Historical Development of Reported Speech in Chinese

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0. Introduction
This paper attempts to show the diachronic process of reported speech in Chinese based on Givon's (1980) hypothesis of binding hierarchy relating verb meaning and complement type. He shows that complementizers occur with saying or informative verbs (i.e. say, tell) first, then with cognitive verbs (i.e. think, know or believe), then with verbs like decide or agree. The methodology I use is calculating the frequency of saying verbs, informative verbs and cognitive verbs which occur with the complementizers in Chinese vernacular short or long fiction from the Tang (A.D. 670-905) to the Qing dynasties (A.D. 1644-1908).

There are several sources for data in classical Chinese. For the Tang dynasty, the primary source is Dunhuang Bian Wen [Transformation Texts of the Dunhuang Stone Caves] (A.D. 4th - 10th century) (henceforth DBW). For the Song Dynasty (A.D. 960 – 1278), I will use Song Si Gong Da Nao Jin Hun Zhang 'Mister Song Disturbing Jin Hun Zhang' (henceforth SDNJ). For the data regarding usage during the Ming dynasty (A.D. 1368 - 1628), I will use a famous short work of fiction entitled Bai Niangzi Yong Zhen Leifeng Ta [Madame Bai Forever Locked in the Leifong Tower] (henceforth BYZLT). In the Qing dynasty (A.D. 1644 - 1908), a well-known work of longer fiction Hong Lou Meng 'Dream of the Red Chamber' by Xue-Qin Cao (A.D. 1715 -1763) (henceforth HLM), is adopted as the source for our data. Since HLM is a longer work of fiction, I will only use chapters two to five.

1. Verbs of Saying in Classical Chinese
In Chinese classical texts, especially the short or long vernacular fiction from the Tang (A.D. 670-950) to the Qing dynasties (A.D. 16447-1908), the forms such as yan 'say', yue 'say', dao 'say' and shuo 'say' are all used as utterance verbs meaning 'say'. Among them, yan, yue and dao 'say' are found to introduce sentential complements when they follow another saying or informative verb.

1.1. Stage One: Tang Dynasty (A.D. 670-905)
1.1.1. As Utterance Verbs Meaning 'say'
Two stories from *Bian Wen* are chosen as primary sources for our data. In these two stories, *yan* 'say' and *yue* 'say' as in (1) and (2) are both commonly used as utterance verbs meaning 'say'.

DBW

(1)  
Zi Xu *yue* meng xiansheng yi ji.  
Zi Xu *say* receive mister one help  
'Zi Xu says, "I have received help from you."'

(2)  
Mu Lian liang jiu er *yan* shi yi Qing Ti furen fou  
Mu Lian very long then *say* know one Qing Ti Madame not  
'After a while, Mu Lian says, "Do you know Madame Qing Ti?"'

1.1.2. As Complementizers after Saying and Informative Verbs

In addition, in numerous examples from (3) to (5), when *yan* or *yue* introduces a sentential complement, this item occurs following another verb of saying as in (3), or verb of information as in (4) and (5). In these examples, *yan* or *yue* has lost its literal meaning and served as a complementizer to introduce a sentential complement. For example, in (3), when *yue* functions as a complementizer and introduces a sentential complement, it occurs following another verb of saying *yan*. Since two adjacent verbs of saying are redundant and unnecessary, it turns out that the two of them have different functions: the first verb *yan* has a lexical function and serves as a main verb in the main clause whereas the second verb *yue* has a grammatical function and serves as a complementizer to introduce a sentential complement.

Another observation is that in examples (4) and (5), the sentential complement introduced by the complementizer expresses what has been answered as in (4), or what has been reported as in (5) instead of what has been verbally said.

DBW

(3)  
kou chang ge er *yan* *yue* lu zhong yi ren...  
mouth sing song and say *YUE* cottage inside one person  
'(Someone) sings a song and says, "There is someone inside the cottage."'

(4)  
zhu ren day *yan* jin jie bu shi.  
you-gentleman answer *YAN* total all not know  
'Everyone answers "We do not know any of them."'

(5)  
er shi shizun bao Mu Lian *yue* ru mu yi luo Abi.  
then time master report Mu Lian *YUE* you mother already fall Abi  
'Then the master reported to Mu Lian "Your mother has fallen Abi ..."'
1.1.3. Optional Complementizers
A number of examples as in (6) and (7) have been found in which an informative verb precedes a sentential complement without being followed by another yan or yue. This indicates that yan or yue as complementizers following an informative verb are optional. Since they are optional, it is more reasonable to analyze them as complementizers instead of full utterance verbs.

