movie FP goodbye
   ‘We (excluding the hearer) are going to see a movie, bye!’

Although the illocutionary force of \( lo3 \) is stronger than \( laa3 \), it is obviously weaker than that of \( laa1 \). Compare,
The *l̬aa*3 sentence in (96) simply reports that it is time to eat, as the meal is ready. It conveys to the hearer that he should stop doing other things and come and eat. The *l̬o*3 particle in (97) conveys a discussing tone and seeks the hearer’s agreement to perform the action denoted by the VP. Put in semantic terms, the speaker anticipates the outcome to be desirable for the hearer but he does not assume that the hearer has a very high potential for bringing that action about. Moreover, *l̬o*3 indicates that the speaker will participate in performing the action. The *l̬aa*1 sentence in (98) carries much stronger illocutionary force. The hearer’s willingness to perform the action or not is not a concern on the part of the speaker. Rather, the speaker expects the hearer to take some action to make the event possible, such as setting the table, adding more chairs, etc. To put this in semantic terms, the speaker does not query whether the hearer has the potential to perform the action since he has assumed that the action is easily achievable by the addressee. The difference in illocutionary force between *l̬aa*1 and *l̬o*3
is conveyed through different assumptions of the speaker with respect to potentiality in
the use of one versus the other particle.

3.3.7. LOI

In the literature, lo1 is described as a FP indicating that the proposition is
obvious and simple; that is, it conveys something that is evidential, unquestionable, and
works (e.g., Leung 1992, Li et al. 1995), lo1 is analyzed as conveying an evaluative
sense and is associated with a negative attitude towards the proposition, including being
reluctant, indifferent, and ironical. Among the claims in the literature, we will first
examine the epistemic sense of lo1 followed by the evaluative sense.

3.3.7.1. THE DISCOURSE-BOUND CHARACTERISTIC OF LOI

The distribution of lo1 is quite different from that of lo3 even though these two
manifestations share similar segmental make-up. The most distinct feature of lo1 and is
its discourse-bound characteristic. Utterances appended by lo1 cannot be used to begin
a conversation. It will be very odd to hear the utterance in (99a) used as a conversation
opener; instead, it would be more appropriately uttered as a response to a previous
linguistic or non-linguistic stimulus in an exchange. The context for (99a) is as follows:
the speaker is resting by the roadside when he is approached by the hearer who inquires
if he is alright. The speaker utters (99a) to explain to the hearer why he is not feeling
well. In (99b), in contrast, the speaker is using the utterance to start an exchange by informing his hearer of his health condition.

(99)  a. Aai, ni gei jat go tin jamjam-sapsap, ngo fimgsapbeng oh this several days Cl sky gloomy-humid I rheumatism jau faatzok lo1. again attack FP ‘Oh, (it’s because) the weather is humid these days and my rheumatism is acting up again.’

b. Aai, ni gei jat go tin jamjam-sapsap, ngo fungsapbeng oh this several days Cl sky gloomy-humid I rheumatism jau faatzok lo3/laa3. again attack FP/FP ‘Oh, the weather is humid these days, my rheumatism is acting up again.’

3.3.7.2. HIGH LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE ASSUMPTION AND THE LOGIC-BOUND CHARACTERISTIC OF LO1

In its epistemic use, lo1 shares with others in the L- family the core meaning of ‘realization of a state.’ Lo1 assumes the hearer should have a high level of knowledge of the proposition. The speaker regards the knowledge to be very evident and objective, since it comes from simple, logical reasoning or direct observation. In addition, lo1 also is logic-bound. In the corpus, most lo1-appended utterances are found to convey logical relations, such as causes and consequences, protasis and apodosis, and premises and inferences. Examples are given in (100) through (102), with speaker A’s utterance for context provided in English.
A: How come you can come home so early?

B: 今日晝晝停電，噯咪早啲落班 loi. (3.3) [Cause and consequence]
Gamjat aanzau tingdin, gam mai zoudi lok baan loi.
today afternoon power-outage so is-not early-a-bit off work FP
‘There was power outage this afternoon, so I got off work early.’

A: Why don’t you simply redo the garment for him?

B: 做過咪界過錢 loi. (6.11) [Protasis and apodosis]
Zou-gwo mai bei-gwo cin loi.
make-Asp is-not give-Asp money FP
‘If (he) wants to have (it) redone, (he’ll) have to pay again.’

A: I won’t say a word on this matter.

B: 噯唔係冇辦法真相大白 loi? (1.14) [Premise and inference]
Gam m-hai mou baanfaat zansoeng-daibaak loi.
so is-not no way truth-manifest FP
‘Then the whole truth will never come out (right)?’

As Luke (1990) points out, loi does not mark a specific logical relation; it simply assigns a dependency reading to the utterance, indicating that the significance of one state-of-affairs is dependent upon some other state-of-affairs. The exact logical relationship is not easily captured and needs to be resolved through context.

3.3.7.3. THE AFFINITY OF LOI AND MAI

The high-level of knowledge assumption conveyed by loi is also registered by its particular affinity with the negative polar element m-hai ‘is not’ and its contracted form, mai, as revealed in the corpus: 77% of the loi utterances in the corpus occur with mai m-hai, as exemplified in (100) through (102). Contrary to its literal meaning,
may not serve as a negation marker; instead, it is an affirmative marker conveying the speaker’s high level of certainty. A brief digression on the affirmative nature of mai, contrasting with m-hai, is in order.

Consider the set in (103). As shown in (103b), m-hai can be added to (103a) to negate a proposition in a declarative; however, mai cannot, as shown in (103c).

(103) a. 佢係美國人。 (falling intonation)
    Keoi hai Meigwokjan.
    he is American
    'He is an American.'

    b. 佢唔係美國人。 (falling intonation)
    Keoi m-hai Meigwokjan.
    he is-not American
    'He is not an American.'

    c. *佢唔係美國人 (falling intonation).
    *Keoi mai Meigwokjan.
    he is-not American
    * 'He is/ is not an American.'

In addition, m-hai can form an interrogative from (103b) by ending in a rising intonation, as in (104). As reflected in the two translations given, the interrogative in (104a) seeks confirmation, while that in (104b) is strictly a rhetorical question. As a rhetorical question, (104b) does not expect an answer; instead, it signals that what is being 'negated' was something which was strongly assumed by the speaker. In contrast, the corresponding interrogative with mai in (105) cannot be interpreted as a confirmation-seeking question (105a). Instead, while the utterance takes an interrogative form (in having rising intonation), it functions like an affirmative
statement, as in (105b). There are at least two contexts in which (105b) can occur. It can be used to reject an assumption, as in (106), or it can be used as a response to an information-seeking question, as in (107).

(104) 併唔係美國人 (rising intonation)?
Keoi m-hai Meigwokjan?
he no-is American
(a) ‘Isn’t he an American?
(b) ‘He IS an American, isn’t he?’

(105) 併唔係美國人 (rising intonation)?
Keoi mai Meigwokjan?
he is-not American
(a) *‘Isn’t he an American?’
(b) ‘He IS an American, isn’t he?’

(106) A: There’s no American here!
B: 併唔係美國人 (rising intonation)?
Keoi mai Meigwokjan (rising intonation)?
he is-not American
‘(But look, that one.) He’s an American, isn’t he?!’

(107) A: Who is an American?
B: 併唔係美國人 (rising intonation)?
Keoi mai Meigwokjan (rising intonation)?
he is-not American
‘He is an American, (can’t you see that?)’

It is noteworthy that the contracted form *mai* has grammaticalized into a pragmatic affirmative marker so that what appears to be double negatives, with ‘*mai + m-hai*’, do not in fact create a positive, as exemplified in (108).
Given the affirmative nature of *mai*, the close association between *mai* and *loi* becomes transparent. In utterances containing both *mai* and *loi*, the rising intonation accomplished by *mai* is absorbed by the FP, resulting a declarative form on the surface.7

I have argued that *laal* assumes a high level of knowledge towards the proposition on the part of the hearer. Nonetheless I propose that *loi* encodes an even higher epistemic knowledge: *loi* assumes that the hearer as well as everyone else should have knowledge of the proposition. The high epistemic requirement encoded in *loi* may provide a plausible explanation for the usual occurrence of particle with logical reasoning, as shown in (100) to (102). In general, conclusions deduced by logical reasoning are regarded as highly objective, and knowledge derived in this way should be readily shared by everyone in the community since the expectation is that any rational human being should be able to derive valid conclusions from the premises given.

3.3.7.4. THE EVALUATIVE SENSE

In addition to the logic-bound feature, the high level of knowledge assumption of *loi* further gives rise to the evaluative sense of the FP. In some tokens, the speaker may reach the conclusion that since the state-of-affairs is so obvious, why bother
pointing that. As a consequence, the FP may readily be associated with an impatient attitude. Interestingly, in other tokens, the high level of knowledge assumption may give rise to a reluctant attitude. In this case, the speaker considers the state-of-affairs to be accepted by everyone in that speech community as normal and obvious, thus, the speaker uses the particle to disclaim himself from the proposition. The impatient or indifferent attitude associated with *loj* can be illustrated in the following sentences.

(109) 快啲同佢哋做過批信箱俾佢 *loj*. (9.8)
Faaidi tung keoidei zou-gwo pai seonsoeng mai dak loj.
quick-a-bit for them make-Asp Cl mailbox is-not okay FP
‘It’s simple, just redo all the mailboxes for them as soon as possible.’

(110) 對唔住 loj, 我錯晒 loj.
Deoi-m-zyu loj, ngo co-saai loj.
sorry FP I wrong-all FP
‘Sorry, (okay?), It’s all my fault, (okay)?’

(111) 唔好同佢哋 gaa3.走咪走 loj. (10.6)
Wa, mat gam caangai gaa3, zau mai zau loj.
wow why so furious FP leave is-not leave FP
‘Wow, what a bitch! So, leave, I’m leaving.’

In (109), the speaker expresses her position that the solution to handle the complaints of a group of inhabitants is ‘to redo all the mailboxes as soon as possible,’ and implies that this solution is the most straightforward. At the same time, she is a bit impatient with the hearer, who fails to see that solution. In (110), the apology is not a sincere one, and is offered with reluctance or some belligerence on the speaker’s part, depending on the tone of voice. The degree of reluctance or resistance varies depending on contexts. The speaker may use the utterance to show her willingness to please the hearer, but may hint
at the incident not being her fault. Or, the speaker may convey her reluctance, and implies that she is forced to offer the apology and does not want to argue any more. That is, although the offering of an apology is appropriate according to social norms the speaker may not agree with it, and did so only with great reluctance and resistance, and in silent protest. The reluctance or belligerence is most explicit in ‘VP mai VP lol’ structure as demonstrated in (111). This pattern conveys that, from the speaker’s perspective, the action denoted by the VP is undesirable, but the speaker will perform it anyway but shows his displeasure in the process.

It has been frequently been remarked that lol is being ‘abused’ by the younger generation in Hong Kong. Lol may be found in almost every clause in their speech, as amply illustrated in (112), which is taken from an interview of a movie star. For speakers of the older generation, it would be odd to interpret lol as an epistemic use here, since the propositions are quite personal and should not have been known to the hearer. As a result, the older generation interprets lol in its an evaluative use and blames the younger generation for being irresponsible, uncooperative, and impatient.

(112) 初初唔慣 lol, 乜都唔識 lol, 樣樣都要人提 lol, 猛啞 NG lol, 成日畀導演話 lol. (Leung 1992)
Coco m-zaapgaan lol, mat dou m-sik lol, joengjoeng dou jiu beginning not-used-to FP what all not-know FP everything all need jan tai lol, maanggam N.G. lol, sengjat bei doujin waa lol. others remind FP frequently N.G. FP always Prt director say FP ‘(I) didn’t get used to it in the beginning; (I) was ignorant, always had to rely on others, kept getting N.G. (no good) (from the director), and kept being criticized by the director.’
However, the above phenomenon may also be analyzed from the viewpoint of language change. A bleaching of emotional attitude in utterances containing lol may be taking place in Hong Kong. As Leung (1992) suggests, the particle lol in the above utterance is performing a listing function rather than an evaluative one. This sense is an analogous to the enumerative laal. The particle lol just lists all the reasons as a response in an exchange without committing a specific emotional mood on the part the speaker.

