CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Derived from our interaction with objects in the world, human experience relates to humanness, concrete objects, and functional aspects of an action, which are more salient for humans than their counterparts. This anthropocentric view of the world has served as cognitive basis for learning (Heine, 1997; Kövecses Z. and G. Radden1998).

Recent studies of child’s early language development have found that the majority of young children’s early utterances are organized by linguistic expressions denoting concrete objects from the language that they hear around them (Pizutto, E. and Caselli, C., 1992; Berman, R.A. and Armon-Lotem, S., 1995; Lieven et al. 1997; Rubino, R. and Pine, J., 1998; Tomasello, M., 2000). From this beginning, children can categorize, schematize and creatively combine these learned form-meaning pairings to reach adult-like linguistic constructions in gradual and piecemeal fashion. Goldberg et al. (2004) observe the Child Language Data Exchange System CHILDES) of children’s early speech in order to examine how constructions are learned by children. Their findings have shown that there is a strong tendency for one verb (in
comparison to other verbs) to occur frequently in some particular constructions. For instance, *put* accounts for 38 percent of the uses of the caused-motion construction in mother’s speech to their 28-month-olds. The fact that *put* (compared with *shelve*) occurs so frequently with caused-motion constructions can be explicated by two reasons. First, the verb *put* can be applied to a wider range of arguments and so is relevant in a wider range of contexts (Heine, 1993). Second, the main use of *put* designates a basic pattern of human experience: someone causing something to go to a place. A moving activity typically involves concrete motion so that it is more accessible to children. It is not surprising that the verb *put* is highly frequent for the mothers to address to their children.

1.1 Motivation and Purpose

These findings have demonstrated that English *put* have been an exemplar to a caused-motion activity and have been found to be the first acquired and the most frequently used verbs in many languages. The high frequency of *put* to occur is due to its perfectly semantic compatibility with various syntactic structures and so a dense network of verb uses and constructions is set up (Heine, 1993; Goldberg, 2006). Such frequent occurrence in particular constructions thus gives rise to meaning relatedness of *put*. As is the case with English *put*, copious amounts of ink have been spilled in
discussion of the putting event in Mandarin Chinese (Gao, 2001; Gao & Cheng, 2003; Lien, 2004; Huang, 2006). Although the voluminous studies of form-meaning pairings in Taiwanese Southern Min or in Mandarin Chinese have been conducted (Gao & Cheng, 2003; Lien, 2004; Huang, 2006; Liu 2002), little information is available in the literature of verbs of putting in Hakka, one of the major languages in the Chinese family. Just like the cases in Taiwanese Southern Min, piong3 (放) ‘to put’ in Hakka is rich in semantics. The single word piong3 involves a caused-motion activity and can be decomposed as an animate entity exerting its physical force to move another inanimate entity in a particular direction, with certain means, or in a particular manner, usually resulting in a change of location or a change of state of the moved entity. To illustrate, consider the following examples.

\[(1) \text{ngai 同酒放佇桌亢。}
\]

\[\text{ngai5 tung5 ziu2 piong3 du2 zok2 kong3}\]

1SG PM wine put LOC table top

‘I put (a bottle of) wine on the table.’

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1 There are some dialectal differences of Hakka, including Hailu Hakka, Northern Sixian Hakka, Southern Sixian Hakka, and Dapu Hakka (Dungshi). The data presented in this paper mainly focus on the dialect of Dapu Hakka (Dungshi). The Manual of Taiwan Hakka Tongyong Romanization System (台灣客語通用拼音使用手冊) regulated by the Ministry of Education is used to render the Hakka pronunciation.

2 The following abbreviations are used for their corresponding grammatical functions: 1SG, first person singular; PM, a patient marker; LOC, location; CL, a classifier; COMP, a complementizer; NEG, a negative marker; 3GEN, third person genitive marker; and REFL, reflexive.
(2) ngai 待灶下放一罐酒。 

ngai5  dai3  zo3 -ha5  piong3  it2  kon3  ziu2
1SG  LOC  kitchen  put  one  CL  wine

‘I put a bottle of wine in the kitchen.’