(6) yuzhu geng wen di qi ge zhong you Qing Ti furen fou.
    warden even ask number seven space inside have Qing Ti Madame not
    "The warden even asks "Is there a Madame Qing Ti in the seventh space?"

(7) er zhi jian bixia shi wan ren zhi wang.
    and direct warn your-majesty be ten-thousand people POSS king
    "... and directly warns "Your majesty, you are the king of all the people..."

Table (1) Frequency of Different Types of Verbs Preceding Yan and Yue in DBW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs Types</th>
<th>yan/yue 'tell,talk'</th>
<th>wen 'ask'</th>
<th>da 'answer'</th>
<th>bao 'report'</th>
<th>other verbs</th>
<th>cognitive verbs</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2. Stage Two: from the Song to Qing Dynasties (A.D. 960-1908)
1.2.1. As Utterance Verbs Meaning 'say'
Similarly, in a number of stories written from the Song (A.D. 960-1278) to Qing Dynasties (A.D. 1644-1908), different forms of verbs of saying such as yan 'say', yue 'say', dao 'say' and shuo 'say' as shown in (8) to (13) are commonly used as utterance verbs meaning 'say' introducing a quote.

SDNJ
(8) Song-si-gong dao wo lihui de le.
    Song-si-gong say I understand PART PART
    'Song-si-gong says "I understand."'

(9) kuizi yue ni ji zhi qian duo hai ji.
    executioner say you already know money much harm self
    'The executioner says "Since you already know that too much money is
dangerous to you ..."

BYZLT
(10) Xu Xuan dao xiaozhi zhun lai.
    Xu Xuan say guy allow come
    'Xu Xuan says "You guys are allowed to come."'
(11)  lao yuanwai shuo zhege rongyi.
old gentleman say this easy
'The old gentleman says "This is easy."'

HLM
(12)  Yu Chun dao zheng shi.
Yu Chun say exactly be
'Yu Chun says "Exactly so!"

(13)  Ta shuo bi dei liang ge nuer pei zhe wo du shu.
he say must need two CL girl accompany I read book
'He says "I must be accompanied by two girls when I study."'

1.2.2. As Complementizers After Informative Verbs
Likewise, as illustrated in examples (14) to (18), yue or dao following another
informative verb has lost its literal meaning in that the sentential complement
expresses what has been answered, reported or called in an indirect way instead of
what has been expressed verbally. In these sentences, yue or dao has developed
into a complementizer.

Certainly, the action of answering, reporting or calling must be involved with
some kind of utterance either verbally or metaphorically. However, dao as in (15)
can follow a verb xie 'write' which is not related to an actual utterance,

SDNJ
(14)  lao ren da yue wu fei ren ye.
old man answer YUE I not human PART
'The old man answers "I am not a human."'

(15)  jian shang xie dao Gushu cheng ren.
book on write DAO Gushu city people
'It is written in the book "The people inside the City of Gushu..."

BYZLT
(16)  zhuren chi le yi jing lianmang wen dao zuo shenme.
master eat ASP one surprise right-away ask DAO do what
'The master was surprised and immediately asked "What do you want?"

(17)  Xu Xuan jiao dao que shi ku ye.
Xu Xuan yell DAO yet be bad PART
'Xu Xuan yells "My goodness."

HLM
(18)  Bao Yu xiao wen dao Shenxian jiejie.
Bao Yu laugh ask DAO angel sister
'Bao Yu laughs and asks "Sister angel!"
1.2.3. As Complementizers After Another Saying Verb
Paralleling example (3) at stage one, in (19) to (22), when *yue* or *dao* functions as a complementizer and introduces a sentential complement, it occurs following another verb of saying *yan* or *shuo*. Again, since two adjacent verbs of saying are redundant and unnecessary, it turns out that the two items have different functions: the first verb *yan* or *shuo* has a lexical function and serves as a main verb in the main clause whereas the second verb *yue* or *dao* has a grammatical function and serves as a complementizer to introduce a sentential complement.

**SDNJ**
(19) you ren kou chuan yan **yue** Ji Lun jiu wu ze ge.
     there-is someone knock boat say **YUE** Ji Lun save me PART PART
     'Someone knocked on the boat and said "Ji Lun, help me."'