3.3.8. Lo4

Lo4 and lol share much more similarities with each other than either of them with lo3. Similar to lol, lo4 is also both discourse-bound and logic-bound and cannot be added to conversation openers. As one might expect, lo4 and lol are intersubstitutable in certain contexts, as in (113).

(113) Aai4, nì jìd gei jat go tin jamjam-sapsap, ngo fungsapbeng jau faatzok lol/lo4.
Oh this several day Cl sky gloomy-we I rheumatism again attack FP/FP ‘Oh, (it’s because) the weather is humid these days, my rheumatism is acting up again.’

However, they are not intersubstitutable in other contexts, as I will show later the discussion. The differences between lol and lo4 that have been described in the literature, and those differences can be summarized as that of objective (for lol) versus subjective (for lo4). For example, Kwok (1984) claims that both particles indicate
obviousness, but \textit{lo4} sounds rather blunt while \textit{lo1} seems less severe. Leung (1992) describes \textit{lo1} as conveying something that is self-evident and unquestionable, and describes \textit{lo4} as conveying a subjective opinion that may not be supported by any evidence. Li et al. (1995) note that \textit{lo1} indicates that the proposition is manifest and simple, while \textit{lo4} indicates that the speaker has strong confidence on the truthfulness of the proposition. After examining their claims and instances of those two FPs in the corpus, I propose that the difference between \textit{lo1} and \textit{lo4} is parallel to that between \textit{la1} and \textit{laa3}: namely, the difference lies in that of knowledge assumption. That is, \textit{lo1} assumes the hearer to have a high level of knowledge towards the proposition whereas \textit{lo4} does not. To illustrate, let us imagine a scenario, as given in (114), in which a woman is welcoming a new colleague to their office at Mongkok district in Kowloon, Hong Kong.

\begin{verbatim}
(114) A: 你住邊 gaa3?
    Nei zyu bin gaa3?
you live where FP
    ‘Where do you live?’

    B: 蒲台島 lo4 */*蒲台島 lo1 */*蒲台島 lo3.
    Poutoidou lo4 */*Poutoidou lo1 */*Poutoidou lo3.
    Pou-Toi-island FP/ Pou-Toi-island FP/ Pou-Toi-island FP
    ‘Pou Toi Island.’
\end{verbatim}

Speaker B tells speaker A that she lives in a very remote outlying island. As it is quite rare that one would meet someone commuting to work everyday from that outlying island, the information contained in the answer is very unexpected and definitely not obvious. Thus, the ungrammaticality of \textit{lo1} is predictable. The grammaticality of \textit{lo4},
on the other hand, contradicts Kwok’s claim that lo4 indicates obviousness. Rather, lo4 points out that the state-of-affairs is not so obvious, and the speaker does not expect the hearer to have any knowledge of it. The difference between the levels of assumed knowledge towards a proposition is further illustrated by (115) and (116). In (115), speaker B regards the whereabouts of a certain object to be very obvious and assumes that the hearer should have known that. Lo1 here is compatible with the assumption of obviousness intended by the speaker. In contrast, lo4 is incompatible, since it registers the speaker’s assumption of no knowledge on the part of the hearer and thus contradicts that of obviousness expectation. In (116), the first clause indicates the unexpectedness of the proposition denoted by the second clause. Hence, only lo4 is grammatical in that exchange.

(115) A: Where did he put it?

   B: 你嘅都睇唔到? 嘻嘢度 lo1 / *lo4。
       Nei gam dou tai-m-dou? Hai go dou lo1./*lo4.
       you this-way even see-not-successful at that place FP/FP
       ‘How is it you don’t see it? It’s just over there.’

(116) A: Where did he put it?

   B: 你一定估唔到 gaa3 laa3, 嘻嘨度 lo4 / *lo1。
       Nei jatding gu-m-dou gaa3 aa3, hai go dou lo4./*lo1.
       you must guess-not-successful FP at that place FP/FP
       ‘You probably can’t figure it out, it’s just over there.’

Since the proposition conveyed by the lo4-appended utterance is regarded by the speaker as unknown to the hearer, the particle serves to indicate that the proposition is
the speaker's own subjective opinion. When an utterance is explicitly marked as an
opinion of the speaker, as in (117) and (118), *lo1* is not a suitable FP.°

(117) 我認為呢度出現問題 *lo4/ *lo1。
Ngo jingwai nidou ceot-zo mantai *lo4/ *lo1.
I should this-place occur-Asp problem FP/FP
‘I believe this part has a problem.’

(118) 計我話，你應該留低 *lo4/ *lo1。
Gai ngo waa, nei jinggoi laudai *lo4/ *lo1.
calculate I say you should stay FP/FP
‘In my opinion, you should stay.’

In light of this difference, the contrast between (119) and (120) becomes plausible.

(119) A: 搭巴士定搭地鐵 *aa3?
Daap baasi ding daap deitit *aa3?
take bus or take subway FP
‘(Shall we) take the bus or the subway?’

B: 巴士 *lo1/ *lo4/ *lo3
Baasi *lo1/ *lo4/ *lo3
bus FP/FP/FP
‘The bus.’

(120) A: 搭巴士好定搭地鐵好 *aa3?
Daap baasi hou ding daap deitit hou *aa3?
take bus good or take subway good FP
‘Which way’s better: take the bus or take the subway?’

B: 搭地鐵好 *lo4/ *lo3/ *lo1
daap deitit hou lo4/ *lo3/ *lo1
take subway good FP/FP/FP
‘It’s better to take the subway.’

In (119) speaker A asks speaker B to pick up a choice between two types of
transportation. Speaker B uses *lo1* to express a casual choice between the two
alternatives, indicating either one of them would be fine with him. He is a bit
indifferent to exploring the difference between the two alternatives. In contrast, the question format in (120) involves more deliberate reasoning. Speaker A does not have an answer and hence asks B for his opinion. The use of the particle lo4 by B in (120) provides speaker A with an answer that he did not have. For that reason, particle lo1 is not appropriate in this context.

The subjectivity of lo4 is also reflected in directives containing it. Although lo1 is not used deontically, it is compatible with directives, as shown in (121) and (122a). Note, however, that when lo1 is replaced by lo4, such utterances do not convey suggestions; instead, they become declaratives conveying the opinion of the speaker, as in (122b). One may recall the parallel contrast exhibited by laal and laa3.

(121) a. 要桔 aa3? 嗆攏盆番去 lo1/*lo4 。 (5.9)
Jiu gat aa3? Gam lo pun fanheoi lo1/*lo4.
need tangerine FP so get CI back FP/FP
‘Want a tangerine (plant)? Get one home then.’

(122) a. 帶佅去玩下 lo1/*lo4 。
Daai keoi heoi waan-haa lo1.
take him go play-Asp FP
‘Take him out to have some fun!’

   b. (計我話，你應該)帶佅去玩下 lo4。
   (Gai ngo waa, nei jinggoi) daai keoi heoi waa-haa lo4.
calculate I say you should take him go play-Asp FP
   ‘(In my opinion, you should) take him out to have some fun.’

Due to differences in knowledge assumption, lo4 does not derive the evaluative sense as lo1 does. In (123) lo1 conveys an indifferent attitude to the hearer and implies
the speaker's strong reservations on offering her congratulations. *Lo4*, on the other hand, is not readily found associated with a speaker's negative attitude.

(123) 升級 aa4？嘗恭喜你 lo1/*lo4。
    Singkap aa4? Gam gunghei nei lo1/*lo4.
    promotion FP so congratulations you FP/FP
    ‘Promotion? So, congratulations.’

3.3.9. LOK3

*Lok3* is generally regarded as an intensifier of *lo3*. When the sentence conveys strong emotion, it usually goes with *lok3* rather than *lo3*. For instance, in (124), the strong emotion of the utterance is marked by the modal phrase 都話 *dou waa* 'already said,' asserting very firmly the speaker's feeling about not going. As a result, the utterance cannot take the weaker, less assertive form, *lo3*, but needs *lok3* instead.

(124) 我都話唔去 lok3/*lo3。 (Leung 1992:111)
    Ngo dou waa m-heoi lok3/*lo3.
    I already said not-go FP/FP
    ‘As I said, I am not going.’

In the corpus, the occurrence of *lok3* is limited to non-utterance-final position, as in (125) through (127). This phenomenon of the -k coda adding stronger emotion is similar to the situation reported in section 3.3.5 on *laak3*. The phrase-final *lok3* is, in general, interchangeable with *lo3*, but not *laak3*.10
(125) 而家領導 ngaai3 你做組長 lok3/lo3/*laak3, 唢你咪做 lo1。(4.2)
Jigaa lingdou ngaai nei zou zouoeng lok3/lo3/*laak3,
now supervisor ask you do group-leader FP/FP/FP

gam nei mai zou lo1.
so you is-not do FP
‘Now that the supervisor has asked you to be the group leader, you should
(go ahead and) just do it.’

(126) 你瞓下便 aai3 聲 lok3/lo3/*laak3, 我瞓落去搵咪得 lo1。(9.5)
Nei hai haabin aai seng lok3/lo3/*laak3, ngodei lokheoi lo
you at below yell sound FP/FP/FP we down-go get
mai dak lo1.
is-not okay FP
‘(All you have to do) is simply yell to us from below (and) we’ll come down
to pick them up.’

(127) 嘗啲藥執番嘅 lok3/lo3/*laak3, 啥係成包搵入去煲 aa6 得 lo1。(11.5)
Go di joek zap-faanlei lok3/lo3/*laak3, m-hai seng baau
that Cl medication pick-back FP/FP/FP not-is whole Cl
lo-japheoi bou aa6 dak lo1.
take-inside brew FP okay FP
‘Now that the herbs were picked up, why don’t you just take the whole
packet inside (to the house) and brew it.’

Observe, also, that the *laak3-utterances, cited in the above sections, are not
intersubstitutable with *lok3. Another example is (128) below.

(128) Laa4, 你今日偷一陣間雞 laak3/*lok3, 同我去醫院搵藥一齊番嘅。(11.2)
[=*87)]
Laa, nei gamjat tau-jat-zan-gaan-gai laak3/??laa3, tung ngo
now you today steal-one-Cl-moment-chicken FP/FP
with me
heoi jijyun lo joek jatcai faanlei.
go hospital get medication together come-back
‘Now (listen), sneak away (from work) for a while today and go to the
hospital with me to get some medication, then we come home together.’
Kwok (1984:49) argues that lok3 conveys a stronger sense of inevitability or irrevocability than laak3. However, that analysis is not helpful in explaining the above differences. It seems that the difference may be accounted for by the [logic bound] feature of lok3. The complex sentences connected by lok3 form subordination of certain logical relations, whereas those connected by laak3 contain co-ordination without strong logical relations. Due to the scarcity of the uses of utterance-internal laak3 and lok3 in the corpus, further investigation is needed before making more in-depth analyses of lok3 and drawing further conclusions.

3.3.10. LE5

Le5 has two major uses: it turns a declarative into interrogative, and it re-asserts a declarative. To distinguish these two categories seems to be difficult since there is no overt movement involved in question formation in Chinese. While rising intonation is one way to signal a yes-no question which contains no wh-structures, it coalesces with the rising, surface tone of the FPs, and the hearer must then rely mostly on contextual inference to resolve the ambiguity. In Leung (1992), the interrogative le5 is transcribed as having rising-falling pitch, whereas the declarative le5 is transcribed as simply rising in pitch. However, details of the exact pronunciations of these two senses of le5 and the extent of differences in pronunciation, if it exists, to clue the perception of these two senses must await further acoustic and perception studies.
3.3.10.1. INTERROGATIVE

One of the functions of le5 is to form interrogative structure, as in (129) and (130), behaving like tag questions in English. Similar to other interrogative particles, le5 does not co-occur with other wh-elements or A-not-A constructions, as illustrated in (131). The FP asks the hearer to confirm or agree with to a suspected state-of-affairs.

(129) 呢按洗溫個頭 e3 le5? (9.6)
Ni wan saisap go tau e3 le5?
this Cl wet Cl head FP FP
‘This time you got stuck in the middle, didn’t you?’

