Abstract

English verbs describing putting, a prototypical exemplar of a caused-motion activity, have been pervasively found to be the first acquired and the most frequently used verbs in many languages. Their semantic compatibility with various syntactic structures reinforces the association between verbal meanings and the constructions, giving rise to a grouping of related but distinct senses (Goldberg et al. 2004). Piong3 (放) ‘to put’ in Hakka is abundant in semantics. The basic meaning of piong3 designates a common pattern of human experience: An animate entity exerts manual force upon a physical object and causes the object to move. Adopting Goldberg’s (1995) Constructions and Fillmore’s (1985) Frame Semantics, this study aims to account for the meaning relatedness latent in piong3 and explicate the shades of meaning rooted in the set of its congeners with different degree of family resemblance. It is argued that the delicate nuances denoted by piong3 are derived from the interaction between frames and constructions while the extended meanings of piong3 are linked to its typical use through various metaphors and metonymies such as CONTAINER, EVENT STRUCTURE, CHANGE OF STATE AS CHANGE OF LOCATION metaphors and ACTION FOR RESULT metonymy. Furthermore, with regard to congeners of piong3 in Hakka, it is maintained that differences in profiling and lexicalization patterns capture the primary difference between piong3 and its congeners. Specifically, piong3 does not lexicalize other semantic elements (i.e. path, means, manner, result, and etc.) into its lexical meaning whereas its congeners explicitly do so, in that three subtypes of the congeners can be identified: directional congeners, means congeners, and manner congeners.