CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Some relevant framework can provide a plausible account for the meaning relatedness of piong3 and its delicate nuances with other congeners. In what follows, traditional lexical proposal will be presented in sections 3.1 and 3.2 in order to examine the conceptual structure and lexicalization patterns encoded in piong3 and its congeners. Furthermore, some cognitive-based mechanisms will be introduced in sections 3.3 to 3.5 in order to explicate meaning extensions of piong3 in piong3 constructions. Finally, some remarks will be made to conclude this section.

3.1 Decomposition

Lexical semantics takes the position that lexical concepts are to be learned by virtue of genetic primitives stored in human brains (Jackendoff, 1985; 1990). The lexical decomposition approach assumes that complex concepts, such as verbs, are built up of simpler atomic ones, which are perceptually based. Different verbs may have semantic perception of shared essence as the basis for membership of their types.
For instance, the entry for *put* and *butter* are represented as a causative inchoative predicate.

(1) Fran put the food in the fridge.
→ Fran caused the food to come to be in the fridge. [decomposed form]

(2) Bill buttered the bread.
→ Bill caused the butter to come to be on the bread. [decomposed form]

Such an approach systematically represents internal structure of a word that constitutes conceptual structure.

### 3.2 Lexicalization patterns

One way to examine the systematic relations between meaning and surface form is directed to how meanings are realized in a selected surface form. Talmy (1985) has proposed the notion of lexicalization patterns to account for semantic-to-surface association. He argues that meaning is the conflation of semantic component(s) with surface form(s). It is noteworthy that the linking of meaning-to-form is not one-to-one correspondence. In other words, a particular meaning can be expressed in a single morpheme or in several forms and vice versa. In addition, to fully understand a word in a given context, one has to make reference to its semantic components, its syntactic expressions, and its frames. Talmy (1985:128) investigates verbs relating to a motion
event and analyzes them as involving the following semantic categories:

Semantic categories of verbs of motion

a. Figure: the salient moving entity in the motion event

b. Ground: the reference –frame against which the Figure moves

c. Path: the course followed by the Figure

d. Motion: a situation denoting movement

e. Manner/Cause: the former refers to the ways of motion with which an agent or a patient manifests while the latter refers to causing events which lead to the motion.

Talmy identifies three typical lexicalization patterns of a motion event in order to identify which semantic components are incorporated into the verb root and which are not.

(3) The expressions of Motion with conflated Manner or Cause (Talmy, 1985:62)
   a. The lamp *stood* on the table. (Motion+ Manner)
   b. I *flicked* the ant off my plate. (Motion+ Cause)

(4) The expressions of Motion with conflation of Path (Talmy, 1985:69)
   a. La botella *entra* a la cueva
      the bottle moved-in to the cave
      ‘The bottle floated into the cave.’
   b. La botella *sale* de la cueva
      the bottle moved-out from the cave
      ‘The bottle floated out of the cave.’
The expressions of Motion with conflated Figure (Talmy, 1985:73)

a. It *rained* in through the bedroom window.

b. I *spat* into the cuspidor.

Presented in many if not all languages, the conflation type of Motion+ Path seems to be ranked the most extensive across languages, of Motion +Manner/Cause next, and of Motion + Figure least so. Talmy further indicates that a language is likely to have more than one conflation type or multi-conflation systems in the expression of a motion event; however, certain conflated patterns appear to form a core system of that language.

Mandarin Chinese, similar to the conflated patterns of English, tends to lexicalize Cause/Manner into its verb roots while the path is expressed with a prepositional phrase. For instance, the action denoted by *ti1* (踢) ‘kick’ as in *wo3 ba3 qiu2 ti1 guo4 le5 cao1-chang3* (我把球踢過了操場) ‘I moved the ball across the field by kicking it’ simultaneously manifests the motion and its manner. Languages like English and Mandarin Chinese are grouped as verb-satellite languages where a verb root and its immediate constituents together form a verb complex denoting a particular meaning.