(130) 成個月冇飛髮 le5? (6.6)
Sing go jyut mou faafaat le5?
whole Cl month no haircut FP
‘You haven’t have your hair cut for the whole month, am I right?’

(131) a. *幾多個月冇飛髮 le5? [wh-word]
*Geido go jyut mou feifaat le5?
how-many Cl month no haircut FP
*‘How many months didn’t you have a haircut, am I right?’

b. *係唔係成個月冇飛髮 le5? [A-not-A structure]
*Hai-m-hai sing go jyut mou feifaat le5?
is-not-is whole Cl month no haircut FP
*‘Have you not had a haircut for the whole month, am I right?’

The distinctive feature of the interrogative le5 is revealed through drawing comparisons between this FP and the other interrogative particle, laa4, in this family. Consider,

(132) a. 你食咗藥 le5?
Nei sik-zi joek le5?
you eat-Asp medication FP
‘You took the medication, right?’
b. 你食咗藥 laa4?
   Nei sik-zo joek  laa4?
   you eat-Asp medication FP
   ‘You’ve taken the medication, haven’t you?’

(132a) conveys the speaker’s speculative and subjective assumption of the proposition. The interrogative is an information-seeking question with some degree of doubt. On the other hand, (132b) is a simple confirmation-seeking question without commitment on the part of the speaker to its positive or negative response. This difference can be illustrated by inserting a modal adverb 原來 jyunloi ‘originally, to my surprise’ in the utterance, as in (133). The modal adverb indicates that the state-of-affairs that it modified is not known to the speaker before, but has become known now. Since the state is known to the speaker and he should no longer have doubts about it, the question is incompatible with le5. On the other hand, the question formed with laa4 is just a rhetorical question.

(133) 原來你食咗藥 laa4/#le5?
   Jyunloi nei sik-zo joek  laa4/#le5?
   originally you eat-Asp medication FP/FP
   ‘So, you have already taken the medication (and which I didn’t know before), haven’t you?’

3.3.10.2. NON-INTERROGATIVE

As shown below, le5 can also be used as a non-interrogative FP. It re-asserts a state-of-affairs that has been brought up before but has not been properly acknowledged by the hearer. The speaker further insists on the accuracy of the state-of-affairs to the hearer.

128
(134) 我真係見到佢 le5。
Ngo zan-hai kin-dou keoi le5.
I really-is see-successful him FP
'I really saw him (believe me)'

(135) 佢話買唔到 le5。(Kwok 1984)
Keoi waa maa-m-dou le5.
he say buy-not-successful FP
'He says he wasn't able to buy it. (I've told you this already.)'

(136) 我唔去唔得 le5。(Leung 1992)
Ngo m-heoi m-dak le5.
I not-go not-okay FP
'I have to go there (I've no choice).'

3.3.11. LE3

The last two manifestations that we are going to discuss encode pure deontic modality. Le3 pose a suggestion of the occurrence of the state conveyed by the proposition; that is, the particle suggests that the hearer should perform the action denoted by the proposition. This is illustrated in the following examples.

(137) 腿戲 le3!
Taihei le3!
see-movie FP
'Why don't we go see a movie?'

(138) 阿偉，同我落街買包煙 le3! (Leung 1992)
Aa-Wai, tung ngo lokgaai maa baau jin le3!
Aa-Wai for me down-street buy Cl cigarette FP
'A-Wai, could you go down and get a pack of cigarettes for me?'

Similar to the deontic lo3, le3 does not assume a high degree of potentiality on the part of the hearer. Thus, it conveys a consultative tone and seeks the hearer's agreement to
perform the action. The main difference between lo3 and le3 lies in the assumption of whether the speaker also participates in the action. With lo3, the speaker assumes that he will participate in the action, as in (139a). That then accounts for the ungrammaticality of (139b) where the speaker does not take part in the action denoted by the verb. With le3, the speaker may not participate in the action, as in (138), or may participate in the action, as in (140).

(139) a. 幫佢買包煙 lo3!
Bong keoi maa baau jin lo3!
for him buy Cl cigarette FP
‘(Let’s) get him a pack of cigarettes!’

b. *你幫佢買包煙 lo3!
*Nei bong keoi maa baau jin lo3!
you for him buy Cl cigarette FP
‘Why don’t you get him a pack of cigarettes?’

(140) 我哬換下口味，今晚聽聽懷舊歌曲 le3! (Leung 1992)
Ngodei wun-haa haumei, gammaan teng di waaigau gokuk le3!
we change-Asp taste tonight listen Cl old song FP
‘Let’s change our taste a bit and listen to some oldies tonight!’

3.3.12. LE4

Similar to le3, le4 is also a pure deontic particle that marks a suggestion, as in (141).

(141) a. 幫佢買包煙 le4!
Bong keoi maa baau jin lo3!
for him buy Cl cigarette FP
‘(Let’s) get him a pack of cigarettes!’

130
Unlike *lo3*, *le4* neither assumes nor forbids the speaker to participate in the action, as shown in the examples in (141). Compared with *le3*, *le4* encodes a higher level of potentiality. In a friendly mood, as in (142) and (143), the speaker has strong confidence that the hearer will perform the action as suggested. In an irritating mood, as in (144), the speaker strongly requests that the mentioned state-of-affairs be realized.

The utterance becomes an indirect command.

(142) 老婆, ......同佢喺派咩佢 le4! (9.4)
Loupo, ......tung keoi deoi paai-zo keoi le4!
wife for them deliver-Asp it FP
‘Honey, .....deliver these to them, okay?’

(143) 你同我寫番對對聯 le4! (2.8)
Nei tung ngo se-faan deoi deoilyun le4!
you for me write-Asp Cl couplet FP
‘How about writing a couplet for me?’

(144) 唔該你唔好黎神嘅聲 le4!(9.6) 12
M-goi nei m-hou bansan-gam seng le4!
please you not-good pray-god-Prt voice FP
‘Would you please not be so long-winded!’
3.4. SUMMARY

In this chapter, I first proposed that the semantic meaning of $L$- is [+realization], marking the activity conveyed by the predicate as perfective. I then proceeded to discuss how this core meaning extends from the predicate to the whole proposition and imposes a stative reading on the sentence, indicating the realization of a state in the real world. The [+realization] feature further extends to the epistemic domain to convey the speaker’s subjective attitude towards the proposition. In this domain, the proposition is envisaged as a piece of new information by the speaker. The semantic extension continues in the speech act domain. The $L$- particle turns a declarative into a directive by requesting the hearer to bring the state into reality. In the second half of the chapter, I characterized the distribution and the functional differences among the 11 manifestations of $L$-. The major primes for meaning contrast among the manifestations are discussed in turn and summarized in Figure 3.2. Note that [H-knowledge] stands for the following: ‘the speaker assumes that the hearer has the knowledge of the proposition.’ [h-potential] and [l-potential] stand for: ‘the speaker assumes the hearer to have high and low potential respectively to realize the state-of-affairs conveyed by the proposition.’ [S-desirable] stands for: ‘the state-of-affair described as favorable from the speaker’s viewpoint.’ [S/H-participation] stands for: ‘the speaker/hearer will participate in realizing the state-of-affairs conveyed by the proposition.’
Figure 3.2. The Functional Primes of the Manifestations of L-
NOTES

1 It is also pronounced as lai4 [lai21] and is homonymous with the colloquial reading of the verb 來 loi4 [loi21] 'come.'

2 Liu and Yiu (1998) label it as a creation event.

3 It seems that bare adjectives are not good with lei4 as in the following.

(1) *啲菜貴 lei4。
*Di coi gwai lei4.
Cl vegetable expensive FP
‘The vegetables were expensive.’

(2) *佢靚 lei4。
*Keoi leng lei4.
she pretty FP
‘She was pretty (but is no longer pretty now).’

4 Let me add that the high tonality of a FP facilitates enumeration, but not a necessary or sufficient condition for the function. Compare, for instance, (3a) and (3b).

(3) a. 杯 aa3, 碗 aa3, 筷子 aa3……
Bui aa3, wun aa3, faaizi aa3……
cup FP bowl FP chopstick FP
‘Cups, bowls, chopsticks,……’

b. *杯 aa1, 碗 aa1, 筷子 aa1……
Bui aa1, wun aa1, faaizi aa1……
cup FP bowl FP chopsticks FP
‘Cups, bowls, chopsticks,……’

We still know so little about SCAN intonation in general, not to mention the complex, though interesting, interaction between intonation and FPs in the language.

5 The majority of laa4 in the corpus occurs with aa1 to form aa1 laa4 clusters. In such environments, laa4 can co-occur with wh-elements due to difference in scope in attaching the particle.
(4)  你話咩事 aal laa4? (8.3)
Nei waa me si aal laa4?
you say what matter FP FP
‘In your opinion, what’s going on?’

6 Except for Li et al (1995), who consider laa3 to have a stronger force than laak3.

7 Due to the underlying interrogative structure, utterance containing mai only license the appending of FPs with high level or high rising tone, such as:

(5)  佢嘅高 ge2/*ge3。
Keoi mai hou gou ge2/*ge3.
he IS very tall FP/FP
‘He IS quite tall, (isn’t he?)’

8 The utterance will be possible only when loi is used to express reluctance on the speaker’s part in not wanting to talk about her residency. However, this attitude would be interpreted as being very impolite to one’s new friends.

9 However, the new generation may find loi acceptable.

10 It seems to me that the sentence-internal lo3 has to be pronounced with longer duration and with slightly rising pitch.

11 Acoustic research is clearly needed to gain a greater understanding of the interaction between tone and intonation with respect to FPs.

12 Similar to ‘please’ in English, m-goi can mark a polite request, but it may also be used to convey indignation or exasperation, as in this case.
CHAPTER 4

THE PARTICLES OF SITUATION GIVENNESS: G-

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses a family of particles that have the velar stop as the onset.
It includes ge3 [kε33], ge2 [kε35], gaa3 [ka33], gaa2 [ka35], gaa4 [ka21] and gaak3 [kak3].
In the literature, manifestations of the G- family of particles have been described as showing
a sentence that is a factual statement, conveying what the speaker regards as true, strengthening
the force of assertion (e.g., Kwok 1984), and asserting either the truth of an extant fact or the
certainty of an expected event (e.g., Leung 1992). It has also been associated with
perfective-marking (e.g., Chao 1947, Light 1983) and focus-marking (e.g., Light 1983, Matthews & Yip 1994).

It is proposed here that the core feature of G- is marking a situation that is given
in the communicative context; that is, that situation is part of the presumed knowledge
of the participants in the exchange. Similar to L-, G- also imposes a stative reading to an
utterance. However, while L- marks a change of state, G- is neutral in this regard. G- is
also different from L- in indicating that the existence of the state in the communicative context has been presumed by the speakers. Although the family of G- particles is relatively simple and, unlike L-, does not have a complex system of manifestations, there are nonetheless a large number of syntactic devices, such as possessive marker, associate marker, nominalizer, etc., that are semantically related and phonologically similar to G-. In order to better understand the semantics and pragmatics of G-, its connection with other related function words will be explored first. I propose that the whole family of G- is part of a mega word family, formulated as $\mathcal{G}$. The mega $\mathcal{G}$ includes the general classifier $go3 [kɔ33]$, the distal demonstrative $go2 [kɔ35]$, the predicative demonstrative $gam2 [kəm35]$, the linking particle $ge3 [kε33]$, the nominalizer $ge3 [kε33]$, and the final particle family G-. They are linked by the core feature, [+deictic], whereas the members of G- per se are linked by the [+situationally given], [+focus] and [+deictic] features. In what follows, I will present the semantic extension of the $\mathcal{G}$ family and then proceed to the discussion of G-.

4.2. THE MEGA $\mathcal{G}$ FAMILY AND THE [+DEICTIC] FEATURE

As mentioned in the preceding section, the mega family includes a large variety of members, such as the general classifier $go3 [kɔ33]$, the distal demonstrative $go2 [kɔ35]$, the predicative demonstrative $gam2 [kəm35]$, the linking particle $ge3 [kε33]$, the nominalizer $ge3 [kε33]$ and the final particle G-. Below, I illustrate how the [+deictic] feature is revealed in each of these members and how this feature extends
from the *de re* domain to the *de dicto* domain, giving rise to the various syntactic devices. The deriving process will be best studied by beginning with the classifier *go3*, in the following subsection.

