CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A preponderance of literature on verbs relating to putting some substance on a location has shown that patterns formulated by a putting event can provide the foundation for learning form-meaning correspondences (Slobin, 1985; Jackendoff, 1990; Levin, 1993; Tomasello, 2000; Gao & Cheng, 2003; Lien, 2004; Iwata, 2005; Nemoto, 2005; Huang, 2006; Goldberg, 2006). In what follows, we will review two relevant studies conducted by Lien (2004) and Huang (2006), respectively.

2.1 Lien (2004)

With a constructional approach, Lien (2004) has investigated the polyfunctions of pang3 (放) in Taiwanese Southern Min. He claims that the core conceptual structure of pang3 can be depicted as an agent causing a theme to move from its source to a goal. The four participants (namely, agent, theme, source, and goal) acting as on-stage information make up part of the basic scenario of pang3 whereas the others (i.e. means, manner, and result) serving as off-stage information may be shaded.
If emphasis is placed on the profiled arguments (i.e. agent, theme, source, and goal), Lien notes that not all participant roles are rendered linguistically in a VO construction. For instance, Pang3 hong1-che1 (放風吹) ‘to fly a kite’ profiles the theme role; pang3 tang7-lai7 (放重利) ‘lending money and charging the borrower interest at an excessive high rate’ profiles the goal.

In addition to the core meaning denoted by pang3 (放), Lien further proposes that other relative conceptual structure describing certain inheritance relations have been established within the core conceptual structure. These inherent relations include the agent’s intention to perform the action, the destination of the motion, the endpoint of the motion and the result of the caused-motion activity, and the metaphorical transfer from a change of location to a change of state. Let us see the following examples.

(1) The agent’s implicit intention

a. Pang3 nng7 (放卵) ‘to put (produce) spawn’

b. Pang3 thiap4 (放帖) ‘to put invitation cards’

Examples in (1) convey the implicit intention of the agent to perform the action although the intention is not overtly expressed. In the case of (1a), the agent (i.e. fish) causes its theme (i.e. spawn) to move out of its body in order to reproduce their own
kinds. Likewise, in the case of (1b), the agent (i.e. the host) causes the theme (i.e. invitation cards) to move from his side to the guests’ side so as to invite the guests to his house.

(2) The endpoint of the caused motion

a. Pang3 chiu2 be2 (cinn5) (放手尾(錢)) ‘to make a bequest’

Example in (2) describes a giving event where the agent causes the theme (i.e. chiu2 be2 (cinn5) (手尾(錢)) ‘bequest’ to move to an implicit goal. In this case, the agent serves as the source whereas the goal/ location hidden in the whole construction acts as the benefactive.

(3) The endpoint of the motion plus the fulfillment of the agent’s intention

a. Phang5 be5 hoo7 i1 (捧糜與伊) ‘to serve a bowl of porridge to him’

b. Kong1-si1 lai7 e5 tai7-chi3 long2 pang3 hoo7 in1 kiann3 tih4 bu2
   (公司裡的事務擺放與(因 囲侍舞) ‘Company business is put on his son, who will be responsible for the future running’.

Examples in (3) contain two events. In the case of (3a), the serving event causes the later eating event. Although the construction in (3a) only profiles the theme role (i.e. be5 (糜) ‘porridge’) and the endpoint of the serving event (i1 (伊) ‘him’), the
fulfillment of the agent’s intention is overtly expressed. That is, with the purpose of having the benefactive (i.e. *il* (伊) ‘him’) to eat, the agent actively performs the action of serving. The same holds true for example (3b). It is interesting to note that *pang3* in examples (3) syntactically behaves like a ditransitive verb, and can be fused with *hoo7* (與) ‘to give’, a verb with valence of three arguments. This can be shown in example (3b).