### 3.3 Frames and Perspective

Form-meaning pairings are not randomly assembled. A preponderance of literature
on form-meaning correspondence has shown that recognition of a lexical form is better understood with reference to common experiential background *frame* or *scene* (Lakoff, 1987; Langacker, 1987a, 1991; Pinker, 1989; Fillmore, 1985; Fillmore & Atkins, 1992, 2000; Lien, 2000). Postulated by Fillmore (1985), frames are “specific unified frameworks of knowledge, or coherent schematizations of experience” (223). The notion of frame, responsible for speaker’s construal and use of language, provides a plausible account for various clause patterns and lexical choice within the same frame.

The notions of frames and perspective are not restricted to the analysis of linguistic and conceptual situations. Instead, the frame and perspective notions can be extended to describe temporal and causative situations. Talmy (1985, 1991) proposes the notion of event-frames and the windowing of attention to verify the claim that frames (or more specifically, motion event-frames), one of the cognitive models, heavily context and culture dependent, are shared by all humans.

In his follow-up study, Talmy (2000) makes the distinctions between complements and adjuncts by examining the interaction between event frames and their complement structure. Two types of complements to a lexical item are proposed: an obligatory complement, which must co-occur with the lexical item, and an optional complement that may or may not do so. A third type of complement, a blocked
complement is proposed as an associated argument which may be expressed in particular conceptual construction rather than any particular lexical item.

According to Talmy, there are five generic types of event frame—a path, a causal chain, a cycle, a participant interaction, and an interrelationship. To understand Talmy’s notion of event-frames, we will be mainly concerned with the motion event-frame by comparing and contrasting Fillmore’s motion frame and Talmy’s motion event-frame. To start with, both approaches capture the insight that cognitive background provides all possible general elements of a motion event. However, although both claim that clause patterns within a motion frame must largely hinge upon their cognitive background, the treatment of the categories with temporal or locative phrases are far from identical. Fillmore conforms to the principle of prominence (Langacker, 1990a) by which the categories with greater conceptual prominence (i.e. figure and ground) are rendered by syntactic subject or object whereas others with lower degree of prominence (i.e. categories denoting spatial-temporal information) are treated as setting of the motion event.

By contrast, Talmy’s notion of motion event-frames identifies six components including figure, ground, path, motion, manner, and cause. While the four components (i.e. figure, ground, path, and motion) are conceived of as central and so are claimed to lie within the motion event frame, the others (i.e. manner and cause) as peripheral
or incidental lie outside the event frame. The treatment of temporal or spatial categories of the motion event is far from identical. In other words, unlike the treatment of being part of the setting of the motion event, these peripheral categories rendered linguistically in adverbial forms are conceived of as explicit specifications of the path component of the whole motion event frame which in Talmy’s term is called windowing of attention. This term, as suggested by its name, must take place in an event frame where the profiled portion of a referent situation is windowed by explicit mention while the remainders of that situation are gapped by omitting mention of it (Talmy 2000). The cognitive process of foregrounding/backgrounding certain portions of an event-frame can be subject to the notion of perspective and profiling.

3.4 Constructions

3.4.1 From constructions to construction grammar---what are they?

A construction, in Goldberg’s term, refers to any conventionalized pairings of syntactic (phonological and morphological) form with semantic complexity, sometimes including pragmatic inference. In terms of construction grammar, grammatical knowledge in a speaker’s mind represents a syntax-lexicon continuum: components smaller than a single word (i.e. a morpheme) or larger than a single word (i.e. phrases, idioms, clauses, sentences, or a larger discourse) can be labeled as a
construction. The construction grammarians claim that syntax and semantics as a whole (i.e. construction) can be generalized to encompass the full range of grammatical knowledge of a speaker. In other words, all syntactic expressions whether they are fully fixed in word or partially lexically open have particular meanings assigned to them.

Goldberg adopts the concept of construction in her analysis of argument structure constructions. She emphasizes constructional relations between constructions. In particular, she argues at length for this statement that the proper way to analyze argument structure construction is to investigate the interaction between the participant roles and the whole event/situation it evokes. In other words, each distinct sense of a verb is associated with a rich frame that in part specifies certain participant roles. Only those (participant) roles, functioning as focal points within the frame, are obligatorily expressed. As is the case with verb meaning, only certain argument roles of a construction are profiled.