4.2.1. THE GENERAL CLASSIFIER *GO3*

Each noun in SCAN is assigned a particular classifier based on such distinctive features as those pertaining to shape, size, and function. The classifier *go3* is the most common and most neutral classifier for individual items (Matthews & Yip 1994). The major function of a classifier is for counting. However, classifiers in SCAN also bear the deictic feature. As shown in (1a), a bare noun phrase in the subject position would be understood as generic. However, after it is modified by a classifier, the noun phrase bears deictic implication, as in (1b). Moreover, the [+deictic] feature is anaphoric, that is, the noun phrase following the classifier must be mentioned previously or be known by the interlocutors.

(1)  
\[\text{a. 個銀包就唔抵買 laa3。} \quad \text{[generic]}\]
\[\text{Nganbaau zau m-daimaai laa3.}\]
\[\text{wallet then not-worth-buying FP}\]
\[\text{‘Wallets aren’t a good deal.’}\]
\[\text{b. 個銀包就唔抵買 laa3。} \quad \text{[specific]}\]
\[\text{Go nganbaau zau m-daimaai laa3.}\]
\[\text{Cl wallet then not-worth-buying FP}\]
\[\text{‘This/that wallet is not a good deal.’}\]
4.2.2. THE DISTAL DEMONSTRATIVE \textit{GO2}

In \textit{SCAN}, the distal demonstrative \textit{go2} is bound by a classifier phrase to form
\textit{go2-(numeral)-classifier} phrases. The anaphoric property of a \textit{go2}-phrase is illustrated
in (2).

(2)  
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{我知道这个人。}  
\textit{Ngo sik go go jan.}  
\textit{I know that Cl guy}  
\textit{‘I know that person.’}
\item \textit{我要去个。}  
\textit{Ngo jiu go go.}  
\textit{I want that Cl}  
\textit{‘I want that one.’}
\end{enumerate}

4.2.3. THE PREDICATIVE DEMONSTRATIVE \textit{GAM2}

Thus far, the [+deictic] feature of \textit{g} in the examples we have seen has been
restricted to the \textit{de re} domain. However, the anaphoric, or the referring back, function
may extend to the \textit{de dicto} domain and link the proposition conveyed by the preceding
elements and the element that follows. The predicative demonstrative \textit{gam2} can best
illustrate this semantic extension.

(3)  
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{（看着一个不整洁的房间）你干嘛？}  
\textit{[de re—demonstrative]}  
\textit{（看着一个不整洁的房间）妈 \textit{gam} ge2?}  
\textit{（Looking at a messy room） why so FP}  
\textit{‘Why is it like this?’ (i.e., so messy)}
\item \textit{你要一个人去。}  
\textit{Nei jiu jat go jan heoi.}  
\textit{you need one Cl guy go}  
\textit{‘You have to go alone.’}
\end{enumerate}
Gam in (3a) denotes a certain physical state in the real world, that is, in the de re domain, and in this case, the messy situation of a room. In (3b), gam becomes a clause anaphor in the de dicto domain, referring to the statement ‘you have to go alone.’ In (3c), gam turns the adjective小心 siusam ‘careful’ into an adverbial in order to modify the verb行 haang ‘walk’.

4.2.4. THE LINKING PARTICLE GE3

Given the above illustrations, the semantic extension of the deictic feature of ge3 from the de re domain to the de dicto domain will become self-explanatory after going through the following examples. The linking particle ge3 appears in a large number of syntactic constructions, as shown below. In addition to the semantic extension, we should also note the parallel distribution between the go2-classifier and the linking particle ge3 in the examples.
4.2.4.1. POSSESSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

We turn first to possessive constructions. Ge3 marks the possession relationship by linking an NP to the head noun, as in (4). For concrete objects in (5), both classifier go3 and ge3 can convey the possessive relationship, but the classifier will be more readily found in colloquial speech. In fact, all other classifiers in SCAN can mark possessive constructions, as illustrated in (6) and (7).

(4) 但 ge3 解釋
Keoi ge gaaisik
he Lnk explanation
‘His explanation’

(5) 阿爸 ge3/個銀包
Baabaa ge/go nganbaau
father Lnk/Cl wallet
‘Father’s wallet’

(6) 我件衫
Ngo gin saam
my Cl garment
‘My garment’

(7) 學校架電腦
Hokhaau gaa dinnou
school Cl computer
‘The school’s computer’
4.2.4.2. ASSOCIATIVE EXPRESSIONS

In addition to nominals, ge3 also links an adjectival expression to the head noun, as in the following examples.

(8) 紅紅倉 ge3 西瓜
Hunghung-dei ge saigwaa
red-red-Prt Lnk watermelon
‘A somewhat red watermelon’

(9) 好紅 ge3/個西瓜
Hou hung ge/go saigwaa
very red Lnk/Cl watermelon
‘A very red watermelon’

In (9), the general classifier go3 can also perform this function within NPs that refer to an individual entity.

4.2.4.3. RELATIVE CLAUSES

In relative clauses, ge3 links a clause to the head noun. It should be pointed out, however, that relative clauses formed by ge3 usually refer to a class of entities, not to individual entities, as illustrated in (10). For individual reference, the demonstrative-classifier structure 嘔個 go go ‘that one’ must be adopted, as illustrated by (11) and (12).

(10) 考試唔合格 ge3 學生應該留班。
Haausi m-hapgaak ge hoksaang jinggoi laubaan.
exam not-pass Lnk student should retained
a. ‘Students who fail the exam should be retained.’
b. *‘The student who failed the exam should be retained.’
4.2.5. NOMINALIZER GE3

Leaving the linking particle, we now proceed to the discussion of the nominalizer ge3. The particle ge3 attaches to verbal or adjectival phrases forming nominal expressions, as in (13) and (14). Note that ge3 nominals are non-referential (Lee & Yiu 1998); that is, they refer not to an individual but to a class of entities, as in (14). For individual reference, the demonstrative-classifier structure must be employed, as in (15).

(13) 記得 ge3 都講哂 laa3.
Geidak ge dou gongsaai laa3.
‘I’ve told (you) everything that I can recall.’
(14) 大 ge3 三蚊。細 ge3 一蚊。
Daai ge saam man, sai ge jat man.
big Nom three dollar small Nom one dollar
a. ‘The big ones cost $3 (each), the small ones $1 (each).’
b. * ‘The big one costs $3, the small one $1 dollar.’

(15) a. 大個讀三年班，細個讀一年班。
Daai go go duk saam ninbaan, sai go go duk jat ninbaan
big that CI study third grade small that CI study first grade
‘The older one is studying primary three (grade three), the younger one
primary one (grade one).’

b. ??大 ge3 讀三年班，細 ge3 讀一年班。
?? Daai ge duk saam ninbaan, sai ge duk jat ninbaan
big Nom study third grade small Nom study first grade
‘The older one is studying primary three, the younger one
primary one.’

Ge3 nominals are commonly treated as free relatives or headless complex NPs in the
literature (e.g. Matthews & Yip 1994). According to this analysis, the so-called
nominalizer is in essence the linking ge3, as presented in the previous section. However,
there is another line of analysis adopted from the analysis of de, the ge3 equivalent in
MSC. This line of analysis (e.g., by Li & Thompson 1981 and Zhu 1983) treats ge3 as a
pronominalizer, which turns the modifying phrase into a nominal. When ge3 goes with
a head noun, the ge3 phrase functions as an apposition to the head noun1. These two
lines of analysis are not contradictory if my [+deictic] hypothesis for ge3 is correct. In
my hypothesis, ge3 possesses both linking and pronominal characteristics that are
derived directly from the [+deictic] feature.2
4.2.6. THE FINAL PARTICLE G-

The final particle G- is closely related to the nominalizer ge3, which occurs at sentence final position. Let us first consider the two readings of the following ambiguous utterance.

(16) 我打足球 ge3。
    Ngo daa zukkau ge3
    I play football Nom.
    a. ‘I am a football player.’ (class membership reading)
    b. ‘It is football that I play.’ (cleft reading)

In (16a), the VP ‘play football’ becomes the NP ‘the person who plays football as an occupation’ after the appending of ge3, in essence a pronominalizer that instantiates the [+deictic] feature. The particle ge3 in (16b), on the other hand, merely turns the activity denoted by the VP ‘play football’ into a stative nominal meaning ‘the fact is I play/played/will play football (not other games) at some specified time’ without adding new lexical meaning. It merely places the VP as the focus of the information conveyed. The particle ge3 exhibits the [+focus] feature, which does not have any apparent connection with pronominalization. In fact, both the [+deictic] and [+focus] features are related to nominalization, but to two different types of nominalization. Zhu (1983) identifies two types of nominalizations and labels them as transferred-designating nominalization and self-designating nominalization. Using Zhu’s terms, it is proposed that the [+deictic] feature originated from the transferred-designating nominalization, whereas the [+focus] features originated from the self-designating nominalization. The distinction between the two types of nominalization is presented in (17).
In transferred-designation at the morphological level, the suffix -er adds new meaning to the root 'write.' At the syntactic level, 'that she stole' refers to the object 'diamond' and not to the action 'she stole.' On the other hand, in self-designation at the morphological level, the suffix -ness merely changes the syntactic category of the root 'kind' without introducing new lexical meaning. At the syntactic level, 'that she stole the diamond' refers to the event, 'she stole the diamond', without adding new meaning.

In view of these two types of nominalization, it becomes transparent that the class membership reading in (16a) instantiates the transferred-designating nominalization whereas the cleft reading in (16b) instantiates the self-designating nominalization.

Gradually, the [+deictic] and [+focus] features range over the whole sentence instead of the predicate and entertain the sentence as a second order representation. That is, the particle ge3 does not add new lexical meaning to the sentence, but construe the sentence as an abstract noun-like object, which produces a 'matter-of-fact-tone', as in (16b), where the fact is that speaker plays football, and is the focus of the sentence. Details on the evolution of the two features, [+deictic] and [+focus], that give rise to the [+situationally given] will be discussed in section 4.3.1.
4.2.7. CROSS-LINGUISTIC REGULARITIES OF THE SEMANTIC EXTENSION OF [+DEICTIC] FEATURE

Above, I have uncovered a word family whose members are linked by the core [+deictic] feature. In addition to SCAN, the proposed connection among the general classifier, the demonstratives, and the linking particle, demonstrate cross-dialectal and cross-linguistic regularities as well. First, that connection is commonly found in other southern Chinese dialects, as shown in Figure 4.1 (à la Beijing Daxue Zhongwenxi Yuyan Jiaoyanshi 1995 and Qian 1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialects</th>
<th>General classifier</th>
<th>Demonstrative</th>
<th>Possessive, Associative, Relative, Nominalizer</th>
<th>FP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>ء ء</td>
<td>ء/ke?</td>
<td>ء/ke?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanchang</td>
<td>kəo</td>
<td>kə213</td>
<td>kəo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meixian</td>
<td>ke53</td>
<td>ke31</td>
<td>ke53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jian’ou</td>
<td>ke33</td>
<td></td>
<td>ke33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1. Deictic Markers in Southern Chinese Dialects
Second, that connection is also found in many other unrelated languages in the world, as demonstrated by a few examples given in Figure 4.2. (à la Frajzyngier 1991 and Maynard 1997).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Definite</th>
<th>Demonstrative</th>
<th>Complement</th>
<th>Relative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>the &lt; that</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>that/wh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>das/die/der</td>
<td>das/die/der</td>
<td>dass</td>
<td>das/die/der</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yiddish</td>
<td>Φ</td>
<td>za</td>
<td>vos</td>
<td>vos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ge'ez</td>
<td>za</td>
<td>za</td>
<td>za</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amharic</td>
<td>u/w</td>
<td>ya</td>
<td>ya/ala</td>
<td>ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mupun</td>
<td>nə</td>
<td>nə</td>
<td>nə</td>
<td>də</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toba Batak</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>ano/kono/sono</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2. Deictic Markers in Other Languages

4.3. THE SEMANTIC EXTENSION OF THE CORE MEANING OF G-

In the above section, I introduced the [+deictic] feature of the mega word family $G^-$, and the [+focus] feature of $G^-$, which developed from one special type of nominalization. In this section, I propose one more feature that is derived from the aforementioned two features, namely [+situationally given].