(20) na laoer shuo **dao** laohan shi Song Gong dian cha de.
     that old-man say **DAO** old-guy be Song Officer order tea PART
     'That old man said "I am the tea server fro Officer Song."'

**BYZLT**
(21) si dui Zhang zhuguan shuo **dao** women dou yao heqi.
     privately to Zhang boss say **DAO** we all need friendly
     '...Privately talks to Mr. Zhang, the boss, "We all have to be friendly."'

**HLM**
(22) Yu Chun banri shuo **dao** yi ni zhenme zuo.
     Yu Chun half-day say **DAO** depend you how do
     'Ater a while, Yu Chun says "What will you do?"'

1.2.4. As Complementizers After Cognitive Verbs
At the later stage, a complementizer has extended its domain to occur not only with saying and informative verbs, but also with cognitive verbs.

As illustrated in (23) to (26), *dao* in these sentences should be analyzed as a complementizer for two reasons: First, *dao* has lost its literal meaning of 'say' in that the sentential complement expresses what the subject has thought instead of what s/he has verbally said. Further evidence comes from an example (24) in which the context such as 'did not open his mouth but contemplated in his mind' strongly implies that no utterance is involved. As for the cognitive verbs preceding a complementizer, only *xunsí* 'think', *siliang* 'think' or *sichun* 'contemplate' are found in all of these works.

**SDNJ**
(23) Lu Zhu zi si **dao** zhangfu bei ta wuhai xingming.
     Lu Zhu herself think **DAO** husband PASS s/he harm life
     'Lu Zhu herself thinks "My husband was killed by him."'
(24) Song Si Gong kou li bu shuo, du li siliang dao Zhao Zheng shou gao si wuo...
Song-si-gong mouth inside not say stomach inside
contemplate DAO Zhao Zheng hand skillful like me
'Mister Song did not open his mouth but contemplated in his mind
"Zhao Zheng is as skillful as me ...."

BYZLT
(25) Xu Xuan xunsi dao wo ye wen ta yi wen.
Xu Xuan contemplate DAO I also ask him/her one ask
'Xu Xuan contemplates "Let me ask him/her."

HLM
(26) Bao Yu xiang dao zhe ge difang youqu.
Bao Yu think DAO this CL place interesting
'Bao Yu thinks "This is an interesting place."

1.3. Optional complementizers
Other evidence for analyzing dao as a complementizer is that dao in these contexts is optional. As shown in (27) to (30), in these examples a sentential complement is directly introduced by an informative verb such as wen 'ask' or jiao 'call', or a cognitive verb such as xunsi 'contemplate' or xiang 'think'.

SDNJ
(27) Wang Xiu you wen shifu zhe kezhang gao xing.
Wang Xiu again ask master this guest Polite last-name
'Wang Xiu asks his master again "May I have your last name?"

(28) zhi ting de you ren jiao Zhao er guanren.
only hear PART there-is someone call Zhao two officer
'(I) only heard someone called "Officer Zhao ..."

BYZLT
(29) Xu Xuan ziji xunsi zhen ge hao yi duan yinyuan.
Xu Xuan self contemplate really CL good one CL marriage
'Xu Xuan himself contemplates "It's really a good marriage."

HLM
(30) Dai Yu xin xiang zhe ge Bao Yu bu zhi shi zenyang ge pilan...
Dai Yu heart think this CL Bao Yu not know be how CL lazy
'Dai Yu thinks in her mind "I do not know how lazy this Bao Yu...."
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Table (2) Frequency of Verbs before a Complementizer (Tang to Qing Dynasties)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dynasty</th>
<th>Tang dyn. (7th-10th cent.)</th>
<th>Song dyn. (10th-12th cent.)</th>
<th>Ming dyn. (14th-17th cent.)</th>
<th>Qing dyn. (17th-20th cent.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utterance verbs</td>
<td>yan, yue</td>
<td>yan, yue, dao</td>
<td>yan, dao</td>
<td>shuo, dao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementizer</td>
<td>yan, yue</td>
<td>yan, yue, dao</td>
<td>dao</td>
<td>Dao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>freq. %</td>
<td>freq. %</td>
<td>freq. %</td>
<td>freq. %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying verbs</td>
<td>7 9.6</td>
<td>7 19.4</td>
<td>7 16.6</td>
<td>4 17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informative verbs</td>
<td>66 90.4</td>
<td>23 64.0</td>
<td>30 71.4</td>
<td>12 52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive verbs</td>
<td>0 0.0</td>
<td>6 16.6</td>
<td>5 12.2</td>
<td>7 30.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Verbs of Saying in Modern Chinese Dialects