Two general principles are employed to constrain the ways in which the participant roles of a verb and the argument roles of a construction can be fused. One is the semantic coherence principle. The other is the correspondence principle. For

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3 The fusion of the participant roles of a verb with the argument roles of a construction must conform to two general principles: The Semantic Coherence Principle and the Correspondence Principle. The former guarantees semantic compatibility of the participant roles and argument roles. In other words, the more specific participant roles of a verb must be qualified as an instance of the more general argument roles of a construction. On the other hand, the default principle, the Correspondence
example, let us examine the use of *put* within the caused-motion construction (Goldberg, 1995:60).

(6) She put the phone on the desk.

The verb *put* in (6) lexically denotes a caused-motion event, whose semantics is compatible with the semantics of the caused-motion construction. Figure 1 shows a pairing between a semantic level and a syntactic level of grammatical function.

![Figure 1. Composite Fused Structure: Caused-Motion + put](image)

At the semantic level, the verb *put* lexically specifies three profiled participants, namely, putter, put-place, and puttee, while the caused-motion construction profiles two argument roles, namely cause and theme. The Correspondence Principle ensures that the three profiled participants of *put* must be fused with the profiled arguments of the Caused-Motion Construction in a one-to-one correspondence manner. The **Principle**, ensures that each obligatory lexically-profiled participant role must be fused with one argument role of the construction.
Semantic Coherence Principle guarantees that the profiled participant roles of the verb *put* must be construable as one instance of their correspondent profiled argument roles of the Caused-Motion Construction. In other words, the *putter* must be construed as one type of cause; the *put-place* must be conceived of one instance of goal; the *puttee* must be regarded as one kind of theme. At the syntactic level, the cause argument manifests itself as subject; the theme argument as object; and the goal argument is rendered linguistically in oblique slot.

The two principles give the guidelines as to how semantics is directly reflected in syntax. However, cross-linguistic evidence shows that discrepancies still exist in terms of the syntax-semantics matching. Goldberg (2000) has observed that under some discourse conditions, the theme argument can be omitted (i.e. the implicit theme construction). A few examples may be useful. In the cases of verbs of emission, i.e. *spit* and verbs of contribution such as *contribute*, the theme arguments (i.e. *spit*, and *money*, respectively) will be shaded on account of pragmatic politeness. Moreover, based on semantic recoverability, some sentence containing a causative verb allows its theme argument to be optionally unexpressed as exemplified in *A tiger kills (its prey) at night*. In short, both the implicit theme and the deprofiled object construction stand as counterexamples to the two principles. In languages like Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, the theme argument with lower discourse prominence tends to be omitted
because non-focal information is construed to be deprowled in the discourse.

Goldberg then concludes that a deeper understanding of argument realization must take the alignment of the three factors into account: lexical semantics, constructions, and discourse conditions.

3.4.2 Idioms as constructions

Issues related to argument structure have long been discussed by linguists. While linguists in favor of generative approaches argue that it is the main verb that licenses the argument structure, others beckon that a network of constructions also helps sanction some argument structures. The study of idioms\textsuperscript{4}; however, poses a direct challenge to generative account. The traditional characterization of grammatical knowledge would indicate that the semantic interpretation of a particular syntactic configuration is predictable from the general rules of the grammatical components and their interfaces whereas some quirky cases like idioms should be restricted to the lexicon.

Largely grown out of work on frame semantics, the alternative approach, known as a constructionist account, maintains that all grammatical knowledge is represented

\textsuperscript{4} Idioms are partially or fully fixed conventionalized linguistic expressions, whose meaning usually reflecting speaker’s affective stance or describing common social activity cannot be parsed by the general syntactic rules for the language. The following examples show a continuum from fully fixed to partially lexically open idioms: \textit{It takes one to know one, kick the bucket, (X) blows X’s nose, the X-er, the Y-er, and so on.}
as generalized constructions which have their specific syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic properties that cannot be derived from a set of linking rules but should be rule-governed within the context of that construction. Specifically speaking, the overall interpretation of a clause is arrived at by integrating the meaning of the construction with those of the components in the construction (Fillmore, Kay and O’Connor 1988; Lakoff 1987; Goldberg 1995, 2006).