The [+deictic] and [+focus] features of $G^-$ are not restricted to the predicate domain, but may range over the whole sentence and entertain the utterance as a noun-like abstract object and give a ‘matter-of-fact tone’. The derived factual tone, in essence, instantiates the [+situationally given] feature. The term ‘situationally given’ refers to the
description of a situation or a state that has existed in the real world or has been presumed in the communicative context. To better understand the nature of this feature, compare an utterance appended by G with one appended by L-, which is also a state-imposing FP.

(18)  

a. 我要去美國 laa3。
Ngo jiu heoi Meigwok laa3.
I need go America FP
'I need to go to America (now). (I didn’t need to before)'

b. 我要去美國 ge3。
Ngo jiu heoi Meigwok ge3.
I need go America FP
'(The fact is) I need to go to America.'

In (18a) L- indicates a change of state: a change from ‘my being in the state of not going to America’ to ‘my being in the state of going to America.’ In (18b), however, G- merely imposes a stative reading on the sentence and informs the hearer of the existence of the state ‘I need to go to America.’ The FP does not require the speaker to have any commitment on the continuance or discontinuance of the state: the sentence may refer to a future activity of the speaker according to a plan or an original plan of the speaker that is no longer valid. Rather, the FP emphasizes that the situation is given as a fact.

Below, I demonstrate how the semantic features [+deictic, +focus, +situationally given] are extended through various linguistic domains, as schematized in Figure 4.3.
Figure 4.3. The Semantic Extension of G-

*Details of this function are discussed in sections 4.4.4. and 4.4.5
4.3.1. BACKGROUNDING

One of the major functions of G- is to provide background information. I will demonstrate how this function is derived by examining three types of predicates, namely, activity, stative and nominal.

4.3.1.1. ACTIVITY PREDICATES

We first turn to verbal predicates that denote activities. Consider the contrast between the presence and the absence of G- in the following sentences.

(19) 佢打緊字 ge3/#，係我叫佢抖下先 ge2。
    Keoi daa-gan zi ge3/#, hai ngo giu keoi tau-haa sin ge2.
    ‘He was typing (at some specified time), it’s me who asked him to take a break.’

(20) 郵個郵遞員 aa4，唔知點搞 ge3/#，（梗係撞鬼 laa3。) (9.8)
    Go go jaudaiyuan aa4, m-zi dimgaau ge3/#, that Cl mail-carrier FP not-know how-do FP
    (gang hai zonggwai laa3).
    (must be bump-ghost FP)
    ‘I don’t know what’s happened to that mail carrier, (he must have bumped
    into a ghost.)’

(21) 唔關你事 ge3/#。 (3.13)
    M-gwaan nei si ge3/#。
    not-concern you matter FP
    ‘It’s not your fault.’

In (19) the VP ‘is typing’ denotes an activity performed by the subject NP without G-.

After appending ge2, the action depicted becomes a stative fact that has either existed in the real world or is assumed in the communicative context, and, thus, serves as
background information for the proposition to follow. In (20), the VP 'don't know what to do' has a strong tendency to predicate the subject 'the mail carrier' when G- is absent, meaning that 'the mail carrier didn't know what to do.' After appending the particle ge3, the VP loses its predicating ability. The whole utterance conveys a subjective presumption by the speaker, and has the meaning of 'the speaker did not know what the mail carrier has done.' Similarly, the bare utterance in (21) will be more readily interpreted as advice given to the hearer on how to handle an event. With G-, the utterance becomes a statement explaining a fact assumed by the speaker.

4.3.1.2. STATIVE PREDICATES

The [+situationally given] feature becomes more prominent when the predicates that G- is appended to contain stative verbs or adjectives. This is illustrated in the following pairs of examples.

(22) a. 後面有條河。
    Hau-min jau tiu ho.
    'There is a river in the back.'

b. 後面有條河 ge3。
    Hau-min jau tiu ho ge3.
    'And in the back there is a river.'

(23) a. 件衫好新潮。
    Gin saam hou sanciu.
    'The garment is very trendy.'
b. 件衫好新潮 gaa3。
   Gin saam hou sanciu gaa3.
   CI garment very trendy FP
   'The garment is a very trendy one.'

The differences between the (a) and (b) utterances are significant for native speakers. A speaker may utter (22a), with physical pointing as well, to provide an on-the-spot description of a state-of-affairs. The utterance may be a response to 'Did you see anything?' However, (22b) will sound odd in such a context. Instead, it describes a pre-existing state-of-affairs according to one's knowledge, and would be a felicitous response to the question 'Is there any landmark there?' (when talking about the location of a place). In (23a), the adjectival predicate provides a comment on a certain characteristic of the garment; it would be an appropriate response to 'What do you think of this garment?' In contrast, (23b) may not be a felicitous response to this question, but it would be to the question 'How does the garment look?' (23b) provides a piece of background information to help the hearer identify the garment.

4.3.1.3. NOMINAL PREDICATES

In the preceding subsections, I examined the appending of G- to verbal and adjectival predicates. Turning now to nominal predicates, these do not license the appending of the G-. Sentence (24) will be grammatical only if G- is read as a possessive marker.
The ungrammaticality of G- with nominal predicates is predictable if we accepted that
G- developed from nominalizer ge3, as proposed above. In order for an utterance to be
appended by G-, the nominal must be denominalized first by another FP lei4 (which
was discussed in Chapter 3). An example is given in (25) below. Recall that the particle
lei4 serves to assert the innate properties of an object and pragmatically rectify a
mismatch of name and object. The appending of G- further asserts the innate properties
of an object by pointing out that the information is assumed and known in the
communicative content.

(24)  a. 呢個電視機 gaa3。
     Ni go dinsikei gaa3.
     this Cl TV FP
     (a) *‘This is a TV set.’
     (b) ‘This is part of the TV set.’

     b. 哎呀，講笑 laa1，其實通通唔係我 ge2。(9.7)
        Aiyaa, gongsiu laa1, keisat tungtung dou m-hai ngo ge2.
        oh, kidding FP in-fact everything all not-are me FP
        (a) *‘Oh, no kidding. In fact, none of these are me.’
        (b) ‘Oh, no kidding. In fact, none of these are mine.’

(25)  a. 呢個電視機 lei4 gaa3。
     Ni go dinsikei lei4 gaa3.
     this Cl TV FP FP
     ‘This is a TV set.’

     b. 哎呀，講笑 laa1，其實通通唔係我 lei4 ge2。(9.7)
        Aaiyaa, gongsiu laa1, keisat tungtung dou m-hai ngo lei4 ge2.
        oh kidding FP in-fact everything all not-is mine FP FP
        ‘Oh, no kidding. In fact, none of these are mine.’
4.3.2. CONVEYING (UN)CERTAINTY

Unlike the utterances cited in 4.3.1, the semantic differences between the absence or presence of G- seems to be very subtle to native speakers.

(26) 唔能夠啲 aa3 算數 ge3。(12.11)
M-nanggau gam aa3 syunsou ge3.
not-can this-way FP let-go FP
‘Can’t just let that go like that.’

(27) 我哋一定會管落去 ge3。(12.12)
Ngodei jatding wui gun-lokheoi ge3.
we sure will take-care-down-go FP
‘We’ll definitely keep on taking care of the matter.’

(28) 出面落緊雨 ge2。
Ceot-min lok-gan-yu ge2.
outside fall-Asp-rain FP
‘It’s raining outside, (how come?)’

It is generally agreed that the G- in the above utterances conveys a sense of certainty, as in (26) and (27), on the one hand, and doubt, as in (28), on the other, of the existence of an extant or expected event according to the speaker’s judgment. The semantic features of G- have been extended to the epistemic domain, commenting on the knowledge of the existence of the situation. The evolution of the sense of certainty is better understood through the distinction between verbs and nouns. It is well known that physical objects are prototypical representations of the noun category. A physical object normally occupies a region in certain domains, which sustain time-stability, while actions or events are not time-stable. (cf. Givon 1979: 320-321). The [+deictic]
and the [+focus] features construe the state as an abstract object that resembles a fixed unit of knowledge or concept. The strong sense of existence coming after the nominalization naturally gives rise to the modality of certainty. At a further stage, the speaker may also question and doubt the certainty of a given situation instead of strongly asserting it. As a result, different epistemic levels towards the knowledge of the proposition can be conveyed by different manifestations of G-.

4.3.3. EXHORTING

The senses of G- that have been discussed so far are all related to the appending of G- to declaratives. In fact, G- can also be appended to interrogatives. When G- is appended to an interrogative, the features apply to the speech act performed by the structures. Instead of describing the situation as given and existing, [+situationally given] feature indicates that the speech act should have already been known to the hearer, while [+focus] places strong emphasis on the speech act. These two features together impose an exhortative sense to the question and urges the hearer to give a quick answer, as in (29).

(29) 9% #0§M .#gaa2?
    Dimgaai m-gin   keoi gaa2?
    why    not-see him FP
    ‘Why don’t we see him (this is the question)?’

As shown in the above discussion, the semantic features of G- have extended from the sentential domain to the epistemic and speech act domain, giving rise to
various pragmatic meanings. In the next section, I am going to discuss how these meanings are expressed among the multitude variations of the surface form of G-.

4.4. THE MANIFESTATIONS

There are only 6 manifestations in the G- family. They are ge3, ge2, gaa3, gaa2, gaa4 and gaak3. They all bear the [+situationally given], [+deictic], and [+focus] features. Their major differences lie in the different assumptions of the existence of the situation and the knowledge of the situation on the part of the hearer. Except gaa2, which can convey deontic modality, all other manifestations convey purely epistemic modality.

4.4.1. GE3

The function of ge3 is relatively simple. Its major function attested in this corpus marks a high level of commitment on the part of the speaker to the proposition conveyed by the utterance, asserting the certainty of the proposition without any doubts, as illustrated in (30) and (31).

(30) 邊家有啲乜嘅事 le1, 大家都好關心 ge3。(11.10)
Bin gaa jau di matje si le1,
which family has Cl what matter FP
daaita dou hou gwaansam ge3.
everyone all very concern FP
‘Whatever happens to any family, everyone is very concerned.’
(31) 阿二叔會陸續寄番嚓 ge3 · (9.8)
    Aa-ji-suk wui lukzuk gei-faanlei ge3.
    second-uncle will continue mail-back FP
    ‘Second uncle will continue to send (them to us).’

The certitude of the sentence can be demonstrated by its compatibility with the adverb
of certainty 一定 jatding ‘must,’ and incompatibility with the adverb of doubt 大概
daaigoi ‘probably, maybe’ in (31’).

(31’) 阿二叔一定／?大概會陸續寄番嚓 ge3·
    Aa-ji-suk jatding／?daaigoi wui lukjuk gei-faanlei ge3.
    second-uncle sure／?probably will continue mail-back FP
    ‘Second uncle sure／?probably will continue to send (them to us).’

4.4.2. GE2

The meanings conveyed by ge2 are much more complicated, compared with ge3.
First, ge2 has an interrogative and a declarative use. The interrogative ge2 is
pronounced with a shorter duration and a sharper rising pitch, while the declarative ge2
is pronounced with a longer duration before the rise, based on perception. As pointed
out in section 3.3.3.10 for the particle le5, it may be difficult to distinguish yes-no
question from a statement since there is no overt movement involved in question
formation in Chinese. And the rising intonation usually associated with a yes-on
question without any wh-words may coalesces with the rising, surface tone of the FPs.
The clues for the distinction come mainly form contextual inference. Further research
on this would require acoustic and perception studies.
4.4.2.1. INTERROGATIVE USE

The questioning use of ge2 is obviously exhibited by comparing the differences between ge3 and ge2, as in the following utterances.

(32) 後面有條河 ge3。
    Hau-min jau tiu ho ge3.
    back-side has Cl river FP
    ‘(That place) has a river running at the back.’

(33) 後面有條河 ge2?
    Hau-min jau tiu ho ge2?
    back-side has Cl river FP
    ‘There is a river running at the rear, how come?’