(3) 甜粄炊好，放幾隻月無問題。

Tiam5-  pan2  coi5-  ho2,  piong3  ki5-chat4  ngiet5  mo5  mun3-ti5
sweet-pastry  steam  COMP  put  several  month  NEG  problem

‘The steamed sweet pastry can be put for several months.’

(4) 放厥鴨去河壩亢食水。

Piong3  kia1  ap2  hi3  ho5-  pa3  kong3  siit5  sui2
put  his  duck  go  riverbank  top  have  water

‘To release the ducks (from the) pen and (set them free to) have some water along the riverbank’

(5) 心愛放開兜。

sim5  oi3  piong3  koi5  teu1
heart  need  put  open  bit

‘To let go the heart a little bit’

(6) 放火燒厥屋。

piong3  fo2  seul  kia1  vuk2
put  fire  burn  3GEN  house

‘To set on fire (for the purpose of burning down the house)’

Examples (1) through (3) denote the basic meaning of piong3 ‘to put’ in Hakka; example (4), involving two metaphors, CONTAINER, and the EVENT STRUCTURE metaphors, bears an extended meaning of ‘to set in freedom’. Example (5) extends its basic use to denote a relief of one’s mind by CONTAINER metaphor and
PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT FOR EMOTION metonymy. Finally, the meaning of piong3 in example (6) designates a more extended meaning of ‘to start fire’ where two mechanisms, metaphor and metonymy, are responsible for this meaning extension. So far, the examples demonstrate meaning relatedness denoted by piong3 in Hakka.

In addition to the basic category (i.e. piong3) in the PUT frame, there are other congeners semantically related to piong3. Displaying different degrees of family resemblance to its basic category member, piong3, these congeners can be divided into several subtypes. First, the path congeners including song2 (上) ‘to put upwards’, lim5 (淋) ‘to put downwards’, and so1 (挲) ‘to move in back-and-forth direction’ take an overt object, indicating the path along which the caused-to-move action comes about. Second, the means congeners such as (漆) ‘to put with layers of paints’, mat2 (抹) ‘to put with one’s palm’, lim5 (淋) ‘to put with liquids’, and so1 (挲) ‘to put with one’s fingers’ identify the means by which an action takes place. Third, the manner congeners incorporate the way of acting into the lexical meanings as exemplified in bai2 (摆) ‘to put in order’, so1 (挲), ‘to put with gentle manual force’, yam3 (掞) ‘to scatter in small amount of something’, and pat2 (潑) ‘to scatter (a fluid) about in flying masses’. Unlike the previous three types, the last congener of piong3 does not lexicalize extra semantic elements into its lexical meaning. Rather it only imposes severe restrictions on the selection of its theme role. This can be exemplified
in go5 (膏), which requires its theme role to be a highly viscous/semisolid substance.

Let us see the following examples.

(7) **Verbs of putting with a precise direction**

a. **上肩**
   
   *Song5 kien1*
   
   Put-upwards shoulder
   
   ‘To put things upwards toward the shoulders’

b. **淋尿**
   
   *Lim5 ngiau3*
   
   Put-downwards urine
   
   ‘To pour urine (on the plants)’

c. **挲鹽**
   
   *So1 yam5*
   
   Put-back-and-forth salt
   
   ‘To apply salt (on fresh)’