To find a place for idioms in the speaker’s mind, the constructionist account seems natural and reasonable. From constructionist perspective, idioms are better recognized as constructions. More specifically, an idiom as a construction has its own syntactic structure and syntactic constraints such as subcategorization of a verb. The syntactic structure of a construction varies considerably from fully fixed in word (i.e. *it takes one to know one; kick the bucket*) to partially lexical open (i.e. *(X) blow X’s nose, The X-er, the Y-er; the let alone construction*). Turning to semantic interpretation, an idiom as a construction (regulated by its selectional restriction) assigns particular meaning to its parts within the same/whole construction (Nunberg et al. 1994: 497).

To recapitulate, this account blurs the boundary between lexicon and syntax. It captures the insight that every syntactic configuration must denote specific semantic interpretation unique to that construction.
3.5 Metaphor and metonymy

Most lexical items are polysemous in nature. How these distinct meanings are linked and associated with one another needs to be specified as discussed in many studies. Two mechanisms, metaphor and metonymy, have been used to account for such a prevailing phenomenon.

Metaphor, embedded in everyday use of language and ways of thinking about the world, involves an understanding of a more abstract concept in terms of a more basic, and concrete entity, usually by analogy and iconic relationships (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Sweetser, 1988, 1990; Traugott & Konig, 1991; Hopper & Traugott, 1993; Bybee & Pagliuca, 1994; Traugott & Dasher, 2002). Human body-parts, on account of their geometric features and relative location, have been documented to be the most useful cognitive template to express spatial concepts. For example, nouns for ‘head’ have given rise to FRONT, REFLEXIVE, MIDDLE, and UP markers (Bruce 1984:85; Moravcsik, 1972: 272; Frajzyngier, 1989: 183; O’Neil, 1935). The body-part term ‘face’ appears to give rise to FRONT markers in forty-nine Oceanic languages (Bowden, 1992:36). The body-part term ‘head’ is used to express ‘on’; ‘the back of a bodies’ gives rise to ‘the back of the house’; terms for ‘belly/stomach’ are used as structural template to express the deictic location of ‘in’ (Claudi and Heine, 1986; Svorou, 1994; Heine and Kuteva, 2002).
These examples indicate how the use of deictic location can generate temporal interpretation. Sweetser (1986) has noticed that the single form of English preposition *in* can be used to express spatial, temporal, and emotional senses, and gives rise to a broader range of meanings. According to Sweetser, English preposition *in* by nature profiles a containment relation between the content and the container as exemplified in the sentence: *The wine is in the bottle.* In the case, the preposition *in* denotes a physical spatial meaning. However, the containment relation does not specify any absolute location because individual speakers construe the world in different ways based on their unique personal experiences. Speakers can use *in* to describe a state as in *John was in the room*; or they can perspectivize the point of entry of the trajectory into the landmark as shown in *John came in the door*.

Sweetser further indicates that the geometric relation can shift to refer to temporal or emotional one as illustrated in the sentences: *I will be with you in 5 minutes* and *Can she be in love again?* According to Sweetser, the transfer from physical spatial *in* to abstract temporal *in* can be described in terms of metaphorical projection. To put it precisely, if one entity is located spatially in an event, s/he is also located temporally in that event (Claudi and Heine, 1986; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Heine, 1997; Yu, 1998; Ahrens and Huang, 2000). Likewise, the deictic location *in* can be metaphorically extended to denote emotional *in* although spatial structure and
emotional structure are far from identical. It is likely that when people are in a certain mood, they metaphorically enter another mental state which can be regarded as a mental container.

In brief, metaphorical transfer from conceptually concrete domains to abstract domains as discussed above has been claimed to be one of the paramount mechanisms to motivate distinct but related senses of a given lexeme (Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca, 1994; Lai, 2003). The meaning relatedness of polysemy motivated by metaphorical process is conceptualized as abrupt and discontinuous.