(34) a. 你睇，後面有條河 ge3。
    ? Nei tai, hau-min jau tiu ho ge3.
    you see back-side has Cl river FP
    ‘You see, there is a river running behind.’

   b. 你睇，後面有條河 ge2?
    Nei tai, hau-min jau tiu ho ge2?
    you see back-side has Cl river FP
    ‘You see, there is a river running behind, how come?’

Utterance (32) presents the situation as a known characteristic of a certain place and is usually used to provide background information. It would be odd to find this utterance where someone is physically pointing at a place and describing the situation on the spot.

On the other hand, utterance (33) indicates the speaker’s not expecting there to be a river in that place. The existence of the river contradicts the speaker’s presumption. The speaker not only doubts, but also questions, the reason for the existence of the current situation. The contrast is magnified by adding a discourse marker 你睇 nei tai ‘you see,’ which introduces an on-the-spot predication of a situation, as in (34a). In
contrast, utterance (33) is compatible with the discourse marker, 你睇 nei tai 'you see,' as in (34b). Since the ge2-utterance is a why-question, it is compatible with wh-words bearing the meaning of ‘why,’ such as 點解 dim-gaai and 做乜 zou-mat, 爲乜 wai-mat and their contract form 乜 mat. However, ge2 is not compatible with other wh-words, as illustrated in (35).

(35)  a. 點解/乜後面有條河 ge2? [why]
    Dimgaai/Mat hau-min jau tiu ho ge2?
    why/why back-side have Cl river FP
    ‘Why is there a river running behind (there)??’

 b. *後面幾時有條河 ge2?
    * Hau-min geisi jau tiu ho ge2? [when]
      back-side when have Cl river FP
      ‘When did (this place) have a river running behind (it)?’

 c. *邊度後面有條河 ge2?
    *Bindou hau-min jau tiu ho ge2? [where]
      where back-side have Cl river FP
      ‘Which place has a river running behind (it)?’

 d. *後面係唔係有條河 ge2?
    *Hau-min hai-m-hai jau tiu ho ge2? [yes-no]
      back-side is-not-is have Cl river FP
      ‘Is there a river running behind (it)?’

The function of the interrogative ge2 can be further illustrated by examples found in this corpus.

(36) 點解我唔知道 ge2? (11.2)
    Dimgaai ngo m-zidou ge2?
    why I not-know FP
    ‘How come I didn’t know (it)??’

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(37) 卑啲酒苦 ge2? (6.18)
    Mat di zau fu ge2?
    why Cl alcohol bitter FP
    'How come the alcohol is bitter?'

(38) 咁快番囉 ge2? (12.8)
    Gam faai faanlei ge2?
    that quick back FP
    'How come you’re back so soon?'

Although ge2 can turn a declarative into an interrogative as shown above, it is not
considered a question particle due to its co-occurrence with ‘why’-words.

4.4.2.2. DECLARATIVE USE

We now turn to the non-interrogative sense of ge2. Two functions of the
particle are identified below, namely casting doubt and offering an explanation.

4.4.2.2.1. CASTING DOUBT

As opposed to ge3, which demonstrates a high level of certainty in response to a
given situation, ge2 conveys the speaker’s reservation or uncertainty about a situation.
Below, the certitude of the speaker is confirmed by inclusion of modal adverbs of
certainty, such as 一定 jat-ding ‘must’ and 梗係 gang-hai ‘must.’ Given this epistemic
requirement, ge2 is not interchangeable with ge3, due to the incompatibility of the
uncertainty of ge2 with modal adverbs of certainty.
(39) 呢支一定係玩具槍 lai4 ge3/?ge2。
Ni3 zi jatding hai1 wungeoicoeng lai3 ge3/?ge2.
this Cl must is toy gun FP FP /FP
‘This CI must be a toy gun.’

(40) 那個係成龍 lai4 ge3/?ge2。
Go3 go3 gang-hai Singlung lai4 ge3/?ge2.
that CI must is Jacky Chan FP FP /FP
‘That one must be Jacky Chan.’

Instead of certainty, ge2 presents the situation as possible and tentative, as in the following.

(41) 愛都得 ge2。
Gam dou dak ge2.
this also possible FP
‘This seems to be possible.’

One should note that (41) may be interpreted either as a statement as in the above or as a question as in (42). In order to differentiate the two uses, one has to rely on the minute difference in the actual pronunciations of ge2 and the insertion of related markers, such as ‘why’ words and some declarative discourse introducers, such as 我想 ngo lam ‘I think,’ as illustrated below.

(42) Interrogative ge2

a. 愛都得 ge2? (short duration on ge2)
Gam dou dak ge2?
this also possible FP
‘How can this be?’

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b.  clearfix[Why-word insertion]
   Mat/Dimgaai gam dou dak ge2?
   why/why this also possible FP
   ‘How come it can be that way?’

b.  *澄清點解扣都得 ge2?  
    [Discourse introducer insertion]
    *Ngo lam gam dou dak ge2?
    I think this also possible FP
    ‘I think how can this be?’

(43)  Declarative ge2

a.  澄清得 ge2。 (longer duration on ge2)
    Gam dou dak ge2.
    this also possible FP
    ‘This seems to be possible.’

b.  *澄清點解扣都得 ge2。 [Why-word insertion]
    *Mat/Dimgaai gam dou dak ge2.
    why/why this also possible FP
    ‘Why this seems to be possible.’

c.  *澄清點解扣都得 [Discourse introducer insertion]
    Ngo lam gam dou dak ge2?
    I think this also possible FP
    ‘I think this seems to be possible.’

The ambiguity of the ge2-utterance may be further complicated by a negative polarity element m-hai ‘is not’, as in (44) below. Recall that m-hai can negate a proposition semantically or assert the proposition pragmatically. Adding all things up, there would be three possible readings for (44): (44a) and (44b) reveal the interrogative use of ge2. The negative polarity element, m-hai, syntactically negates the proposition in (44a) and (44c), but pragmatically assert the proposition in (44b).
(44) **間屋唔係幾光 ge2?** (Kwok 1984:91)
Gaan nguk m-hai gei gwong ge2?
Cl house not-is quite bright FP
(a) ‘The room is not bright enough, (how come)?’ [negation + interrogative]
(b) ‘The room is quite bright, isn’t it?’ [assertion + interrogative]
(c) ‘The room is not too bright, (don’t worry about it).’ [negation + declarative]

4.4.2.2. OFFERING EXPLANATION

In section 4.4.2.1, it is shown that the interrogative ge2 conveys a why-question and requests the hearer to provide an explanation for the question posed. The declarative ge2 demonstrates a parallel function. It marks the situation given as an explanation to another known situation. This parallelism is illustrated by the following exchange.

(45) A: 乜啲酒苦 ge2? (6.18)
Mat di zau fu ge2?
why Cl alcohol bitter FP
‘How come the alcohol is bitter?’

B: 唔會 gwaa3! 我啫啫買番嚟 ge2/*ge3。 (6.18)
M-wui gwaa3! Ngo ngaamngaam maai-faanlei ge2/*ge3.
not-possible FP I just buy-back FP/FP
‘Can’t be! I just bought it.’

The occurrence of ge2 uttered by speaker A demonstrates its interrogative use and poses a why-question for the hearer. The occurrence of ge2 in speaker B’s reply demonstrates the declarative use that provides an explanation based on the speaker’s opinion. The explanatory feature of ge2 reveals the logic bound nature and which can be further confirmed by the following exchanges.
A: 嘿，嘿，乜你咁有禮貌 gaa3, 門都唔敲 aa3 入去 gaa3 laa4? (10.10)
   Wai, wai, mat nei gam mou laimaau gaa3, mun dou
   hey hey why you this no good manner FP door all
   m-haau aa3 jap-heoi gaa3 laa4?
   not-knock FP enter-go FP FP
   ‘Hey, hey, how can you’re so rude? (You) don’t even knock on
   the door before going in?’

B: 梅老師冇所謂 ge2/?ge3。 (10.10)
   Mung lousi mou sowai ge2.
   Mung teacher no mind FP
   ‘Teacher Mung won’t mind.’

In the exchange, speaker B explains his impoliteness by stating that Teacher Mung is a
casual person who does not paid attention to the usual protocol. If ge3 is adopted in the
exchange, the explanatory force would be lessened. To further illustrate the explanatory
force of ge2, let us compare the ge3 and the ge2 utterances in the following.

(47)  a. 係佢得罪我先 ge3。
       Hai keoi dakzeoi ngo sin ge3.
       is he pick-on me first FP
       ‘He’s the one who picked on me first.’

       b. 係佢得罪我先 ge2。 (2.12)
       Hai keoi dakzeoi ngo sin ge2.
       is he pick-on me first FP
       ‘He picked on me first (that’s why).’

With ge3, the statement merely states a fact and is typically used to answer the question
‘Who started the fight?’ With ge2, the stated fact is more often found to reply the
question ‘Why did you beat him?’ The speaker uses the ge2-appended sentence to state
his explanation.
The following are further examples to demonstrate the explanatory sense of ge2.

(48) 上邊肯定會重視 ge2, 而家日日都開會，都係研究呢個問題。 (12.13)
Soeng-bin hangding wui zungsii ge2, jigaa jatjat dou
above must will take-seriously FP now everyday all
hoiwui, dou hai jingau ni go mantai.
meeting all is discuss this Cl problem
‘The authority must take this matter very seriously. Now, they’re having
meetings everyday to discuss this problem.’

In this utterance, the speaker explains to the hearer that the authority will certainly take
the matter (namely, the pollution problem) seriously. The modal adverb of certainty 肯
定 hangding ‘for sure’ in the utterance eliminates the possibility of considering ge2 as a
doubt-casting or tentativeness marking element. Instead, the FP marks the situation
given as an explanation to the hearer’s inquiry into solving the pollution problem. The
speaker further supports his claim by telling the hearer that the authority is having
meetings day after day to discuss that problem.

We turn now to example (49).

(49) 我問咗佢 gaa3 laa3, 佢話唔緊要 ge2。 (2.5)
Ngo man-zo keoi gaa3 laa3, keoi waa m-ganjiu ge2/?ge3.
I ask-Asp him FP FP he said not-important FP/FP
‘I have asked him. He said it didn’t matter.’

As background to this utterance, the hearer had tried to buy some soft drinks, but had been rejected by the storekeeper, since the bank note that he had used was worn-out.
Surprisingly, the speaker later succeeded in purchasing the drinks with the same money
note and in the same store. The puzzled hearer kept asking the speaker about the tricks
she had used. The speaker explains in (49) that she had not used any tricks at all. It was the storekeeper who wanted to accept the worn-out bank note.

Another example is given in (50).

(50) 順啪可能係高級護髮素 lei4 ge2。 (6.10)
Go di honang hai goukap wufaatsou lei4 ge2.
that CI possible is high-grade conditioners FP FP
‘Those may be high-grade conditioners.’

The hearer in this utterance, who has just visited a new hair salon, is not happy about the hidden charge on the conditioner applied by the hairdresser. Since the conditioner smells like ordinary soap to him, he asks for the speaker’s opinion of the conditioner. The speaker tries to comfort the hearer by explaining that the conditioner may be a high-grade conditioner and thus carries a peculiar odor.

One further example is given below.

(51) 個衰女又係懵 ge2, 寫信畀二叔個地址唔寫清楚。 (9.1)
Go seoineoi jau hai mung ge2, se seon bei Jisuk
Cl bad-girl also is dumb FP write letter to second-uncle
go deizi dou m-se cingco.
Cl address also not-write legibly
‘Our daughter is dumb too. She didn’t write the address legibly when she wrote to Second Uncle.’

The speaker in this utterance has found out that the magazines sent from her second uncle was incorrectly placed in another mailbox. She first complains about the error made by the mail carrier, but then admits that her own daughter should also be responsible for the mistake, since she had not written their address clearly.
In some of the tokens in the corpus, the reasons offered to support the speaker's claim may not be explicitly stated, leaving a tone of reservation on the part of the speaker. Compare the pair of examples in (52).

(52)  a. 你係得 ge3。

Nei hai dak ge3.
you are competent FP
‘You’re competent.’

b. 你係得 ge2。

Nei hai dak ge2.
you are competent FP
‘You’re competent, (but……).’