In the remainder of the discussion I will use some data from Modern Taiwan Mandarin, Taiwanese, a Southern Min dialect spoken in Taiwan and Cantonese, to demonstrate the grammatical status of different uses of verbs of saying in Modern Chinese. There are several sources for the data for verbs of saying. The data in Taiwan Mandarin is collected from Taiwan's Electrical Mails News-Group Chat (BBS) in 1997. I have also used two books, one is entitled Bixu Ying de Ren [You have to Win] by Ji-Gao Zhang, and the other one is entitled Chutou Kaogu Xuejia de Zaji [An Archaeologist with a Hoe: A Note of Liji's life as a Scholar] by Guang-Muo Li. Some data in Taiwanese is collected from Taiyu Quwei Xuanji [Selection of Humor and Jokes in Taiwanese] edited by Robert Cheng. The data in Cantonese is primarily elicited from a native speaker of Hong Kong Cantonese, named K. C. Ma. She is from Hong Kong and is currently a graduate student in the Art department at the University of Hawai, Manoa.

2.1. As Utterance Verbs Meaning 'say'

As shown in (31) to (32), when Mandarin shuo serves as an utterance verb meaning 'say', it can be marked for aspect such as le, zai or guo as the full verbs and retains the literal meaning of 'say'.

Mandarin

(31) Xianqian shuo le na zhong hua, shi ho you shuo
     previously say ASP that kind word afterwards again say
     'has previously said that kind of words and afterwards said that …'

(32) Ni zai shuo nimen xuexiao wo.
     You ASP say your school PART
     'Are you talking about your school?'

Paralleling Mandarin shuo 'say', Taiwanese kong and Cantonese wa 'say' as in examples (33) to (36) can serve as an utterance verb marked by aspect markers as full verbs and retain the literal meaning of 'say'.

151
Taiwanese
(33) I m bat kong koe petshat oe.
    he NEG used-to say ASP lie word
    'He has never told a lie.'

(34) Hakseng kong: 'm si goa m si goa ...
    student say NEG be me NEG be me
    'A student said, "It is not me, it is not me ... "'

Cantonese
(35) Ngo mou wa kwo.
    I NEG say ASP
    'I have never said so.'

(36) Khue wa khui m sik wo.
    he say he NEG know PART
    'He said he did not know...'

2.2. As Cognitive Verbs Meaning 'think'
Mandarin shuo, as in (37) and (38), Taiwanese kong in (39) and (40) and
Cantonese wa in (41) have all evolved into a cognitive verb with an abstract
reading meaning 'to think' (Liu 1986; Meng 1982). On the basis of examples (37)
to (41), Mandarin shuo, Taiwanese kong and Cantonese wa introducing a
sentential complement should not be analyzed as utterance verbs meaning 'to say',
but should be analyzed as cognitive verbs meaning 'to think' because the subject
you or I does not verbally say anything. Instead, the reading of this sentence
indicates that the speaker has assumed that what is introduced by shuo expresses
the thought of the subject.

Mandarin
(37) Yexu ni hui shuo Taiwan yi zhongxiao qiye wei zhu.
    maybe you will think Taiwan take middle small company as primary
    'Maybe you will think that the majorities of business corporations are
    primarily small businesses in Taiwan.'

(38) Ni shuo ta congming ma?
    you think he smart Q
    'Do you think he is smart?'

Taiwanese
(39) Li kong goa au lepai khi Taipak ho m ho?
    you think I later week go Taipei good NEG good
    'Do you think it is okay for me to go to Taipei next week?'
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(40)  
Goa kong li mai khi kha ho.
I think you NEG go more good
'I think you had better not go.'

Cantonese

(41)  
Ngo wa dou m ji hai m hai keui tao ga je.
I think all NEG know COP NEG COP he steal PART PART
'I think I do not know whether he stole (it) or not.'
(example from Chui 1994)

2.3. As Complementizers Following Saying and Informative Verbs

In examples (42) to (44), Mandarin shuo, Taiwanese kong and Cantonese wa have all evolved into complementizers introducing a sentential complement when they are preceded by an informative verb such as ask or answer. In these examples, shuo, kong and wa can neither be marked for aspect nor retain the literal meaning of 'say'. Similarly, the embedded sentence in these sentences indirectly expresses what the subject in the main clause has asked or answered. In addition, sentences, shuo, kong and wa in these sentences are all optional occurrences. Thus they should be analyzed as complementizers instead of utterance verbs.