Unlike a metaphorical process, metonymic strengthening is a gradual and continuous process. Traditionally, metonymy is defined as a figure of speech where the name of one entity is used to refer to another entity. In Nunberg’s (1978) term, metonymy has a referring function. Such a referring function makes one entity as a reference point to another entity, which is continuous or proximate to that reference point. For instance, *Shakespeare is on the top shelf* is a metonymic use of a producer for his product.

In addition to the continuity relation, the part-whole relation also exists between two entities. For example, *new faces* in *we need some new faces around here* is metonymic since *faces* as the most salient part in identifying a person stands for new comers. However, even discontinuous entities within the same conceptual domain
may give rise to metonymy. Kovecses and Radden (1998) propose the notion of metonymy in terms of a cognitive linguistic view. There are various types of part-and-part relations such as Action ICM\(^5\), Perception ICM, Causation ICM, and Containment ICM. Since the single word *piong* in Hakka denotes a caused-motion activity, which is actional in nature, the following discussion will be centered on how individual participants (i.e. agent, theme, location, means, manner, source, result, and time) are related to each other within an Action ICM. A couple of metonymic relationships\(^6\) can be found in the Action ICM, among the intricate relationships, ACTION FOR RESULT metonymy comes into play. In the case of a deep cut, for instance, de-verbal noun *cut* profiles the direct consequences of the action. The substitution of de-verbal noun *cut* for any generic nouns denoting a result (i.e. *wound*) may be more specific and more accessible to the hearers since the cutting action and its result represents a continuous relation within the same Action ICM. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibañez & Díez Velasco (2001) state explicitly as follows:

This metonymy, by highlighting a subdomain of the propositional action ICM, involves the reduction of the conceptual material which is brought to bear upon interpretation.... Processes are congruently expressed as verbs, but they may be reworded metaphorically as nouns, which designate participants in a process.

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\(^5\) ICMs, the abbreviated form for “idealized cognitive models,” are responsible for the notion of metonymy.

\(^6\) According to Kovecses and Radden (1998), there are types of metonymic relationships within an Action ICM, including ACTION-FOR-RESULT, INSTRUMENT-FOR-ACTION, AGENT-FOR-ACTION, ACTION-FOR-AGENT, OBJECT-FOR-ACTION, ACTION-FOR-OBJECT, RESULT-FOR-ACTION, MEANS-FOR-ACTION, MANNER-FOR-ACTION, TIME PERIOD-FOR-ACTION, DESTINATION-FOR-ACTION, and TIME-OF-MOTION-FOR-ACTION.
3.6 Remarks

Issues related to argument structure have been conducted into bipartite ways: lexical and constructional approaches to syntactic realization. Although the two approaches share the norms that no two syntactic forms carry exactly the same meaning, their treatments of argument structure are far from identical. To start with, traditional linguists have claimed that argument realization is simply determined by the semantics of a verb and a set of linking rules. Thus, an emphasis is placed on decomposing a verb into several atomic primitives in order to find its more general conceptual structure.

Unlike lexical approach, the constructional approach maintains that semantics of the verb classes and the semantics of the constructions are integrated to yield to the semantics of particular expressions (Goldberg, 1995:60). With the notion of conceptual structure, Goldberg further indicates the importance of frames invoked by the verb classes. She claims that for people to understand each distinct senses of a verb, they have to make reference to its background frame rich with world and cultural knowledge. Because a single frame can be applied to a set of verbs with different degree of family resemblance, issues related to the choice of one verb over another has been said to be a change of perspective within the same frame. In addition, on account of metaphorical mapping or metonymic extension, a single verb can occur
in various clause patterns, denote subtle nuance, and give rise to verbal polysemy.

The theoretical framework has been reviewed here to provide a valuable tool for analyzing the constructional polysemy of piong3 and its congeners in Hakka. The frame notion can offer a plausible account for the shades of meanings exhibited in piong3 and its congeners while metaphor and metonymy can be used to describe the complicated polysemies of piong3 in Hakka.