Utterance (52a) merely presents the fact that ‘you’re competent,’ but for (52b), the utterance has an implication that some further information, usually concessive, has not been spelled out. This function may be related to the tonal pattern of the FP. As mentioned in chapter 3, a high rising tone is regarded as a listing tone indicating incompleteness. It primes the hearer to wait for further related information. But when ge2 is not followed by further linguistic information, it implies that there is something that the speaker does not or cannot spell out at the moment, thus giving rise to the sense of reservation or concession on the part of the speaker.

4.4.3. GAA3

Gaa3 is commonly treated as a fusion of ge3 and aa3. After the fusion, the utterances are more autonomous than the utterances appended by ge3. That is to say,
gaa3 can occur naturally in environments that may sound odd for ge3. Consider the following examples.

(53) a. 前面有好多人 aa3。
    Cin-min jau hou do jan aa3.
    front-side have very many people FP
    ‘There are lots of people in front.’

b. 前面有好多人 ge3。
    Cin-min jau hou do jan ge3.
    front-side have very many people FP
    ‘(That place) has lots of people in front (of it).’

c. 前面有好多人 gaa3。
    Cin-min jau hou do jan gaa3.
    front-side have very many people FP
    ‘There are lots of people in front.’

(54) a. 出面落絮雨 aa3。
    Ceot-min lok-gan-yu aa3.
    out-side fall-Asp-rain FP
    ‘It’s raining outside.’

b. 出面落絮雨 ge3。
    Ceot-min lok-gan-yu ge3.
    out-side fall-Asp-rain FP
    ‘(At that time,) it’s raining outside.’

c. 出面落絮雨 gaa3。
    Ceot-min lok-gan-yu gaa3.
    out-side fall-Asp-rain FP
    ‘It’s raining outside.’

In the above, the (a) sentences report to the hearer the state-of-affairs that has just been known by the speaker. The (b) sentences may sound odd in a dialogue but would be more readily found in storytelling. This phenomenon is highly plausible since ge3 marks the situations as given information and thus has a strong tendency to introduce
background materials. The (c) sentences, in contrast, sound very natural and colloquial in dialogues. They remind the hearer of situations that should be known but may have been overlooked or neglected by the hearer. In other words, gaa3 assumes that the hearer has no knowledge of a situation that should have been known and is a given (as opposed to a new) situation.

The contrast between gaa3 and ge3 can be further illustrated in (55). (55a) is a story-telling narrative in which ge3 is used to present the background, something that would be odd if presented using gaa3. The discourse parenthesis 你睇 nei tai ‘you see’ in (55b) requires an on-the-spot predication, which can be performed by gaa3 but not ge3.

(55) a. 嘅陣時，出面落緊雨 ge3/?gaa3，佢重等咗好耐才出去。
   Go zan si, ceot-min lok-gan-yu ge3/?gaa3, keoi zung that CI time out-side fall-Asp-rain FP/FP he even dang-zo hou noi zi ceothoi.
   wait-Asp very long then out-go
   ‘At that time, it was raining outside and he had waited quite a while before going out.’

b. 你睇，出面落緊雨 gaa3/*ge3。
   Nei tai, ceot-min lok-gan yu gaa3/*ge3.
   you see out-side fall-Asp-rain FP/FP
   ‘Look at that, it’s raining outside.’

In addition to declaratives, gaa3 can also be appended to interrogatives, as in the following.

(56) a. 你幾時嚟 aa3?
   Nei geisi lei aa3?
   you when come FP
   ‘When will you be coming?’

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b. 你幾時嚟 gaa3?
   Nei geisi lei  gaa3?
you when come FP
   ‘What time was it that you got here?’

(57) 眞字邊個寫 gaa3/ge3?
   Di zi bingo se  gaa3/ge3?
   CI characters who write FP/FP
   ‘Who wrote/will write these characters?’

The contrast between (56a) and (56b) reveals that the event, ‘you are coming’, is entertained as a given situation in (56b); that is, as a planned event, but not in (56a). In view of this, (56b) can be used to question a situation that has happened before or a planned situation that will happen in the future. In (57), both gaa3 and ge3 are grammatical in the utterances. However, the ge3-question sounds more forceful and abrupt, which gives the hearer a feeling of being interrogated by an authority. This difference is probably due to the function of the FP aa3, which is typically regarded as an utterance softener.6

4.4.4. GAA2

Gaa2 is the only manifestation in this family that conveys both epistemic and deontic modality. The epistemic modality will be introduced first, followed by the deontic exhortative.
4.4.4.1. CASTING DOUBT

The most prominent feature of *gaa2* is its doubtful tone and low commitment to the truth of the proposition. This feature is demonstrated in the following utterances.

(58) 信我 laa1, 前面有條河 gaa3/*gaa2。
Seon ngo laa1, cin-min jau tiu ho gaa3/*gaa2.
believe me FP front-side have Cl river FP/FP
‘Trust me, there’s a river up ahead.’

(59) 前面有條河 gaa2/#ge3, 點解捉唔到 ge2?
Cin-min jau tiu ho gaa2/#ge3, dimgaaai wan-m-dou ge2?
front-side have Cl river FP/FP why find-no-successful FP
‘There should be a river up ahead, how come I can’t find it?’

In (58), the utterance conveys the strong certainty of the proposition, ‘there is a river up ahead,’ and thus cannot take *gaa2*. In (59), the speaker holds an assumption that ‘there should be a river ahead;’ however, the current situation shows contradicting evidence. The FP *gaa2* conveys the speaker’s doubt concerning this assumption.

Although both *ge2* and *gaa2* cast doubt on the proposition, they are not interchangeable due their difference in assumptions towards a situation. Consider the following two examples.

(60) 前面有條河 ge2?
Cin-min jau tiu ho ge2?
front-side have Cl river FP
‘There’s a river up ahead, how come?’

(61) 前面有條河 gaa2!
Cin-min jau tiu ho gaa2?
front-side have Cl river FP
‘There should be a river up ahead, shouldn’t there?’
In (60), *ge*2 assumes the non-existence of the situation; that is, that there should not be a river up ahead. However, the current situation shows contradictory evidence and the speaker has doubts about it and, furthermore, demands an explanation. In (61), *gaa*2 assumes the existence of the situation, namely, that there should be a river up ahead. However, the current situation shows contradictory evidence and the speaker casts doubts on it, but does so without further questioning, indicating the non-logic-bound nature of *gaa*2.

4.4.4.2. CONTRASTING

The contrastive use of *gaa*2 follows directly from its assumption of the given situation. The first clause in the following utterances states the assumed situation, while the second clause states the new and contradictory situation. The whole utterances hence convey a contrastive use.

(62) Nei Jisuk loi-bat-si dou faanlei *gaa*2/*ge*2/*gaa*3, dim wui lin deibou dou *gaa*3? (9.2)

"Your Second Uncle does visit you once in a while (doesn’t he?), (so) how can he mix up the address?"
In (62) the speaker assumes that the hearer’s uncle did come to visit them quite frequently. However, he is no longer sure about this assumption since the uncle wrote the speaker’s address incorrectly. Similarly, the speaker of (63) assumes that their family has maintained a good relationship with the hearer. Now, he doubts that assumption, due to the hearer’s tricking them.

4.4.4.3. EXHORTING

In addition to declaratives, gaa2 is also attached to interrogatives. Compare the following examples.

(64)  a. 點解唔見佢 gaa3?
      Dimgaai m-gin keoi gaa3?
      why not-see him FP
      ‘Why isn’t he here?’

b. 點解唔見佢 ge2?
      Dimgaai m-gin keoi ge2?
      why not-see him FP
      ‘Why isn’t he here (he should be here)’

c. 點解唔見佢 gaa2?
      Dimgaai m-gin keoi gaa2?
      why not-see him FP
      ‘Why isn’t he here (this is the question)?

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(64a) is a relatively neutral question. The speaker of (64b), however, has a strong presumption of the presence of somebody. The particle ge2 casts doubt on the seeming contradiction to this presumption. In (64c), the FP gaa2 conveys an exhortative sense and seeks an answer to the question posed. The exhortative sense probably comes from the speaker’s assumption of the existence of the question as well as the placing of a focus on the question; that is, it is really a question to the speaker. Thus, gaa2 can be attached to all types of questions, as in the following.

(65) A: 乜你都識惜人 ge3 me1?
    Mat nei dou sik sek jan ge3 me1?
    what you also know care people FP FP
    ‘Oh, you know how to care for me?’

B: 點解唔識得 gaa2? (3.1) [why]
    Dimgaaai m-sik dak gaa2?
    why not-know possible FP
    ‘Why wouldn’t I know?’

(66) 當我哋唔係嘅嘅，嘅點得 gaa2? (12.11) [how]
    Dong ngodei m-hai je gam, gam dimdak gaa2?
    treat us not-is thing like-this this-way how-can FP
    ‘Treating us as nobodies, how can this be?’

(67) 呢包嘅係咪你頭先送嘅 gaa2? (3.13) [yes-no]
    Ni baau je hai-mai nei tausin sunglei gaa2?
    this CI thing is-not-is you earlier send-come FP
    ‘Is this the package that you sent me earlier?’

(68) 咚幾點食藥 gaa2? [when]
    Keoi geidim sik jeok gaa2?
    he when eat medication FP
    ‘What’s the time for him to take the medication?’
4.4.5. GAAK3

Similar to other particles that end in -k, gaa3 is found to be an emotion intensifier of gaa3. As illustrated by (69), utterances modified by the intensified adverb gang-hai ‘definitely’ do not take gaa3 but they do take the stronger variant of the FP, gaak3.

(69) A: 你夠膽唔換 aa1!
   Nei gau-daam m-wun aa1!
   you enough-bravery not-exchange FP
   ‘You dare not to do the exchange!’

   B: 棘係夠 gaak3/*gaa3, 你估我怕你 aa4? (6.12)
   Ganghai gau gaak3/*gaa3, nei gu ngo
certainty enough FP/FP you guess me
   paa nei aa4?
   scare-of you FP
   ‘(I) certainty dare, you think I am scared of you?’

Gaak3 is also found in sentence-internal position in complex sentences, as in (70) and (71). It seems that the complex sentences connected by lok3 form subordination of certain logical relations, such as premise and inference.

(70) 聽講王副院長個仔重未搵到女朋友 gaak3/?gaa3, 點解咁快 aa3 要結婚
laa1? (4.3) [Premise and inference]
   Teng-gong Wong fuyunzeong go zai zung mei wan-dou
hear-say Wong assistant-director Cl son still not-yet find-successful
   neoipangjau gaak3/gaa2/?gaa3, dimgaaai gam faai aa3 jiu gitfan laa1?
girl-friend FP/FP/FP why so fast FP need marry FP
   ‘(I) heard that the son of Assistant Director Wong didn’t have a girlfriend yet? How can he be getting married so soon?'
4.4.6. Gaa4

The last manifestation gaa4 turns a factual declarative into a question. It double-checks the existence of the given situation, or the assumption of the situation conveyed by the declarative. Unlike ge2, which marks a high degree of doubt, gaa4 performs mere questioning without casting any doubt. As shown in (72) and (73), the particle exhibits the co-occurrence restriction with wh-structures, which is typical to other question particles.

(72) a. 你畀我 gaa3。
   Nei bei ngo gaa3.
   you give me FP
   ‘It’s you who gives (it) to me.’

b. 你畀我 gaa4?
   Nei bei ngo gaa4?
   you give me FP
   a. ‘Is it for me (from you)?’
   b. ‘Is it you who gave (it) to me?’
c. 你畀唔畀我 *gaa4/gaa3?  [V-not-V]
Nei bei-m-bei ngo *gaa4/gaa3?
you give-not-give me FP/FP
‘Will you give (it) to me?’

d. 你幾時畀我 *gaa4/gaa3?  [when]
Nei geisi bei ngo *gaa4/gaa3?
you when give me FP/FP
‘When was it that you gave (it) to me?’