(4) A metaphorical transfer from a change of location to a change of state

a. *Sim1-cing5 ai3 ka7 il pang3 hoo7 il khin1-sang1* (心情愛共伊放與伊輕鬆) ‘to let go your heart a little bit’

b. *Pang3 (hoo7) il khi3* (放(與)伊去) ‘to leave him alone’

c. *Pang3 m7 cai1 iann2* (放唔知影) ‘to assume an ignoring ear’

As illustrated in examples (4), the caused-motion activity can metaphorically shift from a change of location to a change of state (i.e. from space to state). In the case of (4a), the whole construction designates an inchoative sense, where the theme has undergone a change of state (due to its previous causative event). As for example (4b), *pang3* is used with a clausal complement, indicating the resultant state of the theme. Notice that the additional meaning of ‘to leave behind’ seems to be inferred from the contexts. In example (4c), *pang3* is concurrent with the negative predicate *m7 cai1*
iann2 (唔知影) ‘knowing nothing’, and expresses the meaning of ‘to pretend’.

To sum up, Lien argues at length that the overall interpretation of pang3 is not lexically determined but holistically composed from the interaction among verb uses and constructions involved, and even cultural knowledge. Consider, for example, the use of pang3 in pang3 hong1-che1 (放風吹) ‘to fly a kite’ denotes an upward direction of the theme, hong1-che1 whereas the use of pang3 in pang3 mng5 li5 (放門簾) ‘to lower the curtain’ denotes a downward motion of the theme, mng5 li5. Lien’s study captures the insight that the understanding of a lexical item must make reference to the whole frame and its constructions.

2.2 Huang (2006)

Huang (2006) studies two verbs of putting fang4 (放) ‘to put’ and bai3 (擺) ‘to put in an arranged way’ in Mandarin Chinese by examining their event types, inherent attributes, roles, and role-internal attributes. In terms of their argument structure, the two words are identical in their roles: agent, theme, and location. However, this is where their similarity ends. The two verbs of putting differ in their event types and role-internal attributes.

To begin with, fang4 (放) ‘to put’ represents a composite event, including punctuality, boundary, and state. The three elements cannot be composed within the
same event. For example, \textit{fang4} (放) ‘to put’ in \textit{fang4 xia4} (放下) ‘to put down’ designates an event where the completion of the action is instantaneous and has boundary. Another example is \textit{fang4} (放) ‘to put’ in \textit{fang4 zhe5} (放著) ‘to stay’ which denotes a durative atelic state of putting. On the other hand, the composite event denoted by \textit{bai3} (擺) ‘to put in an arranged way’ also contains three elements but the event structure is quite different. In other words, the event denoted by \textit{bai3} (擺) ‘to put in an arranged way’ starts with an inception, a process, an endpoint and a final state of this putting activity.

Next, the two verbs differ in their role-internal attributes although their participant roles (i.e. agent, theme, and location) are alike. For the agent role of \textit{fang4} (放) ‘to put’, the agent may not have any specific aim to guide this action whereas in the case of \textit{bai3} (擺) ‘to put in an arranged way’, the agent almost always takes the action with specific purpose. The other role-internal attributes that distinguish \textit{fang4} (放) ‘to put’ and \textit{bai3} (擺) ‘to put in an arranged way’ are the restrictions to the location. The location of \textit{fang4} (放) ‘to put’ can be either a contained space as in \textit{ba3 zuo4 pin3 fang4 zai4 yi1 ge5 mu4 xiang1 li5} (把作品放在一個木箱裡) ‘to put one’s work into a wooden box’ or a referential space as in \textit{ba3 fu3 tou2 fang4 zai4 dong4 kou3} (把斧頭放在洞口) ‘to put the ax in the cavity’. Contrary to the location of \textit{fang4} (放) ‘to put’, the location role-internal attribute of \textit{bai3} (擺) ‘to put in an arranged way’
way’ can merely act as a referential space as in ye2 ye5 ba3 jiu3 bai3 zai4 zhuo1 shang4 (爺爺把酒擺在桌上) ‘Grandpa puts a bottle of wine on the table’. In addition, because of the role-internal attributes of agent (intentional agent) and location (location as a referential space), the theme of bai3 (擺) ‘to put in an arranged way’ is exposed in order to be visualized while this is not true for the theme of fang4 (放) ‘to put’.