(8) **Verbs of putting marked by a means**

a. **漆壁**
   
   *cit2 biak2*
   
   put-paint brush wall
   
   ‘To paint the wall’

b. **抹紅毛泥**
   
   *Mat2 fung5- mol- ni3*
   
   Put-tool-with-flat-surface cement
   
   ‘To spread cement (on the wall)’
(9) **Verbs of putting with a specific manner**

a. 擺碗筷  
   *bai2 von2 kuai3*  
   put in order  bowl  chopstick  
   ‘To set the table’

d. 掱心肝  
   *so1 sim5 kon1*  
   put-fingers  heart  liver  
   ‘To stroke on the chest (for a relief)’

b. 撒胡椒粉  
   *yam3 fu5-zeu1-fun2*  
   put-sprinkles  pepper  
   ‘To pepper (on food)’

c. 潑水  
   *pat2 sui2*  
   put-in flying-masses  water  
   ‘To scatter a fluid about in flying masses’
Verbs of putting that impose (selectional) restrictions on the theme

a. 醬藥膏仔
   
gau1 e2  yok5 go5
   put  ointment
   ‘To plaster (the wound)’

b. *膏冰角
   
*go5 gok2 ben1
   put ice-cube
   ‘*To plaster (the wound) with the ice cube’

Akin to its basic category member piong3, the individual verbs embedded in the examples in (7) through (10) all picture a scene of the caused-motion activity where the theme moves around after the agent’s physical exertion. However, this is where their similarity ends between piong3 and its congeners. The basic category member piong3 as illustrated in examples (1) through (6) does not indicate other semantic elements (i.e. figure, means, manner, path, result and source) of the movement whereas its congeners explicitly specify other components of the motion event. For instance, the component path/direction is incorporated in the verbs of (7); the element means is signified in the verbs of (8); the category manner is made explicitly in the verbs of (9). In short, verbs in the examples from (7) to (9) reveal every subtle nuance within the same motion event-frame when compared with the basic category member piong3. These congeners in the aforementioned examples (7) to (9) display different
degrees of family resemblance: They seem to invoke the same semantic frame but differ in the profiling.

In contrast to the congeners referred to by (7) to (9), the congener with the theme specified (i.e. go5 (膏) ‘to put with the ointment’) does not incorporate other semantic elements into its lexical meaning. Alternatively, the frame enriches its meanings by imposing selective restriction to the theme role as illustrated in (10).

Therefore, one of the goals of this study is to examine the syntactic manifestation of participant roles of the basic category member piong3. Next, this study will provide a plausible account for the various uses of piong3 in terms of two cognitive mechanisms: metaphor and metonymy. Third, the multiple uses of piong3 reveal shades of meaning among one another and so must be attributed to the various conceptual frames it can invoke. By establishing the frames of piong3 and those of its congeners in Hakka, this study intends to show how the frames enrich the semantics of piong3 and its congeners, yielding to a grouping of distinct but interrelated meanings.

1.2 Conventions of the data

The data about verbs of putting with Tongyong Romanization System are mainly collected from Dapu Hakka in Dungshi. The corresponding Chinese characters are
based on 《台灣桃園客家話方言》・《台灣的客家話》・《客話辭典》. The examples come from both written and oral texts (i.e. stories/local legends, news reports, and interviews). The tone system is represented as 1 for yinping (mid tone), 2 for yinshang (mid falling tone), 3 for yincliu (high falling tone), 4 for yinru (short low tone), 5 for yangping (low tone), 8 for yangru (short high tone).

1.3 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is organized as follows. In addition to the introduction, chapter II will present an overview of the theoretical background drawn in on previous analyses of PUT in Taiwanese Southern Min (Lien 2004) and in Mandarin Chinese (Huang 2006). Chapter III will introduce relevant theoretical frameworks to account for the meaning relatedness of piong3 and its delicate nuances with other congeners. Special attention is directed to theories of Frame Semantics (Fillmore 1985, Fillmore & Atkins 1992, 2000), Construction Grammar (Goldberg 1995, 2005, 2006), and metaphor and metonymy (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Sweetser, 1988, 1990; Traugott & König, 1991; Hopper & Traugott, 1993; Bybee & Pagliuca, 1994; Traugott & Dasher, 2002). Chapter IV will propose the account, followed by a conclusion in chapter V.