(73)  a. 你估嘅鎮痛膏唔使錢買 gaa4?
Nei gu di zantunggou m-sai cin mai gaa4?
you guess Cl painkiller no-need money buy FP
‘You think the painkiller is free of charge?’

b. *你估嘅鎮痛膏唔使錢買 gaa4?  [V-not-V]
*N sei gu di zantunggou sai-m-sai cin mai gaa4?
you guess Cl painkiller need-not-need money buy FP
‘Guess if the painkiller costs money or not?’

c. *你估嘅鎮痛膏要幾多錢買 gaa4?  [how many]
*N sei gu di zantunggou jiu geido cin mai gaa4?
you guess Cl painkiller need how-much money buy FP
‘Guess how much the painkiller costs?’

4.4.7. SUMMARY

In the first part of this chapter, I proposed a mega word family G-, whose members include the general classifier go3 [ko33], the distal demonstrative go2 [ko35], the predicative demonstrative gam2 [kw35], the linking particle ge3 [ke33], the nominalizer ge3 [ke33] and the final particle G-, which are linked by the [+deictic] feature. I also argued that the final particle G- is derived from the nominalizer ge3. I further propose that the [+focus] and [+situationally given] features are derived from the
[+deictic] feature of the nominalizer. The proposal was completed with a discussion of the extension of these three semantic features among the propositional domain, the epistemic domain, and the speech act domain. The second part of the chapter is devoted to the discussion of the nuances of the six manifestations in the family, which is summarized in Figure 4.4. Note that [e-assumption] refers to the 'assumption of the existence of a situation' in the figure.
Figure 4.4. The Functional Primes of the Manifestations of G-
NOTES

1 For instance, 貴的 gui-de 'expensive ones' is analyzed as an independent nominal since 'de' is a pronominal element. 貴的書 gui-de shu is analyzed as an appositive construction with the nominal shu 'book' modified by another nominal 貴的 gui-de. These two nominals, in fact, share the same referent.

2 Nonetheless, it may be more desirable to treat the nominalizer ge3 as a pronominal element, given the parallelism between the nominalizer ge3 and the go2-classifier.

3 See Chapter 2, section 3.3.7 for a detailed discussion.

4 Note that the assertive sense of m-hai is derived pragmatically from a yes-no question. In order to convey the assertive sense, m-hai has to go with an interrogative FP. Thus, the four ambiguous elements only give rise to three possible readings for the utterance.

5 This item is more often pronounced as mai in colloquial speech.

6 It is worth noting that the aa3 particle shows statistically-significant gender-linked differences in usage in Chan (forthcoming), based on two of the episodes in the Kaleidoscope TV series (Episodes 3 and 8 in the Kaleidoscope corpus). Females produced this particle proportionately more than males in the two television episodes. Interestingly, no gender-linked differences were found in the corresponding Cantonese script for those two episodes: aa3 was distributed almost equally between the two genders. Hence, what appeared to be a fairly neutral particle based on the Cantonese script reveals gender differentiation in what was actually said by the performers in the final television production. If aa3 is an utterance softener, then it is used more frequently by females in the two Kaleidoscope episodes, and fit into stereotypical expectations of gender-differentiated roles.
5.1. OVERVIEW

In previous chapters on specific particles, I have characterized the core semantics of the particle families and identified the unique features of each manifestation in three particle families. This chapter summarizes our observations of several across-the-board regularities.

5.1.1. TONALITY AND FINAL PARTICLES

As discussed in Chapter 1, Law (1990) proposes a relationship between high tonality and semantic meaning. According to her, particles carrying a \([H]\) feature (that is, those with high level or rising tone in SCAN) should be semantically the weakest of the particles in the language. However, this is not empirically borne out in the present study, where a high or rising tone may occur on FPs that may be semantically strong or weak.
It is also observed that particles with a high level or high rising tone are more expressive than the other particles, in that they are more readily associated with high affective value. Examples are \textit{zekl} with coquettishness and impatience, and \textit{loI} with resistance and belligerence.

Moreover, high tone particles tend to have stronger illocutionary force and thus occur in imperatives (e.g., \textit{laaI}) and exhortatives (e.g., \textit{zel, zekl} and \textit{gaa2}). Illocutionary force is a pragmatic notion that has no clear definition thus far. As Wilson and Sperber (1988) suggest, this pragmatic notion can be expressed as a semantic category by referring to the notions of desirability and potentiality. Strong illocutionary force is then correlated with the semantic features of high degree of desirability (for the speaker) and high potentiality (for the hearer). That is, the speaker considers the action described to be highly desirable from the speaker’s point of view, while the hearer is in the position to bring about the state of affairs described.

High tonality seems to have an iconic relationship at the epistemic level. As shown in Figure 5.1, high-level tone particles, in general, assume other persons in addition to the speaker, and include at least the hearer, who should have knowledge of the proposition. In other words, high tonality encodes a high epistemic level. Both high-level tone particles – \textit{laaI} and \textit{loI} – are associated with high epistemic level. Conversely, their counterparts with low tonality – \textit{laa3, lo4} - encode a low epistemic level. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that the reverse of the relationship is not valid, since FPs with low tone may also encode high epistemic level. For instance, a hearer’s knowledge is also assumed by the low-falling FP \textit{ze4}, even though the
epistemic level is much lower than \textit{zel}. Moreover, the hearer's knowledge is assumed by \textit{ge3}, which does not have a high-level tone counterpart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hearer's knowledge assumed</th>
<th>Hearer's knowledge not assumed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>\textit{laa1} (high-level tone)</td>
<td>\textit{laa3} (mid-level tone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{lo1} (high-level tone)</td>
<td>\textit{lo4} (low-falling tone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{zel} (high-level tone)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{ze4} (low-falling tone)</td>
<td>\textit{gaa3} (low-level tone)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.1. Tonality and Hearer's Knowledge

Finally, it is also observed that a rising tone is conversely related to the level of commitment to the truth of the proposition. As seen in previous discussions, FPs with rising tone tend to cast doubt on the proposition. Examples attested in our study are \textit{gaa2} (high-rising), \textit{le5} (low-rising), and \textit{ge2} (high-rising). As mentioned in chapter 2 onwards, a rising tone tends to signal incompleteness in the inventory of particles in the present study. A similar observation with respect to rising intonation has also been noted in the literature for English and other languages (Cruttenden 1986/1997: 163). It is highly plausible that incompleteness implies doubt, reservation, and uncertainty.
5.1.2. VOWEL QUALITY AND SCALES

In addition to tonality, vocalic alternation between a and e is also a prominent feature in the FP system of SCAN. It seems that there is a scale of assumption induced by the two vowels. To recapitulate: the difference between za3 and ze1 lies in their difference in assumption. Za3 encodes an assumption that the quantity or extent to be evaluated is higher than the reality, whereas ze1 encodes an assumption lower than the reality. Za3 thus conveys the idea of insufficiency, whereas ze1 that of something that is not too excessive.

A parallel contrast is also found in gaa2 and ge2. Recall that gaa2 assumes the existence of a situation and raises doubts about its non-existence. On the other hand, ge2 assumes the non-existence of a situation and doubts its existence. In other words, gaa2 assumes a positive value while ge2 assumes a negative value along the scale of expectation.

One more alternation should be noted. The temporally-related particles laa3 and lei4 also exhibit a continuum-like contrast on the time line: laa3 encodes a realization of a state from non-existence to existence, while lei4 encodes a state from existence to non-existence with reference to speech time.

5.1.3. CHECKED CODAS AND FINALITY

The segment -k, which turns an open syllable into a closed, checked one, has been regarded as a semantic strengthener in previous studies. The present work also recognizes its emotion-intensifying function that is described in the literature.
Surprisingly, we discovered that some particles that end in this segment have a tendency to occur in sentence-internal position, where it performs some sort of connective function. This use has never been reported in the literature before, and seems to be counterintuitive. Semantically, checked particles convey a strong sense of finality when they occur in sentence-final position. Phonologically, the finality of checked particles is reflected in the fact that they are not followed by any other FP to form particle clusters, unlike their non-checked counterparts. Due to the scarcity of such tokens in our corpus, no strong claim will be made at this point on this puzzling phenomenon. More research is needed.

5.1.3. EPISTEMIC AND DEONTIC MODALITY

We turn now to the claim of a regularity that is reported cross-linguistically, namely, that the same lexical item can be used to express both epistemic and deontic modality in many languages. Sweester (1990) accounts for this by hypothesizing that epistemic modality evolved from deontic modality. Although ambiguity between epistemic modality and deontic modality is exhibited among the FPs in SCAN, our study does not show strong evidence to support the hypothesized direction of evolution. Take the particle Z- as an example. It encodes the epistemic modality of downplaying a proposition as well as the deontic modality of exhortation. It is difficult to claim that the latter is derived from the former. In our framework, the two types of modality developed through the extension of semantic primitives in different linguistic domains. A sequence of the extension may be readily proposed. Recently, the Z- particle has
developed another epistemic use, that of posing judgment on the top of the original deontic modality. Hence, it seems that deontic modality may not be the final stage of the evolutionary process.

5.2. CURRENT ATTEMPTS AND FURTHER PROSPECTS

Given the limitations of early studies on SCAN FPs, the present study attempts to direct the study of SCAN FPs in a more principled manner. It differs from previous research in a number of respects. Three important differences will be noted here. First, this study establishes a word family framework to analyze FPs. A total of 25 FPs are analyzed and grouped into three underlying FPs. As a result of the grouping, a more systematic study of the rich repertoire of this subset of FPs in SCAN is made possible, thus greatly simplifying both the description and the analysis of these 25 particles. More importantly, this approach enables us to gain a better understanding of the underlying system of FPs.

Second, this work separates out those the core semantics of the three particle families from those features that are relevant for distinguishing members within each particle family. The approach thus lays the foundation for future investigation of other particles in SCAN.

Third, the current study is based primarily on a speech corpus rather than relying solely on constructed sentences. The study thus needs to account for the rich repertoire in the behavior of the 25 particles. More corpus-based research on SCAN FPs will surely reveal yet-to-be-discovered interesting phenomena.
Fourth and finally, besides the use of a corpus and not rely merely on impressionistic intuition, this study also includes minimal pairs, syntactic tests, and felicity conditions. Underlying the construction of some of these tests is the recognition that, despite the assumption that FPs are, by and large, 'optional' elements, there are co-occurrence restrictions that aid us in exploring and understanding the syntax and semantics of these FPs. The tests administered in this study have been designed by the author to identify the semantic features of each manifestation. In the process, a set of twenty-one functional primes has been proposed for describing and explaining the functions of each FP. Figure 5.2 presents the inventory of the functional primes used to identify the meaning contrasts among the twenty-five particles in the present study.
Table 5.2. Functional Primes and the Twenty-Five SCAN FPs.
The semantic analysis of this work is, of course, far from complete nor perfect. FPs form a complex system in human communication. Many problems remain unresolved. Nonetheless, the word family approach to the analysis of FPs is a fruitful one to explore the syntax and semantics of FPs. In addition to FPs, there are other linguistic elements that interact with FPs, such as verbs, adverbs, and aspect markers. I have already proposed a mega $\mathcal{G}$-family for the FP $G_-$. In fact, the mega word family proposal may also be applicable to the other two particle families. For the $Z$-family, the adverbs containing the restrictive sense – (係) zi-(hai) ‘only’ and (係) zing-(hai) ‘only,’ the concessive connective 之 zi ‘but,’ and the continuous aspect marker 自/在 zi zyu – can all be subsumed under the semantic feature, ‘restrictive.’ They probably constitute a mega word family. As for $L$-, the verb lei4 ‘come’ should probably be included in a mega family. The deictic element exhibits a bewildering array of uses, cuttomg across several lexical categories, from motion verbs and directional complements, to connectives that mark purpose clauses.

In short, FPs are traditionally regarded as non-obligatory elements in most utterances. Their presence makes the utterance more ‘lively and vivid.’ This impressionistic comment can now be interpreted in a more scientific way: the adoption of FP makes an utterance more communicative. As shown in this study, a FP can enrich the implicatures of an utterance, convey a speaker’s presumption and attitude toward the proposition, and make the communicative strategies of interlocutors more explicit, regardless of whether they are direct or indirect. The general framework developed in
this work aims to provide a basis upon which further research on FPs can be more fruitfully pursued.


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