Huang also investigates the motion direction of the two verbs and makes the following remarks. Both verbs involve manual contact, particular manners, force, move, goal, and end. However, they contrast with each other in terms of their motion direction. Below are three motion direction evoked by the two verbs.

(a) From hand level to ground level
(b) From higher than hand level down to the ground level and
(c) Parallel to hand level

Huang claims that condition (a) is the basic motion direction encoded in the two verbs and thus attributes to the synonymous relations between the two verbs. The motion direction of fang4 (放) ‘to put’ also involves condition (b) where the force is applied to manual movement from higher than hand level down to the ground level as shown in ba3 shu1 fang4 xia4 (把書放下) ‘to put down the book’. In contrast to fang4 (放) ‘to put’, the motion direction of bai3 (擺) ‘to put in an arranged way’ is
horizontal. That is, the manual movement denoted by *bai3 (擺) ‘to put in an arranged way’ tends to be parallel to hand level as illustrated in *bai3 wan3 kuai4 (擺碗筷) ‘to set the table’ and *yao2 bai3 (搖擺) ‘to swing’ (cf. *yao2 fang4 (*搖放)).

2.3 Remarks

Based on the interaction between form-meaning pairings, Lien’s study explores the multiple functions of *pang3 in Taiwanese Southern Min. He first decomposes *pang3 into four semantic primitives, including, agent, theme, source, and goal. Next, he describes the conceptual structure as involving a scene where an agent causes a theme to move from certain source. Next, he examines the mapping between semantic roles and syntactic realizations and indicates that the profiling/shading of certain roles may give rise to polyfunctions of *pang3 in Taiwanese Southern Min. Lien’s study is attractive since the constructionist account not only explicates the meaning extension of the polysemy of *pang3, but also delineates the difference between near-synonymous words. However, he does not elaborate how the various senses of *pang3 are linked with one another.

Huang’s study looks into two near-synonymous words, *fang4 and *bai3, in terms of their individual Role-internal Attributes and Event Types. According to Huang, the two verbs construe the putting event in different ways. In terms of Role-internal
Attributes, the agent of fang4 acts upon the theme without specific purpose whereas the agent of bai3 does the same action with personal intention. In addition, while the location of fang4 can be either a referential space or a contained space, the location of bai3 must serve as a referential space. In light of Event Types, fang4 acts as an achievement, denoting a dynamic, instantaneous, telic event. On the other hand, the putting verb bai3 serves as an accomplishment, designating a dynamic, telic, but durative event. Finally, with regard to the motion direction, fang4 involves wider range of movement from higher than hand level to lower than hand level whereas bai3 focuses on movement equal to hand level.

The two studies look into the semantics and syntax of verbs of putting. While Lien’s study probes into the meaning relatedness of the polysemy of pang3 in Taiwanese Southern Min by examining its form-meaning correspondence within a given frame, Huang’s work contrasts two near-synonymous words denoting a putting event. Lien’s study has captured the insight that frames and verbal meaning together determine the overall interpretation of a lexeme. On the other hand, Huang’s work is mainly concerned with the comparison between two near-synonyms, fang4 and bai3, purely in terms of semantic concepts. Although the semantic relatedness of verbs of putting is presented in both studies, little amount of attention has been directed to the discussion of mechanisms which motivate the meaning extensions. Thus, this study
will take up this task as to how the multiple senses of a given word develop. We will introduce the theoretical frameworks in the following section. Section IV provides an in-depth analysis of the verbs of putting in Hakka, *piong*³ and its congers. Section V provides a short summary and points out what need to be done in the thesis.