Mandarin

(42)  
Li Ji huida shuo (*le) meiyou ...
Li Ji answer SHUO (*ASP) NEG
'Li Ji answers "NO".'

Taiwanese

(43)  
Ising huitap kong (*goe) :'tsiN to ai tsunbi ho.'
doctor answer KONG (*ASP) money all must prepare in-hand
'The doctor answers (that), "The money must be in hand."
(example from Cheng 1993)

Cantonese

(44)  
John man ngo wa (*kwo) nisyu yau bouji.
John ask me WA where have newspaper
'John asks me where the newspaper is.'

2.4. As Complementizers Following Cognitive Verbs

In these modern dialects, Mandarin shuo, Taiwanese kong and Cantonese wa as complementizers can follow a cognitive verb other than think.

For instance, in (45) shuo as a complementizer follows xiang 'think' and in (46) it follows guji 'estimate'. In (47) and (48) in Taiwanese, kong as a complementizer follows siuN 'think' and sionsgin 'believe'. In (49) and (50) in Cantonese, wa follows soeng 'think' and tsitou 'know'. For the same token, the embedded sentence in these examples indicates what has been thought, estimated, believed or known by the subject in the main clause. Again, shuo,
kong or wa in these sentences is an optional occurrence, thus it is a complementizer instead of a verb.

Mandarin
(45)  Benlai hai xiang shuo (*le) ruguo ta jiang koshi de shiqing.
      originally still think SHUO (*ASP) if he OM oral-test POSS thing
      'Originally (I) still thought that if he handles the oral tests …' 

(46)  Hai you yi zhong guji shuo (*le) keneng yu shou yi wei tongxiang …
      still there-is one CL estimate SHUO (*ASP) maybe there-is accept one
      CL people-from-the same county
      'It was estimated that it might relate to someone from the same county …' 

Taiwanese
(47)  Hit le lang siuN kong (*koe) : 'nasi edang o tiu than tsiiN e honghoa …'
      that CL someone think KONG (*ASP) if be-able learn ASP earn money
      POSS way
      'That man thinks (that), "If (I) can learn the ways to make money …"' 

(48)  Goa sionssin kong (*koe) I iteng bo phien goa.
      I believe KONG (*ASP) he must NEG lie I
      'I believe that he did not lie to me.' 

Cantonese
(49)  Ngo soeng wa (*kwo) tse nei ke tinwa ta jat ha, tak ma?
      I think WA (*ASP) borrow you POSS telephone dial one CL O.K. Q
      'I think that I’d like to borrow your phone, may I?'

(50)  John tsitou wa (*kwo) Mary hai Meihgwok laih ge.
      John know WA (*ASP) Mary be America come PART
      'John knows that Mary is from America.'

2.5.  Taiwanese Kong as a Sentence-Final Particle
Taiwanese kong as in (51) has also evolved into a sentence-final particle which
has no parallels in Mandarin and Cantonese. This kong as a sentence-final particle
can only occur in declarative or imperative sentences but never in interrogative
ones (Chen 1989).

(51)  A Tiong si Taipak lang kong.
      A Tiong be Taipei person PART
      'A Tiong is from Taipei.' 

3.  Discussion
In classical Chinese, I showed that at the first stage, the complementizers only
occur with saying, or informative verbs, but NEVER with cognitive verbs. At the
later stage, a complementizer has extended its domain to occur not only with saying and informative verbs, but also with cognitive verbs. As for the cognitive verbs preceding a complementizer, only xunsi 'think', siliang 'think' and sichun 'contemplate' are found in all of these works.

However, in Modern Taiwan Mandarin, Taiwanese and Cantonese, a complementizer evolving from a saying verb can occur with other cognitive verbs like know, believe, decide or agree. Consequently, the historical development of reported speech in Chinese fulfills Givon's (1980) hypothesis.

Abbreviation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASP</th>
<th>Aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td>Classifier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>Copular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART</td>
<td>Particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSS</td>
<td>Possessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Question</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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